



**Scoping Report
Alaska Stand Alone Pipeline
(ASAP)
Environmental Impact Statement**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASAP	Alaska Stand Alone Pipeline
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
Corps	United States Army Corps of Engineers
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association
NPS	National Park Service
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW	Right-Of Way
SPCO	State Pipeline Coordinator's Office
TAPS	Trans-Alaska Pipeline System

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Alaska District is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the Alaska Stand Alone Pipeline (ASAP) as proposed by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. Cooperating agencies include the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Park Service (NPS), and the State Pipeline Coordinator's Office (SPCO). As lead agency, the Corps is responsible for the development of the EIS, as well as all necessary permits within its jurisdiction. The cooperating agencies join in this effort so that the EIS provides the basis for permits and the right-of way (ROW) grants to be issued.

The Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on December 4, 2009. The scoping period, during which issues and concerns are identified, was initiated December 7, 2009. As specified in the NOI the original scoping period was scheduled to end February 5, 2010. Responding to a request from a project stakeholder the decision was made to extend the scoping period. A Public Notice was distributed to the original mailing list on February 5, 2010 noting an extension of the scoping period to March 8, 2010. Scoping comments were received through March 8, 2010.

1.1 Scoping Overview

The Corps hosted public scoping meetings for the ASAP EIS to disseminate information about the proposed project and to identify issues and concerns that should be addressed in the EIS (Table 1). Identical formats were followed for each meeting, and the same project information was presented. The meetings combined an open house with a brief, formal presentation, followed by a public question and comment opportunity using the following agenda:

1.0 hour	Open House
0.5 hour	Project Presentation
1.5 hours	Public Question and Comment Period

A court reporter recorded transcripts of each of the public scoping meetings. These transcripts are included in Appendix F.

TABLE 1. SCOPING MEETINGS, LOCATIONS, DATES & TIMES

Date	Time	Meeting	Location
December 8, 2009	5-8 PM	Glennallen Public Scoping Meeting	Tazlina Village Hall Mile 110.5 Richardson Highway, Glennallen
December 9, 2009	5-8 PM	Delta Junction Public Scoping Meeting	Delta Junction Community Center 2287 Deborah Street, Delta Junction
December 10, 2009	11 AM - 1 PM	Nenana Public Scoping Meeting	Nenana Civic Center 723 North A Street, Nenana
December 10, 2009	5-8 PM	Fairbanks Public Scoping Meeting	Pioneer Hall at Pioneer Park 2300 Airport Way, Fairbanks
December 11, 2009	11 AM - 1 PM	Denali National Park/ McKinley Village Public Scoping Meeting	McKinley Park Community Center Mile 230 Parks Highway, McKinley Park
December 14, 2009	5-8 PM	Anchorage Public Scoping Meeting	Anchorage Senior Activity Center 1300 East 19 th Avenue, Anchorage

Date	Time	Meeting	Location
December 15, 2009	5-8 PM	Wasilla Public Scoping Meeting	Curtis D Menard Memorial Sports Center 1001 South Mack Drive, Wasilla
December 17, 2009	2-6 PM	Barrow Public Scoping Meeting	Inupiat Heritage Center 5421 North Star Street, Barrow
December 18, 2009	1-4 PM	Agency Scoping Meeting	Federal Building, Bureau of Land Management Office 222 West 7 th Avenue, Anchorage

The Corps hosted an agency scoping meeting, beginning at 1:00 pm on December 18, 2009 in Anchorage. This meeting provided a specific opportunity for agencies to hear the scoping meeting presentation and to ask questions of clarification regarding the ASAP EIS project. The presentation and discussion served as a common foundation for identification of issues and concerns by federal and state agencies with jurisdiction and responsibility for resources potentially affected by the project.

This document is a public record of the scoping activities conducted for the ASAP EIS project from the issuing of the NOI through the close of the scoping period. Comments received during scoping are summarized and presented in this document. Comments received after the close of scoping will be considered during the development of the EIS, but are not part of this report.

The organization of this report begins with an overview of the outreach to notify the public and convene the scoping meetings. The body of this report then provides a brief summary of issues and comments offered by the agencies and the general public. The concluding section describes the next steps in the planning process.

A series of appendices compile the supporting materials for the summaries provided in this report. Detailed materials regarding public notice and outreach are found in Appendix A through Appendix C. Appendices D and E provide a compilation of the original agency, general public and stakeholder comments. Finally, Appendix F includes the original transcripts from the scoping meetings.

1.2 Proposed Project Overview

Alaska Department of Natural Resources proposes a project to construct a 737-mile natural gas pipeline from Prudhoe Bay, located in Alaska's North Slope, to Cook Inlet in South-central Alaska (Figure 1). This pipeline is known as the ASAP project.

The ASAP EIS project area is primarily within existing transportation corridors, consistent with state and federal recommendations to consolidate such activities. The proposed pipeline and associated facilities would primarily cross state lands, although it would also cross federal (BLM), municipal, Native Corporation, Native allotment, and other private lands.

FIGURE 1. PROPOSED ALASKA STAND ALONE PIPELINE



1.3 Purpose of the Proposed Project

The ASAP project would help supply the energy needs of the Interior and South-central regions of Alaska. The pipeline would deliver natural gas and help decrease heating costs in the Interior and provide natural gas storage for periods of peak energy demand in South-central Alaska.

2.0 SCOPING METHODS

Scoping is designed to be an open, public process for identifying the scope of significant physical, biological, and social environmental issues related to the proposed project that should be addressed through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Scoping provides persons potentially affected by the project an opportunity to express their views and offer any suggestions they may have regarding the project and is typically accomplished through written correspondence, public scoping meetings, use of electronic media, and formal and informal consultation with agency officials, interested individuals, and groups.

The scoping process is the first phase of an ongoing public participation program, which keeps relevant agencies and the interested public engaged in the project's progress and informed of opportunities to participate in the preparation of the EIS. In the scoping phase, stakeholders, general public and agencies have an opportunity to 1) bring local issues and concerns within the project area to light, and 2) make comments and suggestions that will help develop a reasonable range of alternatives to be evaluated within the EIS.

The scoping process utilized a number of techniques to ensure that agencies, officials, stakeholders, and members of the public were informed of the project, including:

- Development of a project mailing list
- Newspaper and online notices of scoping meetings
- Public service announcements of scoping meetings
- Public scoping meetings in Glennallen, Delta Junction, Fairbanks, Nenana, McKinley Village, Wasilla, Anchorage, and Barrow
- Agency scoping meeting in Anchorage
- Project email address for comments (info@asapeis.com)
- Project website for project information and electronic comment submission form (<http://www.asapeis.com>)

2.1 Scoping Activities

The scoping activities conducted during the scoping period are summarized in the following subsections. Comments received during scoping are discussed and summarized in Section 3.0.

2.1.1 Project Scoping Announcements

The ASAP EIS process began with publication of the NOI in the *Federal Register* on December 4, 2009. A copy of the NOI is included in Appendix A.

On December 4, 2009, the Corps sent a public notice to affected parties regarding the EIS public scoping meetings and how to obtain more information. On February 5, 2010, the Corps sent out a second public notice to the original mailing list noting an extension of the scoping period and how to obtain more information.

Newspaper announcements for the scoping meetings were advertised in the *Copper River Record* on December 3, 2009; the *Delta Wind* online edition on December 7, 2009; the *Fairbanks Daily News Miner* December 9-10, 2009; the *Anchorage Daily News* on December 14, 2009; the *Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman* on December 10 and 15, 2009; and the *Arctic Sounder* on December 17, 2009. A public service announcement was emailed on December 1, 2009 to the KXGA radio station. Online announcements were posted on the Delta News Web

calendar on December 2, 2009; the KSKA Anchorage Public Radio datebook calendar on December 10, 2009. This information is included in Appendix B.

Scoping period deadline reminders were advertised in newspaper announcements in the *Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman* on January 17, 19, and 22, 2010; the *Copper River Record, Delta Wind*, and the *Arctic Sounder* January 21, 2010; and the *Fairbanks Daily News Miner* January 22-28, 2010. An online reminder announcement with a link to the ASAP EIS website was posted on the *Anchorage Daily News* homepage January 18-24, 2010 and Peg Tileston's What's Up on January 22, 2010. This information is included in Appendix B.

An extension of the scoping period was advertised in newspaper announcements in the *Copper River Record, Delta Wind*, and the *Arctic Sounder* on February 18, 2010; and the *Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman* February 19, 21 and 23, 2010. Online extension announcements with a link to the ASAP EIS website were posted on the *Anchorage Daily News* and *Fairbanks Daily News Miner* homepages February 19-26, 2010. This information is included in Appendix B.

2.1.2 Public Scoping Meetings

Eight public scoping meetings were conducted in December 2009. Exact dates and locations of each meeting are detailed in Table 1. The scoping meeting format and information presented was the same at each public meeting. The open house session, during the first hour, was an opportunity for attendees to view display boards and maps that presented project information and were able to ask questions of the project team. A project overview, including an introduction to the NEPA process, was presented during the following half hour. The public question and comment period began immediately following the presentation with a court reporter recording public testimony.

Comment forms were made available at the meetings in order for attendees to submit written comments during the meeting or mail them at a later date. Supporting information for the public scoping meetings, including display boards and the formal presentation, is included in Appendix C.

2.1.3 Agency Scoping Meeting

An agency scoping meeting was held on December 18, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. at the Bureau of Land Management Office in Anchorage. Agencies received the same formal presentation as the public. Following the presentation, there were a few questions regarding project design components. The intent of the meeting was to provide agencies with an overview of the project. The agencies were asked to provide their scoping comments in writing. Comment submissions are included in Appendix D.

3.0 SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED

The ASAP EIS scoping meetings were minimally attended with a few public comments in some locations. Three scoping meetings did not receive any attendees. Much of the discussion of those in attendance focused on details regarding design, alignment, and the relationship to other gas pipeline projects. Seventeen unique comment submissions were received, including four from state or federal agencies, one from local government, one State Representative and eleven from non-profits, businesses and the general public. In addition, oral comments were provided and recorded at all meetings, with the exception of the agency meeting in Anchorage and the scoping meetings with no attendance (Glennallen, Delta Junction, and Wasilla).

Comments received from both agency and public scoping meetings were received in several ways:

- Oral discussion or testimony from the public scoping meeting transcripts
- Written comments received during the public scoping meetings
- Written comments received by postal mail or by fax
- Written comments submitted electronically by email or through the project website

Comments were assigned subject category codes to describe the content of the comment. The issue categories are listed below in Section 3.1. Group affiliations of those that submitted comments include: federal and state agencies, local governments, businesses, special interest groups, and individuals. The complete text of agency and public comments received are in Appendices D and E respectively.

3.1 Issues Identified During Scoping

The comments received during the scoping period fell into the ten impact categories described as follows:

- Cultural Resources
- Communication
- Engineering, including route alternatives
- Cumulative Impacts
- Land Use
- Operations
- Safety
- Socioeconomic
- Surface water and wetlands
- Wildlife and Fisheries

3.2 Agency Comments

Agency scoping comments focused primarily on project definition, route and system alternatives, cumulative impacts and land use. The NPS submitted unique comments regarding the alternative route of the pipeline through Denali National Park. The NPS commented that existing regulations do not allow NPS to grant a right-of-way through the national park. NPS commented that federal legislation has been introduced to allow NPS to grant a right-of-way through national park lands. NOAA specifically identified the Beluga Whale and designated critical habitat in connection with plans for a fractionation plant in Cook Inlet.

For specific agency comments received, see Appendix D.

3.3 Public Comments

All comments received at public scoping meetings, by mail, and email, were assigned to issue categories based on the content of the comment (see Section 3.1). Individual comments are located in Appendix E. Below is a summary of the most common issues encountered during scoping including pipeline routing, facility siting and coordination with other projects. All scoping submissions and comments from members of the public can be seen in their entirety in Appendix E.

- **Cumulative Impacts:** Comments were received regarding cumulative impacts, fish and wildlife habitat impacts, future development of minerals and petroleum products
- **Communication:** Comments were received regarding communication and outreach to communities and with other projects. One commenter suggested a citizen's advisory group for the project. Comments were received regarding other in-state and inter-state pipeline projects.
- **Engineering/Design/Construction:** One comment requested an oil line in addition to the proposed gas line from Gubik. Another comment requested Gubik region gas to be a source option for the proposed gas line. One commenter suggested the East Curry Route Alternative, not included in the project documents, which would by-pass the Parks Highway.
- **Land Use/Recreation:** Comments identified competing land use along the proposed route. One commenter submitted 225 signatures on a petition to include multi-use paths in the project design.
- **Socioeconomic:** Comments suggested the EIS include a cost/benefit analysis of the project, local use of natural gas, health impact analysis and environmental justice.
- **Wildlife and Fisheries:** Comments were received identifying impacts to wildlife and fisheries habitat.

4.0 NEXT STEPS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

4.1 Develop Alternatives

A reasonable range of alternatives that meet the purpose and need of the project will be identified and examined in the EIS. Applicable input from the scoping process will be incorporated into the range of potential alternatives. This ensures the entire range of positions expressed by participants in the scoping process has been considered. Eliminated alternatives and their justifications will be identified in the EIS. Viable alternatives will be developed with conceptual plans by utilizing available information, or by identifying additional information to be obtained in order to evaluate each alternative on an equal basis. This step of the process will begin May 2010.

4.2 Study of the Affected Environment

All available environmental information associated with the identified issue categories will be reviewed and summarized. The summary will include the most recent scientific research available and all pertinent studies and surveys required for areas that would be potentially impacted by all viable alternatives. This information will be presented in the *Affected Environment* chapter of the EIS. This step of the process will begin April 2010.

4.3 Assess Environmental Consequences of Alternatives

Potential environmental consequences of alternatives will be evaluated, including direct, indirect, and cumulative effects. NEPA compliance associated with federal, state, and local agency permits will be identified and incorporated into the analysis of potential effects. This step of the process will be conducted concurrently with the *Affected Environment* summary and will begin in May 2010.

4.4 Issue the Draft EIS

The Draft EIS will be prepared and made available for review by the public, Tribal Governments, local, state, and federal agencies. The Corps will identify the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative in the final stage of the EIS, namely the Record of Decision (ROD). The Draft EIS will be available for a 60-day review after the Notice of Availability has been published in the *Federal Register*. The public hearings will offer another opportunity for public comment on the Draft EIS. An additional agency meeting will also be held. The public comment period, for inclusion in the Final EIS, is estimated to be from August 2010 to September 2010.

4.5 Issue the Final EIS and Record of Decision

To prepare the Final EIS, revisions will be made on the Draft EIS upon analysis of public comments received. The Final EIS will include submitted comments on the Draft EIS, including revisions made to the EIS in response to comments. This step of the process will include public notice of document availability, the distribution of the document, and a 30-day waiting period on the final document. This step is anticipated to occur from November 2010 to February 2011.

The ROD issued by the Corps concludes the EIS process in February 2011. In their ROD, the Corps will identify the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative, based upon the technical analysis of the EIS and the public comments on the Draft EIS. The Corps in their

ROD will cite the rationale for their conclusions regarding the environmental effects and appropriate mitigation measures for the proposed Alaska Stand Alone Pipeline project.

5.0 CONTACTS

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