

Table 12.4-1. Summary of consultation on Recreation and Aesthetic Resources study plans.

Comment Format	Comment Date	Licensing Participant Name	Licensing Participant Affiliation	Comment	Response
<u>General</u>					
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	Request AEA develop a schedule ensuring coordination between interdependent resource studies associated w/ Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project. Recreation and Aesthetic studies are dependent on results of other biophysical resource studies (hydrology, instream flow, fluvial geomorphology, ice processes, fisheries, game studies).	Interdisciplinary coordination discussed in each resource study culminating in standard interdependencies charts presented in the schedule section of each study plan. Interdependencies for Recreation and Aesthetics studies discussed in Sections 12.5,6,7. Recreation and Aesthetic interdependences diagrams present in Figures 12.5-2 and 12.6-2.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	Critical Path Method, or comparable project mgmt. mechanism, should be key element of Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project, especially w/ 58 studies, many occurring concurrently.	Each study area provides the key elements that area necessary inputs as well as outputs within the context of each particular study area. AEA maintains a schedule of each study including key predecessors and successors for studies as well as other activities in the planning and design of the Project.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	Transparent process needed for tracking critical milestones and progress of PSPs, w/ interdependencies identified in each study plan.	See responses above. In addition this table together with the draft RSP tracks the changes made to the PSPs through consultation.

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Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	Summary of overall Critical Path schedule should be included as separate plan, and be made available on Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project website for stakeholders to access.	Study plan schedules with interdependencies to other disciplines are presented in the draft RSP within each study schedule section as well as an overall schedule that will be presented in Section 1 of the RSP. AEA's overall schedule is continuously updated as planning and progress advances and changes based on weather, contracting, and other key variables. Key schedule milestones and activities are regularly posted on the Project Website.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	According to current published schedule, agencies and stakeholders will not have results of critical 2012 reconnaissance, baselining studies that are key to determining scope, adequacy of the 2013-14 ILP studies before NPS' final opportunity to comment on ILP studies. NPS is being asked to take AEA's word that if results of 2012 studies indicate a need to modify ILP studies, such modifications will be made voluntarily.	The results of 2012 work as well as all other previous analysis and information gathering for the Project have been used by the study team to develop the study plans. The study plans are based on the most current information AEA has to develop study methodologies that fit within the baseline conditions understood and articulated within the study plan as needed.
Recreation Resources Study (Section 12.5)					

Comment Format	Comment Date	Licensing Participant Name	Licensing Participant Affiliation	Comment	Response
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.1. Intro – Recreation study focuses on recreational uses, demand rather than recreational opportunities, experiences. Need to be qualitative, not just quantitative, b/c experiences are likely to change post-project. NPS is relying on recreation surveys to tease-out qualitative information (quality of experience, preferences, etc.). Without seeing survey instruments and protocol, NPS does not have assurance that studies will be able to characterize these.	AEA agrees that having the study be more explicit about how quality of experience and how the opportunity assessment will be carried out is appropriate, even if the qualitative methods are often more difficult to define. The study plan has been updated throughout to mention where possible how the various study components are going to address quality and recreation supply/opportunity considerations. Section 12.5.4 describes the draft survey protocol. Attachment 12-3 is the draft intercept survey instrument.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.1. Gen. Description of Proposed Study – Add following to “specific goals of the study”: Incorporate the results of the 2012 studies.	AEA agrees and the additional goal has been added to Section 12.5.2.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.2. Existing Info & Need for Additional Info – Agencies, stakeholders will not have results from the “2012 data gathering efforts” until they are reported on 11/5/2012. NPS will not be able to incorporate comments on results by the 10/15/2012 due date for PSP comments.	The Study Plan comment period has been extended to November 14, 2012 however the published report for 2012 studies will not be ready for publication by that time. AEA study teams are using information gathered in 2012 to inform the study plan process in those instances that such information is applicable to customize or alter specific methodologies.

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Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.4. Study Methods – With respect to interdependent analyses, and reliance of recreation and aesthetics studies on results from other disciplines, there is no detail in PSP explaining how timing will work. Schedule table at end of each PSP w/ study seasons and deliverables does not mention this. NPS needs details of how sequence will work. AEA cannot just say it will happen when it does not appear that results of other studies will be available before delivery date for this one.	Sections 12.5,12.6, and 12.7 have been updated to describe interdependencies and Figures 12.5-2, 12.6-2, 12.6-3 provide a graphical representation of the interdependencies.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.4. Study Methods, Regional Recreation Analysis – Study plan should note, early-on, distinction w/ subsistence hunting and fishing v. sport activities.	Agreed, Study Plan, Section 12.5 now makes this distinction.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.4. Study Methods, Regional Recreation Analysis – PSP states “Existing resource management plans relevant to the recreational resources of the study area will be reviewed and compiled.” Isn’t this being done in 2012?	Yes it is being undertaken in 2012 however additional analysis will be necessary throughout 2013 and 2014 as the analyses develop. Text has been clarified in Section 12.5.4.

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Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	<p>10.5.4. Study Methods, Regional Recreation Analysis – 2012 info will be used to develop RSP. Will NPS see this prior to the 10/15/2012 due date for agency and public PSP comments? If not, how will agencies and public ensure that 2012 data is applied correctly? Timing problem points to larger problem of trying to finalize study plans for a project before reconnaissance level work is complete. This also applies to Aesthetics and Instream Recreation PSPs.</p>	<p>The Study Plan comment period has been extended to November 14, 2012 however the published report for 2012 studies will not be ready for publication by that time. AEA study teams are using information gathered in 2012 to inform the study plan process in those instances that such information is applicable to customize or alter specific methodologies. Much of the work being done in 2012 has to do with collection of baseline information which by itself does not necessarily alter the study methods proposed. In many cases the benefits of the 2012 work has informed the logistical considerations of the 2013-14 study. The PAD, Data Gap report, and analysis of management plans and other existing published information related to recreation in addition to firsthand information gathering in 2012, all together comprise the body of information used to identify the data needs and develop the study plan methods to get at those data needs.</p>

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Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.4. Study Methods, Regional Recreation Analysis – AEA needs to analyze effects of Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project <u>operations</u> , not just “features.” Nowhere in PSP is it explicitly acknowledged that Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project may have effects on things like fish abundance (affecting sport fishing opportunities), moose, caribou, waterfowl, upland game bird populations due to migration barriers and alteration of habitat, due to altered fluvial morphology and riparian vegetation.	The study plan has been updated in several places to clarify that the analysis is directed at providing the relevant information to form the basis to be able to understand how the Project construction and operation may affect the resource.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.4. Study Methods, Recreation Carrying Capacity – Physical carrying capacity is just <u>one</u> of 4 elements of “carrying capacity” (physical, ecological, social, spatial). Area’s physical capacity may / may not be most limiting, especially if Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project results in greater access, which could cause use to exceed area’s social carrying capacity. This is one reason why it is important to study experiential aspect of pre- and post-project recreational use. On rivers in particular, social capacity is almost always more sensitive than other aspects of capacity, w/ concerns about group size, encounter rates; competition for space at put-ins, take-outs, campsites; crowding at fishing holes, play boating features, etc.	The discussion of carrying capacity has been expanded in Section 12.5.4 to clarify the various components being addressed. The recreation user intercept survey and regional resident household mail survey will gather some helpful information regarding the social aspect of the carrying capacity, such as quality of experience, and perceptions of crowding.

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Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.4. Study Methods, ID & Analysis of Salient Data from Existing Survey Research – Existing survey research appears biased towards “industrial tourism.” Analysis needs to capture use by independent tourists (e.g. people driving up AK Hwy. and on to Denali Hwy.), and local (unguided AK resident) users, many of whom are able to access area without relying on air taxis or het boat charters.	We do not agree that the totality of existing survey resources is biased toward industrial tourism. As explained in Section 12.5.4, the survey methods are intended and expected to capture information about all types of users.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.4. Study Methods, ID & Analysis of Salient Data from Existing Survey Research – PSP states that AVSP Survey, which will be used in the study plan, is a statewide research program commissioned by the AK Dept. of Commerce, Community & Economic Development, that included 6,747 visitors to AK in Summer 2011 and 1,361 visitors in the Fall/Winter 2011/2012. Survey excludes spring season.	The study team believes this is a robust study that is appropriate to use in combination with other data sources. The AVSP survey is conducted year round. The “spring” season is not excluded; rather March and April are included in the fall/winter season reports, while May is included in the summer season report. Section 12.5.4 has been expanded to discuss further detail about data sources and their applicability for the AEA proposed studies.

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Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.4. Study Methods, Telephone Surveys of Railbelt Residents – Phone survey has very little value. Given the sample size, very few subjects are likely to be familiar with the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project area, and SCORP questions are too general to yield useful info about specific kinds of recreational opportunities in the area. Instead, USNPS suggest resources be focused on “executive interviews” – use snowball sampling method to find actual users of this area and others like it.	The survey study plan has been modified accordingly in Section 12.5.4. The study plan has been revised to include a mail survey in addition to intercept surveys and executive interviews. The SCORP is an important source of information for regional recreation characteristics and it is a formal document prepared explicitly for the purposes of helping recreation providers plan to meet future recreation needs. The SCORP should greatly help the recreation planning effort for the Project and in the region, particularly with regards to identifying regional recreation supply and demand characteristics.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.4. Study Methods, Telephone Surveys of Railbelt Residents – Expecting cooperation from vendors and outfitters, who are being asked to take the time, effort to hand over private info on “actual users” be difficult. This underscores need to review survey instruments, protocols ASAP.	Information from private businesses needs to be handled with great sensitivity and at times with confidentiality to inform the demand assessment. The methods discussion has been expanded in 12.5.4.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.4. Study Methods, Telephone Surveys of Railbelt Residents – Even though the project is unique, such survey templates are fairly standard and should already have been developed and disseminated to agencies, stakeholders.	Examples of other surveys used in FERC relicensing applications provide some insight, however, the study area is unique and information about current uses is scarce. Survey research needs to be customized to meet the unique and disperse recreational use of the study area. Survey draft presented at 9/20/12 TWG meeting. Attachment 12-3, 12-4, and 12-5, 12-6.

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Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.4. Study Methods, Intercept Surveys & Structured Observation Visitor Counts – Where is the detail on this and other methods? NPS needs to be developing instruments now, or at least deciding when they will be developed (prior to NPS' last chance to comment in mid-Oct. 2012).	Methods have been expanded in 12.5.4. Survey draft presented at 9/20/12 TWG meeting, and reviewed again 10-03-12. Draft survey instruments are shown in Attachments 12-3, 12-4, and 12-5, 12-6. The study plan has been updated to explain how the recreation and aesthetics technical workgroups will continue to meet quarterly during implementation of the study.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.6. Schedule – Only one December (2013) will be sampled. No “wobble room” should weather, other conditions render the limited sample seasons inadequate to represent actual project area conditions.	In the recreation studies data capture will occur during 2013. There is a provision to capture data in 2014 in the event that unusual circumstances or events do not allow the capture of data in 2013. Additionally, the survey sampling plans for the recreational users intercept survey allow for flexibility if “make up” days are needed due to inclement weather or other issues (such as road closures, etc.) This is reflected in Table 12.5-1, and discussed in Section 12.5.4.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.5.6. Schedule – No mention of when results of other studies – ice, morphology, fish and game populations, etc. – will be in-hand, and how results will be incorporated in the Recreation Study report.	Study interdependencies are discussed in Section 12.5,6,7 and graphically illustrated in Figures 12.5-2, 12.6-2, 12.6-3.

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Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	<p>A. Study of Recreation Resources Survey Methodology – Changes in flows, sediment transport, ice formation could likely result in significant changes in post-construction recreational opportunities downstream of Talkeetna. Baseline boating, fishing, winter use of Susitna River corridor from Talkeetna to its mouth needs to be assessed to determine project's impacts on recreation and aesthetics. FERC will need this info to balance power and non-power uses of Susitna River in its licensing decision; NPS will also need info to develop appropriate Section 10(a) recommended terms and conditions for the license. Only if studies of the river's post-project flows, morphology, ice processes, fish habitat, etc., determine that there will be negligible effect on relevant biophysical conditions in river corridor downstream of Talkeetna should recreational and aesthetics study areas be restricted to the river corridor upstream of the confluence w/ Talkeetna and Chulitna rivers.</p>	<p>Sections 12.5.3, 12.6.3, 12.7.3 have been revised to indicate that study area may be changed during study implementation if specific findings from other study disciplines indicate resource effects extend beyond currently anticipated study boundaries.</p>
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	<p>C.1. Access Points – Study efficiency could benefit if resources were re-programmed away from certain areas along Richardson and Glenn hwy's. (e.g. Chickaloon, Sourdough, Paxson Lake). Would presumably help keep study costs in line, while including summer and winter access points downstream of Talkeetna. If goal of intercepting Chickaloon area residents is to sample subsistence activities, this effort is more appropriate under Subsistence survey.</p>	<p>Intercept locations have been revised to re-allocate effort and this is discussed in Section 12.5.4.</p>

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Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	C.1. Access Points – Description of access points along Parks Hwy. leaves impression that Talkeetna is on the Parks. Might be better to say that it runs past Talkeetna Spur Rd.	Agreed, Section 12.5.4 has been updated accordingly.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	C.1. Access Points – Fixed Wing Aircraft: Will effort be made to intercept private aircraft at Talkeetna Airport? If not, why not, in light of planned intercepts at Willow Airport and float plane dock?	Talkeetna Airport is included in the intercept survey plans, see Section 12.5.4.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	3. Survey Content – Boundary Project surveys provide useful template for Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project, but crucial difference between these two projects must be keep in mind ... Better questions to capture baseline recreational resource conditions in Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project study area would focus more on recreational experiences currently sought by area visitors, in terms of attributes like remoteness, solitude, self-reliance, low encounter rates, absence of “combat fishing” atmosphere, etc. Instead of asking about the adequacy of existing facilities and services – none of which are provided by AEA – better questions for capturing pre- and post-project differences would assess demand for potential new facilities (such as reservoir-based fishing, serviced campgrounds, maintained trails, a hut system, etc.).	AEA never intended to use the recreation surveys from the Boundary Project relicensing wholesale. Rather, as discussed in TWG meetings 9/20 & 10/03 the Boundary Project surveys were provided as an initial example survey instrument with the understanding the survey plans for this Project need to be customized to gather factors relevant to recreationists in the Susitna River region. The quality of experience aspect is discussed in Section 12.5.4 and outlined on the draft survey instrument in Attachment 12-3. The capacity analysis discussion, which includes pre and post conditions is provided in Section 12.5.4.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	3. Survey Content – Need to determine whether some current area visitors might go elsewhere if Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project significantly changed recreational character of the area.	The current draft of the intercept survey specifically asks current users if their use would be displaced by Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project and to where.

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Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	3. Survey Content – Party size is important recreational use parameter in its own right (e.g., helps characterize visitor experience); this info should be collected early in intercept survey.	Questions regarding party size are included in the draft intercept survey (see Attachment 12-3). The final positioning of these questions will be determined through pre-testing.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	3. Survey Content – Basic structure of the intercept survey will likely work as online survey, but some elements need revision; e.g., NPS suggests the “don’t know” and “refused” options be deleted from each question.	Section 15.5.4 has been updated to clearly explain that differences in some questions are based on the mode of delivery.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	D. Mail & Online Survey – By surveying only registered voters, sample will be somewhat skewed in terms of demographics. Younger visitors are less likely to be registered in AK, as are military members and their dependents. Snowbirds may also be registered in another state, even if they own property in / near the study area. Is it possible to use power utility customer lists to generate a random sample? DMV records may also yield a less biased sample population.	AEA has evaluated a variety of survey sampling strategies and believe voter registration databases offer benefits over other survey database choices. While not all regional residents may be registered to vote, this database represents a wider diversity of names and addresses than commercially purchased mailing lists (such as utility customers). This is discussed in Section 12.5.4.

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Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	<p>D. Mail & Online Survey – Contingency plan: Does AEA have plan for gathering recreation and aesthetics resource info if study area is affected by floods, other unusual or extreme weather, wildfires, earthquakes, road or railroad closures, etc., during critical survey periods? Or if Susitna River is subject to additional emergency Chinook sport fishing closures? These factors can have drastic effect on number of recreational users who want to / are able to access the study area. Study plans should include a detailed strategy for altering survey methods and / or extending study period in event the study area is affected by these forces beyond AEA's control.</p>	<p>The studies are designed to understand recreation trends in addition to a 2013 snapshot. The studies in 2013 and 2014 are also intended to collect data from recent years. There is a variety of sources that can help define the baseline conditions and trends related to recreation.</p>
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	<p>D. Mail & Online Survey – AEA proposes to reduce intercept survey frequency (fortnightly instead of weekly) to save money, if sufficient sample size can otherwise be ensured. AEA should also consider reprogramming its survey efforts as season progresses to respond to unforeseen weather, access, regulatory conditions.</p>	<p>Contingency for sample days disrupted by weather, access (road closures), etc. has been built into the survey sampling plan strategy. The intercept survey timing discussion has been expanded in Section 12.5.4.</p>
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	<p>E. Executive Interviews – Project description: Would be helpful to provide more info for interview subjects about Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project's possible effects on recreation, aesthetics. Many non-specialists have no context for Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project study area, and project's footprint will be more than just a high dam and large reservoir.</p>	<p>AEA has fact sheets about the Project that can be used to help provide additional information to interviewees. The draft executive interview protocols include a description of the Project and study area to inform interviewees prior to the semi-structured questioning. The language describing the Project will be similar to that found on AEA's website for consistency (See Attachment 12-4).</p>

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Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	E. Executive Interviews – Before project’s final operations are determined (e.g., habitat maintenance, sediment flushing, ramping flows, which subtract from volume of water available to make power), and before total project costs are known, it is inappropriate to tell survey subjects that the project will “meet nearly 50% of the Railbelt’s electrical demand.”	The reference regarding the Project being planned to help meet renewable energy goals has been removed. See Attachment 12-4.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	E. Executive Interviews – Goal of executive interviews is to gather more info about baseline conditions and potential project effects, not to “sell” project to recreationists.	AEA is striving to make the interview surveys to be clear and void of bias, see Attachment 12-4.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	E. Executive Interviews – Add brief description of new road, new power line, changes in natural flows downstream of Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project Dam, potential changes in snow and ice cover, etc., to executive survey intro.	The interview protocol has been revised, see Attachment 12-4.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	E. Executive Interviews – Would be useful to learn more about kinds of recreational experiences executive survey subjects seek in Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project area.	AEA expects to learn more about the kind of experiences being sought through the Executive Interviews and will also try and identify these factors in the Intercept/Mail/Web surveys. See Attachments 12-3, 12-6.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	E. Executive Interviews – “Day use areas” could be added to examples of new facilities in Q.7.	Day use areas have been added to the examples of new facilities in Question 7 (see Attachment 12-4).
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	E. Executive Interviews – Survey subjects: Based on 9/20/2012 meeting, appears that members of paddling clubs and highly skilled kayakers who have run Devils Canyon will be surveyed – good.	Comment noted.

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Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Northern Economics Survey Request – NPS disagrees w/ assumption that Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project will lead to “increases in visitation.” Some kinds of baseline project area uses will likely decrease post-project; e.g., hunting in area inundated by project reservoir, floating the upper Susitna River downstream from Denali Hwy., potentially activities dependent on existing amount of fish habitat and existing extent and duration of stable winter ice cover.	AEA believes that total project area visitation will increase with the development of the Project, even if some types of users may get displaced.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Northern Economics Survey Request – Recreational activities likely to be affected by Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project include kayaking and ATV use.	These activities are included in the survey plans.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Intercept Survey – NPS recognizes need to keep length of survey short so subjects will agree to complete it. Some questions seem more appropriate to a relicensing situation, where adequacy of existing licensee-provided facilities and mgmt. is under review. In Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project’s case, primary need is more info about baseline recreational use in area that could be affected by the project. Such use can be further characterized by attributes, such as experiences sought and opportunities provided to the public.	The importance of understanding quality of experience is described in Section 12.5.4; and built into the draft survey instrument in Attachment 12-3. The designs of the surveys consider length and level of detail to help avoid incomplete or poor quality responses. There is also a mail survey effort to capture more detail.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Intercept Survey, Q.3. – Why are subjects not being asked if they drove the Parks Hwy.?	This question will be adjusted according to location of the intercept survey. Attachment 12-3 is a sample for one area.

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Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Intercept Survey, Q.13. & 14. Quality of Experience and Crowdedness and Q.19. Experiences Sought – Re-order these questions. Put what is now Q.19. before Q.13.	The draft survey instrument has been revised accordingly, but it should be noted other factors in pre-testing may change survey question order.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Intercept Survey, Q.13. & 14. Quality of Experience and Crowdedness and Q.19. Experiences Sought – Re-word Q.13. and Q.14. to find out if project area lacks facilities or mgmt. that would enhance recreational experiences, if provided. Given low density, high dispersion of recreational use in Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project area, linear quality and crowdedness assessments are unlikely to yield info useful to project design and mgmt. decisions.	There may be some value in understanding adequacy of supply in the Project area, and even if the recreation experiences are mostly based on dispersed uses it generally is appropriate to query for the quality of the experience as related to numbers and density of other users.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Intercept Survey, Q.15., 16., 17. – These questions seem more appropriate for assessing how well existing recreation management plan is working at an existing hydro project, than for assessing probability of displacement from areas that will be utilized or affected by Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project. While there may be existing conflicts between visitors to Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project area, they are not necessarily AEA's responsibility to fix. Presumably AEA will want to exert – or be required to exert – more active mgmt. of project lands and waters post-construction, reducing conflicts due to littering, vandalism, gunfire too close to roads, trails and campsites, etc.	The survey questions are not intended to be based on AEA being a recreation provider, rather the intent is to understand how users in the area value the recreation experience and attributes regardless of who is managing the use.

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Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Intercept Survey, Q.15., 16., 17. – Until USNPS knows more about kinds of new recreational facilities Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project may provide; how project operations will affect boating, fishing, etc., downstream; and the mgmt. and access policies for the dam, road, transmission corridor right of way, reservoir, it will not be possible to design survey questions that will yield meaningful feedback on public preferences for such facilities and policies. Additional survey regarding such preferences will be needed after more is known about location of new road and transmission corridor, reservoir operations, boatability of the river downstream of the dam, etc.	Understanding preferences is useful early in the Project to inform the planning of possible recreation facilities. Future surveys may be warranted as well.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Intercept Survey, Q.20(f). & (g). – Ask subjects about adequacy of trails, trailheads.	Questions regarding trailheads and adequacy of trails are in the current draft of the intercept survey (see Attachment 12-4).
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Intercept Survey, Q.20(f). & (g). – Table should ask about need for Info. and Edu. resources: kiosks, signage, trail information, points of interest, geologic, historic and / or cultural information.	The need for information and educational resources is included in the interview plans.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Intercept Survey, Q.20(f). & (g). – Ask subjects about mgmt.: level of maintenance, staff presence, etc.	Questions regarding facility management were considered, but due to concern about survey length these are not included in the current draft of the intercept survey. This line of question will be considered in the design of the mail survey.

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Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Intercept Survey, Q.21. & 22. – Reverse order of these questions to ascertain which areas are most important to visitors before assessing whether anything interfered w/ their aesthetic enjoyment. Note that USNPS Aesthetic Resources study plan request included natural sounds, not just scenic values.	The final order of questions (survey flow) will be determined during pre-testing of the survey instruments.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Intercept Survey, Q.23. – Question should be closer to start of survey. It provides context for many more specific questions that follow. Could be combined with Q.10. to help keep survey from being too long.	While this change was made, the final order of questions (survey flow) will be determined during pre-testing of the survey instruments.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Intercept Survey, Q.24. – Determine party size earlier in survey. It is an important recreational attribute; it's important to capture this info before subjects potentially abandon the interview.	While party size is important to understand up front, the final order of questions (survey flow) will be determined during pre-testing of the survey instruments.
Memo	09/20/2012		NPS	Incidental Observation Survey – Possible to get update on effectiveness of this survey prior to release of the 2012 study report?	We had limited responses as noted in TWG meeting of 10/03/12. However, it appears the instrument's design is effective. Follow-up with selected contractors will be conducted to gather additional information regarding their recreational use observations while in the study area. No design changes are expected to the Incidental Observation Survey. This form is shown in Attachment 12-1.
Aesthetic Resources Study (Section 12.6)					
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.6.2. Existing Info & Need for Additional Info – Despite what PSP states, there was no aesthetics inventory (as would be understood by that term in 2011-12 as opposed to 1984, in the PAD).	Section 12.6.2 has been updated to clarify.

Comment Format	Comment Date	Licensing Participant Name	Licensing Participant Affiliation	Comment	Response
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.6.2. Existing Info & Need for Additional Info – PSP states “Through the prior processes, the FERC scoping process and incorporation of work group and other licensing participant recommendations, study methods for 2013-2014 were developed.” This is incorrect, they are still being developed. This is strange language to include in a <i>proposed</i> study plan. NPS has had little time, opportunity to see products and engage consultants so far; it is extremely premature to claim this as <i>fait accompli</i> .	Section 12.6.2.describes the study plans as being under development.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.6.3. Study Area – Limiting downstream scope of this and other studies to Talkeetna is unfounded. Until results of the instream flow, ice, fluvial geomorphology, fish, and other studies are available, cannot say how far downstream project’s measurable effects on visual, auditory resources will go. Vehemently disagree w/ this premature decision, which contradicts statements elsewhere in this and other PSPs acknowledging need to rely on the results of other studies.	Sections 12.5.3, 12.6.3, 12.7.3 have been edited to reflect that the study area may be changed if information from other disciplines established Project-related effects related to aesthetics extend further downstream.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.6.4. Study Methods, Estab. Key Observation Points (KOPs) – Does NPS, other resource agencies and stakeholders, get a say on KOPs? When? This is supposed to be “The Plan”, not a plan to plan.	Final target analysis locations will be selected and mapped following continued interdisciplinary coordination and continued licensing participant consultation during study implementation as noted in Section 12.6.3.

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Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.6.4. Study Methods, Visual Distance Zones – No mention of assessing aesthetics of varying flows. This is a high volume glacial river flowing at up to 25 mph – the sight, sound of flows, color of water, mixing at clear water tributaries are major components of river-related recreation. Need to do this at KOPs along the river, in all seasons, using videography (sound).	Varying flows will be the subject of analysis. Distinguishing specific areas of concentration and characteristics thereof are part of the study plan – for analysis in 2013-14. The process for determining sound monitoring areas is outlined in the study plan.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.6.4. Study Methods, Visual Distance Zones – Need to add to sound analysis.	This is mentioned in <i>Seasonal Surveys of Ambient Sound Levels</i> , Section 12.6.4.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.6.4. Study Methods, Seasonal Surveys of Ambient Sound Levels – When does NPS decide where the 4 LT and 16 ST locations will be?	This is part of the study implementation as outlined in the study plan, see Table 12.6-3. Quarterly technical advisory meetings will be held to collaborate with agencies, as noted in Section 12.6.3.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.6.4. Study Methods, Seasonal Surveys of Ambient Sound Levels – What if NPS thinks there should be more?	Now is the time to comment on proposed survey intervals, however there is ability during study implementation to add or subtract from sites.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.6.4. Study Methods, Seasonal Surveys of Ambient Sound Levels – Need to agree about this prior to 10/15/2012. NPS would like to have enough advance detail to involve NPS Soundscapes staff in reviewing this methodology.	Section 12.6.4 has been updated to identify the relationship between sound and visual sites. Section 12.6.3 notes that AEA intends to involve a technical advisory committee to further evaluate the site choices.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.6.6. Schedule – Schedule is very short; no work is conducted in any December.	AEA is not planning field surveys in December and January as it typically is a period of extreme cold and lack of daylight. Discussed in Section 12.5.4.

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Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.6.6. Schedule – Initial study report is scheduled for 12/13/2012 – will this allow integration of results of other biophysical studies?	To the extent “results” are available – most studies are in the data collection phase. The study plan refers to this study as preliminary data and reconnaissance.
Recreation Boating/River Access Study (Section 12.7)					
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	Consider changing title of study to “Flow Dependent Recreation,” reflecting broader affected activities beyond boating and fishing.	The study plan name has changed to River Recreation Flow and Access Study.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	Study’s title, some initial statements about scope are contradictory. Study goal is not merely to contribute data concerning recreational boating and access – it is to look at all forms of flow-dependent recreation. Includes activities like fishing that are affected by flows, regardless of whether recreationalists are doing it in a boat or from shore.	The study plan has been revised throughout Section 12.7 to reference to a variety of forms of flow-dependent recreation.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	Aesthetics can be flow-dependent (stillwater in res. v. free-flowing stream; lost sight, sound of whitewater at high flows in DC; morphological, vegetation changes downstream due to changed flow regime). No mention of this in Recreation or Aesthetics PSPs.	This is implicit in “flow preferences”, discussed throughout Section 12.6 and 12.7.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	No mention of whether impacts on recreation access and experiences due to changed ice, snow cover resulting from changed flow regime will be assessed under this PSP. This should be included.	All of Section 12 has been revised to reference ice and snow cover/conditions.

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Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.7.1. Gen. Description of Proposed Study, Study Goals & Objectives – PSP includes “developing flow preference curves for each major river reach by type of use and equipment” as a study goal and objective. Unlikely that a preference curve can be developed for winter activities that require stable river ice. It will either be present or absent. What method will be used to assess this effect?	The methods outlined in Section 12.7 are dependent upon results of ice studies (from another discipline) and also dependent upon data gathered from surveys noted in Sections 12.7 and 12.5. Preferred frozen conditions for the Susitna River are intended to be obtained from the recreation surveys as discussed in 12.5.4.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.7.3. Study Area – Do not understand the statement: “areas where the proposed reservoir would create the most flow changes.” What is threshold for “most”? Who decides? When? Even assuming consensus on the standard to be used, how can this decision be made before the results of the instream flow, flow routing, ice processes, etc. studies are in hand? What if NPS, others disagree w/ AEA’s geographic scope decision? Needs to be nailed down by 10/15/2012.	This statement has been deleted from Section 12.7.3. Based on agency input, recreation river-dependent flow now covers all river recreational transportation modes, with no distinction of flow effects.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.7.3. Study Area – Unfounded for AEA to arbitrarily stop Recreation River Flow Study at Talkeetna River.	Sections 12.5.3, 12.6.3, 12.7.3 have been edited to reflect that the study area may be changed if information from other disciplines established Project-related effects related to aesthetics extend further downstream.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.7.3. Study Area – Contradicts prior commitments to rely on results of other studies to inform impacts on recreation. Those studies will not be completed for several years.	Study plan does not indicate “final” results; rather, they are considered to be interim results. See Section 12.7.3.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.7.4. Study Methods – Underscores why NPS needs to see proposed survey instruments, protocol, etc., to determine if Recreation Survey adequately addresses these issues.	Drafts have been provided. Attachments 12-4, 5.

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Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.7.6. Schedule – No info about when / how Level 1 – 3 analyses fit in w/ this schedule.	The study plan no longer includes Level 1-3 analyses. The study plan now assesses field investigations and interviews, and all river transportation, for all three river reaches. Schedule is presented in Table 12.7-2.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.7.6. Schedule – Need specifics and agreement on who makes mid-point decisions to proceed (e.g., from Level 1 to 2, or 2 to 3, based on what criteria).	The study plan no longer includes Level 1-3 analyses.
Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.7.6. Schedule – Only 1 winter and 1 summer of study, and no Novembers or Decembers. This does not indicate a sincere concern for impacts on winter recreation. Arguably, AK's winter recreation season is longer than its summer season. It is certainly important to users, purveyors of equipment, local economy.	Section 12.7.6 now reflects field visits/surveys in all four seasons. There are no proposed intercept surveys in December through January because of concern of the safety of surveyors in recreation study, see Section 12.5.4.
No Memo	08/07/2012		NPS	10.7.6. Schedule – 1 yr. of study is not an adequate sample size to support conclusions about important flow-dependent activities like sport fishing, float hunting. Note emergency Chinook closure this year – how can AEA study the most sought-after fish species in SC AK if harvest is prohibited during the only year of the study? Likewise, upland game hunting season is dependent on variable weather, etc. One season is not enough to document baseline opportunities and experiences when they are dependent on highly variable interannual conditions.	Historical data will also be integrated into the analysis. Most information gathering will occur during 2013. There is a provision to capture data in 2014 in the event that unusual circumstances or events do not allow the capture of data in 2013. See Table 12.7-2.
TWG Meeting	08/09/2012	Wilcox	FERC	Request for list of potential locations of KOP's, intercept survey locations, and more description of river reaches/access.	See responses above.

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TWG meeting	09/20/2012	Miller	NOAA	a)Prefers analysis go downstream of Talkeetna. b)indicated ADF&G Statewide Angler/log book surveys are biased. c) Suggestions as to Intercept survey sites.	See responses above.

General guidance when populating/reviewing table

- The table is intended to summarize all substantive agency/participant input of any form specific to the study plans. The objective is to show the agencies/participants and FERC that AEA heard the comment and then explain how AEA responded/addressed that comment.
- Comment Format: Letter, TWG Meeting, Phone Conversation, E-mail, Other Meeting, Site Visit, etc. since the filing of the PSP July 16, 2012.
- Comment Date: Month/Day/Year - xx/xx/xxxx (for meetings, use the date of the engagement, rather than the date the meeting summary was finalized; for formal comments filed with FERC, use the date on the letter/document).
- Comment: Will be a verbatim excerpt of the relevant text, except in the case of formal study requests (that includes detailed descriptions of FERC’s seven study criteria), where instead a “see study request, [study request title], in [affiliation]’s letter” will be the comment.
- Response: Could be “Section x.x.x of the study plan has been revised to address this comment”, or “Figure/Table x.x-x has been updated to address this comment”. If the comment is only partly accepted and text updated, then state where the changes are reflected but also the rationale for not making all of the recommended changes (or if there is proposing an alternative method). If AEA is not adopting any of the requested change, then a rationale needs to be provided.
- Comment Entered (Date, Initials): Because the table will be continually being updated (comments entered, responses drafted, and reviews of the table conducted), when the table is checked out and a comment(s) entered into the table, the date of entry and by who (initials) will be noted in the last column. This information is for internal tracking purposes only, and therefore, will be removed before the table is integrated into the final master RSP document.