

Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project

(FERC No. 14241)

Subsistence Resources

Study Plan Section 14.5

Initial Study Report

Part C: Executive Summary and Section 7

Prepared for

Alaska Energy Authority



Clean, reliable energy for the next 100 years.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Subsistence Resources Study 14.5	
Purpose	The purpose of the Subsistence Resources Study is to demonstrate whether and, if so, the extent to which communities harvest and use subsistence resources within or near the Project area, use Project area lands to access other lands for subsistence harvest and use, and/or harvest and use resources that migrate through the Project area and are later harvested in other areas.
Status	Data collection began in January 2013 and will continue through 2015.
Study Components	<p>The study consists of the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Compilation of Existing Subsistence Data 2) Household Harvest Surveys 3) Household Surveys in State-Designated Nonsubsistence Areas 4) Subsistence Mapping Interviews 5) Traditional and Local Knowledge Interviews
2013 Variances	One additional community, Knik, was selected for Traditional and Local Knowledge workshops (RSP Section 14.5.4.5).
Steps to Complete the Study	No modifications to the Study Plan are needed to complete the study and meet Study Plan objectives. To complete the study, AEA will finalize remaining household harvest surveys (RSP Section 14.5.4.2) in 2014. In 2015, AEA will complete all subsistence mapping interviews (RSP Section 14.5.4.5) and remaining traditional and local knowledge workshops (RSP Section 14.5.5.5).
Highlighted Results and Achievements	The study team reviewed and compiled existing data for all 37 identified study communities, completed household harvest surveys in 10 study communities, and conducted a total of 28 traditional and local knowledge workshops in seven communities. Pertinent data from traditional and local knowledge workshops have been shared with the study teams for the Cultural Resources Study (Study 13.5) and Health Impact Assessment Study (Study 15.8) for follow-up. Overall, the combination of study methods and resulting data have created a comprehensive baseline of subsistence harvest and use information for the Susitna River watershed and Project area.

7. COMPLETING THE STUDY

7.1. Proposed Methodologies and Modifications

To complete this study, AEA will implement the methods in the Study Plan except as described in Sections 7.1.1 and 7.1.2. These activities include:

- Scheduling and conducting traditional and local knowledge workshops with the Chickaloon Traditional Village Council and Knik Tribal Councils (RSP Section 14.5.4.5).
- Conducting household harvest surveys in the following communities: Glenallen, Tazlina, Lake Louise, Paxson, Gulkana, Tolsona, Tonsina, Mendeltna and Nelchina (RSP Section 14.5.4.2).
- Conducting subsistence mapping interviews in selected study communities to document last 10-year subsistence use areas as well as related baseline indicators (RSP Section 14.5.4.4). Eight communities (Cantwell, Chase, Healy, Talkeetna, Lake Louise, McKinley Park, Trapper Creek, and Petersville) were identified in the Study Plan for possible inclusion in the subsistence mapping studies due to their proximity to the Project. Five of these communities (Cantwell, Chase, Healy, Lake Louise, and McKinley Park) have documented subsistence use area data showing use of the Project area and Trapper Creek's use areas are within the Susitna River watershed. Available use area data for these four communities are all at least 10 years old. For the remaining communities of Talkeetna and Petersville, subsistence use area data are not available. The study team will refine the list of identified subsistence mapping communities based on additional information (e.g., consultation with communities and agencies, adequacy of existing data, need for updated data, or suitability of community for subsistence mapping efforts).

7.1.1. Decision Points from Study Plan

RSP Section 14.5.4.4 indicates that AEA will refine the list of communities identified for subsistence mapping interviews based on adequacy of existing data and need for updated data, and in consultation with communities and agencies. Discussions with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Subsistence regarding this decision point are ongoing, as data from 2013 and 2014 study components are reviewed. AEA anticipates consultation with the potential communities, and a final decision on community list refinement to be made in 2015.

7.1.2. Modifications to Study Plan

As described in Section 4.4.7 of this ISR, AEA implemented a variance in 2013 to include the Knik Tribe, a federally recognized tribe with ties to the Susitna River watershed, in traditional and local knowledge interviews. AEA will continue to implement this method as a Study Plan modification in 2014 and 2015.

7.2. Schedule

In general, the schedule for completing the FERC-approved Study Plan is dependent upon several factors, including Project funding levels authorized by the Alaska State Legislature, availability of required data inputs from one individual study to another, unexpected weather delays, the short duration of the summer field season in Alaska, and other events outside the reasonable control of AEA. For these reasons, the Study Plan implementation schedule is subject to change, although at this time AEA expects to complete the FERC-approved Study Plan through the filing of the Updated Study Report (USR) by February 1, 2016, in accordance with the ILP schedule issued by FERC on January 28, 2014.

With regard to this specific study, in 2014 AEA plans to conduct household harvest surveys in the communities of Copperville, Glennallen, Gulkana, Lake Louise, Mendenhall, Nelchina, Paxson, Tazlina, Tolsona and Tonsina. In 2015, AEA plans to conduct subsistence mapping interviews in selected communities, following refinement of community list (see Section 7.1.1 of this ISR) and traditional and local knowledge workshops in Chickaloon and Knik.

7.3. Conclusion

Implementation of the Subsistence Resources Study will occur in 2014 and 2015 with only one modification: inclusion of the Knik Tribe in traditional and local knowledge interviews. This study is interrelated with the Health Impact Assessment (Study 15.8) and Cultural Resources Study (Study 13.5). AEA expects the approved Study Plan objectives for both this study and Studies 13.5 and 15.8 will be achieved with this modification, in combination with the 2013 efforts, as this modification broadens the scope of the traditional and local knowledge interviews. The results of this study will be reported in the USR.