



# West Dowling Road Connection Project Agency Meeting

HDR Alaska, Inc.

Tuesday, January 10, 2006, 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm

## Minutes

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### Attendees

Miriam McCulloch (DOT&PF), Edrie Vinson (FHWA) via telephone, Dan Simpson (HDR), Lance DeBernardi (HDR), John McPherson (HDR), Laurie Cummings (HDR), Sirena Brownlee (HDR), Mary Lee Plumb-Mentjes (Corps of Engineers), and Karen Keesecker (MOA Planning).

### Introductions

Miriam McCulloch of DOT&PF welcomed participants.

### Discussion

#### Tina Lake Elevation

- Dan Simpson mentioned that the lake level can be above or below the standpipe elevation depending on environmental conditions such as rainfall.
- John McPherson said that HDR believes the lake level will resemble the level shown in the 2001 air photo if the standpipe is fixed
- John mentioned that the lake level elevation should not be changed to an elevation that would compromise local businesses
- Mary Lee Plumb-Mentjes mentioned that she preferred the alignment that was shifted to the north over the initial alignment the bisected Tina Lake
- Dan mentioned that the lake level may be lower without the snow dump
- John mentioned that if the alignment is pushed north, the standpipe will be impacted and will need to be relocated. The elevation of the standpipe will be below the 100 year flood level.
- Mary Lee asked if more water could be diverted into Tina Lake.
- Mary Lee commented that the proportion of water surface to fringe wetland is important. Someone with more expertise in birds could provide more information about that relationship.
- Mary Lee commented that there could be opportunities to add water. That is well-suited mitigation for DOT.
- Dan remarked that adding water to the lake would be challenging because of the elevation in the area. He also commented that passive systems are needed, not active systems such as pumps.
- Mary Lee mentioned that the benefits of fixing/relocating the standpipe need to be incorporated into the mitigation proposal. If there is no benefit, it may not need to be done.
- John suggested that more work be done and another meeting can be held when a more detailed mitigation proposal has been developed.
- Mary Lee suggested that the project think in terms of the critters that use the additional water, when they use it, how they use it, and why the project should get credit for it.

- Mary Lee commented that converting birch forest into wetland is not an appealing option. She would need more convincing of this.
- Mary Lee suggested that the project needs to figure out a way to keep water in the lake.
- Karen Keesecker suggested that contingency plans are needed.
- Mary Lee asked that copies of the as built be distributed.

#### Alternative Refinement

- John discussed how the alternatives have been refined from the initial alignment that went through the middle of Tina Lake to a third generation alignment that has been pushed to the northern edge.
- John mentioned that by avoiding wetlands, more right-of-way needs to be acquired.
- Edrie Vinson wondered if the project is going out of the way to preserve something that can't be preserved. Without the snow dump, there may not be any water in the lake.
- Dan replied that it would depend on rainfall.
- Mary Lee commented that most of the discussion addresses direct impacts. The indirect impacts also need to be considered. Will the remaining wetlands to the north of the alignment still be viable?
- Edrie suggested exploring the potential for hazardous materials on the property adjacent to the northern edge of Tina Lake.
- Edrie suggested developing mitigation proposals for the alignment that goes through Tina Lake as well as the one that has been shifted to the north.
- Miriam McCulloch mentioned that the ownership of the lake bottom is unknown. It depends on when the parcels were platted. Research is being done to determine ownership.
- John commented that determining the purpose of the wetland (habitat versus water filtration) is important as different mitigation is needed.
- Dan wondered if there were any other functions that could be enhanced.
- Mary Lee mentioned that the biggest return would probably be from converting non-wetland to good quality wetland/open water
- Miriam mentioned that DOT&PF is more interested in monetary compensation
- Mary Lee responded that the Corps is unlikely to accept fee in lieu on this project because of the potential for on-site mitigation
- John mentioned that converting the lake to public ownership would be a benefit
- Mary Lee suggested it would be useful for the project to meet with Heather Dean to determine how much credit the project would get and to see what credits it deserves.
- John mentioned that the next step will be to have the hydraulic engineers look at Tina Lake and see what mitigation could be done.

#### Action Items

- Follow-up meeting tentatively scheduled for February 8, 2006 at 9:00AM.