

**Mertarvik EIS Kick-off Meeting
Draft Summary Notes**

Date and Time: Tuesday February 7, 2017, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Location: Denali Commission, 510 L St. #410 (4th floor of Peterson Tower)

Invitees: Alaska DCCED, Alaska DMVA, Alaska DOTPF, BIA, CEQ, DOI, EDA, EPA, FAA, FEMA, FWS, HUD, IHS, USACE, USDA, Native Village of Newtok (NVC), DOWL. (*NVC was unable to join the meeting.*)

Meeting Summary Notes (Prepared by Don Antrobus, Denali Commission)

1. Background: Denali Commission (Commission) opened the meeting by providing some background material on the status of erosion in Newtok and the development of Mertarvik.
 - a. The Ninglik River is steadily progressing toward Newtok. After fall storms in 2016, there is approximately 100 feet of land mass remaining between the river and the first structures. At the average erosion rate of 70 feet per year, homes will be threatened or lost in the fall of 2017. It is projected that within 4 years the community may no longer be viable with the loss of or damage to the water source, airport, and school. It is in this context, that the Commission proposes to complete the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as expeditiously as possible.
 - b. Ongoing Mertarvik development activities include energy planning and design, sanitation facilities design (landfill design, water/wastewater master planning), and final townsite design. The townsite design, upon approval by the community, will become the basis for the description of federal actions to be included in the EIS. Although there is significant progress in Mertarvik, it is most likely that Newtok will lose infrastructure before it can be replaced in the new townsite.
2. Attendees: A copy of the meeting sign in sheet, including individuals who participated via telephone, is attached at the end of these notes.
3. EIS Administration:
 - a. Lead Agency: The Commission will be the lead agency for the development of the EIS. Previously, there was discussion of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as lead agency. Because USACE currently has no federal action in Mertarvik and because the Commission has allocated funding to Newtok specifically for the completion of NEPA activities, it was subsequently concluded that the Commission would act as the lead agency.

The Commission has entered an Inter-Agency Agreement (IAA) with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to prepare the EIS document. USACE was selected to prepare the EIS for the Commission because of its experience preparing EIS documents and specifically because of its familiarity with Mertarvik having previously prepared NEPA documents for earlier Mertarvik development activities.

- i. FAA requested that the Commission evaluate whether there is any potential conflict in having USACE prepare an EIS for activities over which it also has regulatory authority. It was agreed that respective agency counsels would explore the issue and determine what measures may need to be put in place to resolve any potential conflicts.
- b. NEPA Class of Action: The Commission proposed to prepare a single programmatic EIS document covering the construction of all remaining infrastructure necessary for the development of Mertarvik. This overall effort will be referred to as the Mertarvik Infrastructure Development Project (MIDP) for the purpose of these notes.

An EIS was determined to be the appropriate class of action in order to evaluate the cumulative impacts of all proposed activities. The EIS for the MIDP will be prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA, and Commission NEPA Implementing Procedures (45 CFR Part 900).

- i. Programmatic EIS: Discussion ensued over whether it is accurate to use “programmatic” to describe an EIS for the MIDP. The Commission initially titled the effort “Programmatic” because it is not currently known which federal or state agencies will provide funding for MIDP activities and/or when this funding will be made available. While there was no concern raised over the use of the term, it was expressed that “programmatic” in the title communicates that the specific actions to be undertaken are not clearly defined. The Commission argued that specific actions, while not yet designed, are well defined and/or will be well defined via the active townsite planning process.
- ii. Mertarvik Development Activities: DOWL was introduced as the Project Manager selected by NVC for the MIDP effort.
 - 1. Townsite Plan: There is an ongoing parallel effort to finalize the townsite plan for Mertarvik. The final townsite plan will be the basis for defining the footprint of all infrastructure to be included in the MIDP and covered in the EIS. The townsite design process will include development of several alternatives from which the community of Newtok can determine its preferred option. The selected option will be updated based on preliminary engineering analysis of various facilities. The townsite plan will site all infrastructure to be included in the MIDP and subsequently will be utilized to define the Area of Potential Effect for the EIS. The townsite plan schedule includes 65% plan by the end of February and final by end of May 2017.
 - 2. Airport: The 2014 Airport Layout Plan (ALP) developed by ADOT for a new Mertarvik airport was used as the basis of locating the airport in the townsite planning options. It is understood that the information provided in the ALP is typical of the information on which other airport Environmental Assessment (EA) or EIS documents have been based.

There was a brief discussion about the implications of flipping the proposed airport apron from the west to the east side of the primary runway. There were no conclusions drawing, but it was generally agreed to pursue analysis of this option.

4. Participating Agencies: The Commission presented its preliminary plan for formally inviting interested parties to participate in the EIS. The Commission proposed to invite FAA to participate as a cooperating agency. It proposed to engage with other agencies at the *consult* level as defined in “*Collaboration in NEPA, A Handbook for NEPA Practitioners*”, prepared by CEQ and dated October 2007. At the consult level of engagement, agencies will be invited to public and agency meetings, provided copies of draft and final documents for review and comment, and will be informed as to how their comments have been addressed. The intent of this engagement plan is not to limit agency collaboration, but to limit the number of different agency procedures that might otherwise have to be accommodated. There is concern that this would have a significant impact on the schedule of the effort. For instance, many agencies do not have the authority to review an EIS locally. Inviting them as a formal cooperating agencies, would most likely extend the review and comment periods beyond what could otherwise be accomplished locally.


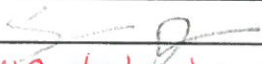
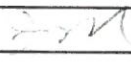
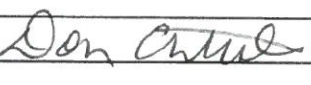
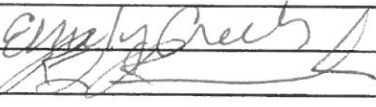
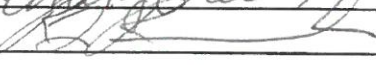
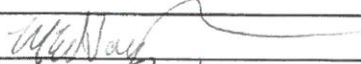

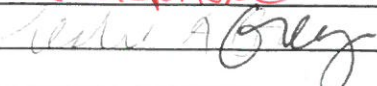
It is understood that this EIS process must meet an agency’s regulations if it is to be subsequently adopted to satisfy that agency’s future NEPA requirements. It is the intent of the Commission to complete a document that satisfies participating agency regulations.

- a. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) requested to participate as a cooperating agency by virtue of being an adjacent land owner, requested to also be a cooperating agency, indicating that the EIS review could take place locally. The Commission agreed to consider the request. FWS also noted that additional land exchange between NVC and FWS is being discussed and recommended that any foreseeable actions on the new land be considered in the EIS.
 - b. FAA noted that the Commission would have to ensure/verify that other agencies had been consulted and provided an opportunity to comment in order to comply with FAA requirements.
5. EIS Process: USACE provided a brief overview of the proposed NEPA process and schedule; a summary of NEPA documents completed to date; the resource categories to be included in the EIS; and a discussion of existing baseline data and potential data gaps.
 - a. Baseline Data: It was noted that based on initial review most if not all baseline data has been collected as part of previous Mertarvik NEPA activities. There was some discussion on whether sufficient baseline data already exists. Generally, agencies indicated that they would need time to review existing data themselves before concluding that additional data is not required.
 - b. Decommissioning of Newtok: It was noted that decommissioning of Newtok was not included in MIDP activities to be considered in the EIS. It is understood that there may be additional environmental work necessary for decommissioning activities, however, there is currently no federal decommissioning activities be pursued. FAA noted that it would have to evaluate whether decommissioning of the Newtok airport would have to be considered to satisfy FAA requirements.
 - c. EIS Work Plan: USACE will develop a Work Plan further defining the EIS content, schedule, and procedures. Upon completion, it will be distributed to participating agencies for review and comment.

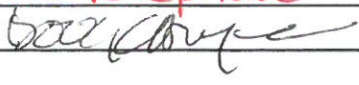





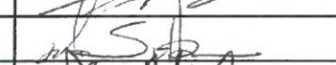

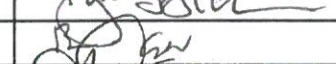

6. General Discussion:

- a. Information Exchange: A request was made to establish a website to exchange information and post EIS documents and products. The Commission agreed to pursue this and set up some type of information sharing site.

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#	Name	Org.	Signature	Primary Contact (yes/no)	Contact Number
1	Romy Cadiente	NVC			
2	Paul Charles	NVC			
3	Brent Nichols	ADMVA			
4	Kevin Reeve	ADMVA			
5	Todd VanHove	ADOT&PF		yes	289-0520
6	John Binder	ADOT&PF			
7	Daniel Delfino	AHFC			
8	Michael Singleton	AHFC			
9	Gavin Dixon	ANTHC		Yes	907-779-3586
10	Stuart Hartford	BIA	via telephone		907-271-6984
11	Ronald Lamb	CEQ			
12	Sally Cox	DCCED			
13	Joel Neimeyer	Denali		NO	(907) 271-1414
14	Jay Farmwald	Denali			(907) 271-1415
15	Chris Allard	Denali	C. Allard		(907) 271-1416
16	John Whittington	Denali			(907) 271-1417
17	Don Antrobus	Denali		Yes	(907) 271-3500
18	Givey kochanowski	DOE			
19	Vanitha Sivarajan	DOI	via telephone		202-219-1136
20	Addison Smith	DOWL			
21	Emily Creely	DOWL			562 2000
22	Randy Romenesko	DOWL		Y	907, 304-2240
23	Shirley Kelly	EDA			
24	Diane Soderlund	EPA			
25	Molly Vaughan	EPA		Y	271-1215
26	Tammy Fordham	EPA		N	271-1484
27	Jennifer Curtis	EPA			
28	Kristi Warden	FAA			
29	Keith Gordon	FAA	via telephone	Yes	907-271-5030
30	Leslie Grey	FAA		NO	907-271-5453
31	Kerry Long	FAA			
32	Patricia Deem	FAA	via telephone		
33	Robert Forgit	FEMA			

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#	Name	Org.	Signature	Primary Contact (yes/no)	Contact Number
34	Jeffrey Markham	FEMA			
35	Mark Carey	FEMA	via telephone		
36	Science Kilner	FEMA	via telephone	Yes	425-487-4713
37	Douglas Campbell	FWS		Yes	202-551-766-3907
38	Mitchell Ellis	FWS			
39	Bill Zachares	HUD			
40	Colleen Bickford	HUD			
41	Kevin Bingley	IHS	via telephone	Yes	907-729-3610
42	Denman Ondelacy	IHS	via telephone		907-729-3501
43	Michael Noah	USACE		Y	(907) 783-2677
44	Chris Floyd	USACE			907-753-2700
45	Timothy Krug	USDA	via telephone	Yes	907-761-7777
46	Tasha Deardorff	USDA			
47	MARK KAHK	BIA			907-291-2008
48	Kim Weibel	DHS/EM			907-428-7020
49	Andy Petroni	AHFC			907 330-8275
50	MIKE SUTTON	DHS/EM			907-428-7062
51	Joel St. Arbin	DOTAF			269-0619
52	Bria Elkin	"			269-0539
53	Andy Concepcion	HUD			907-84677-9810
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