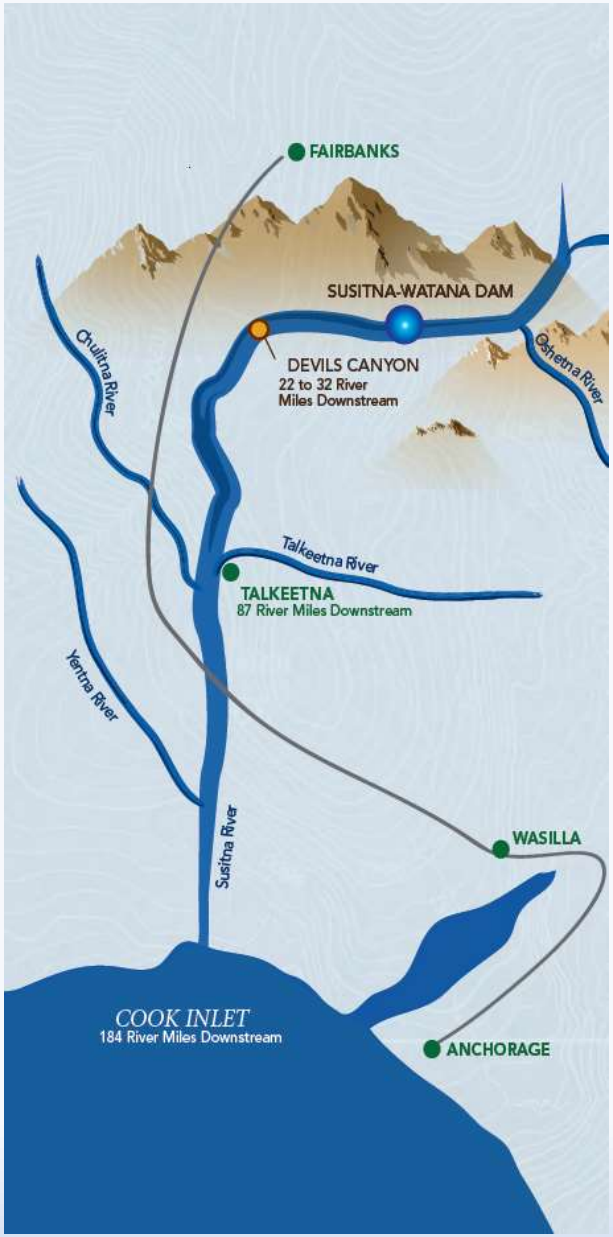


Initial Study Report Meeting

Study 12.6 Aesthetic Resources

October 23, 2014

Prepared by

URS Corporation

Study 12.6 Objectives

The study objectives, established in **RSP Section 12.6.1**, are to:

- **Inventory and document** baseline aesthetic (e.g., visual, auditory) conditions within the Aesthetic Resources Study area.

- **Evaluate the potential effects** to aesthetic resources that may result from construction and operation of the proposed Project.

Study 12.6 Status

Visual Resources

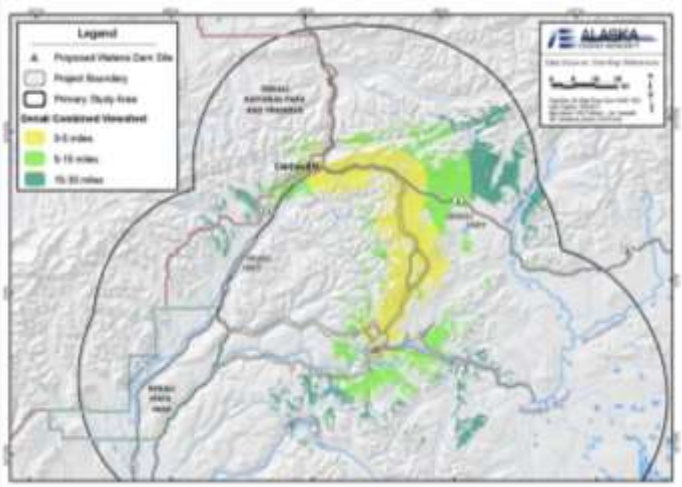
- Viewshed Modeling
- Analysis Locations
- Baseline Data Collection
- Photosimulations

Soundscape

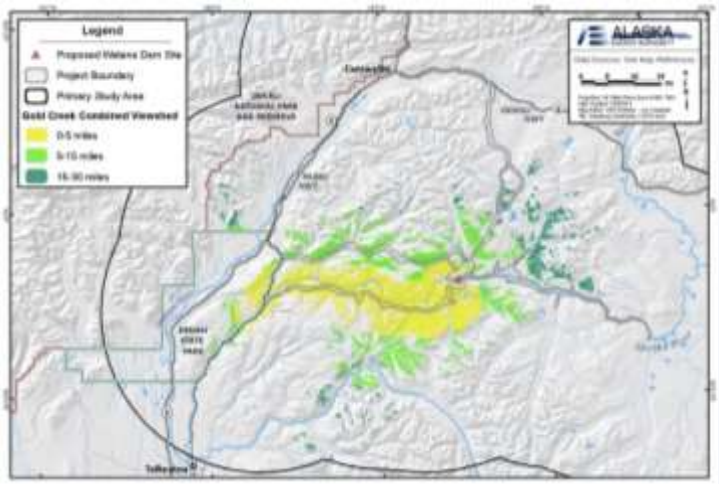
- Baseline Data Collection

Study 12.6 Status – Viewshed Modelling

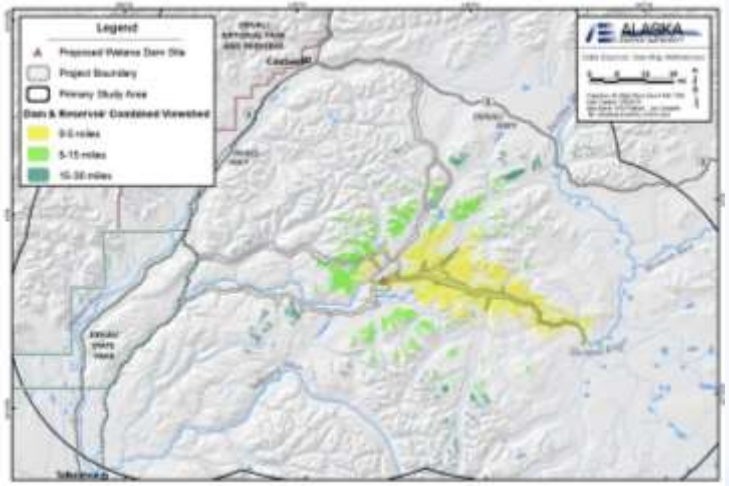
Denali Corridor



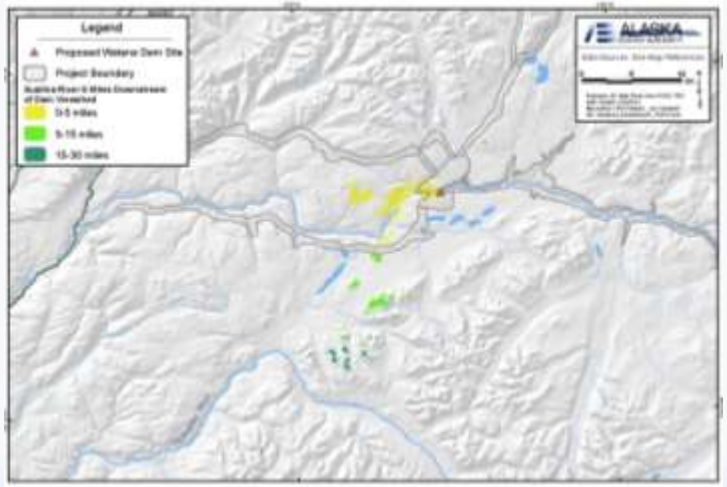
Gold Creek Corridor



Reservoir

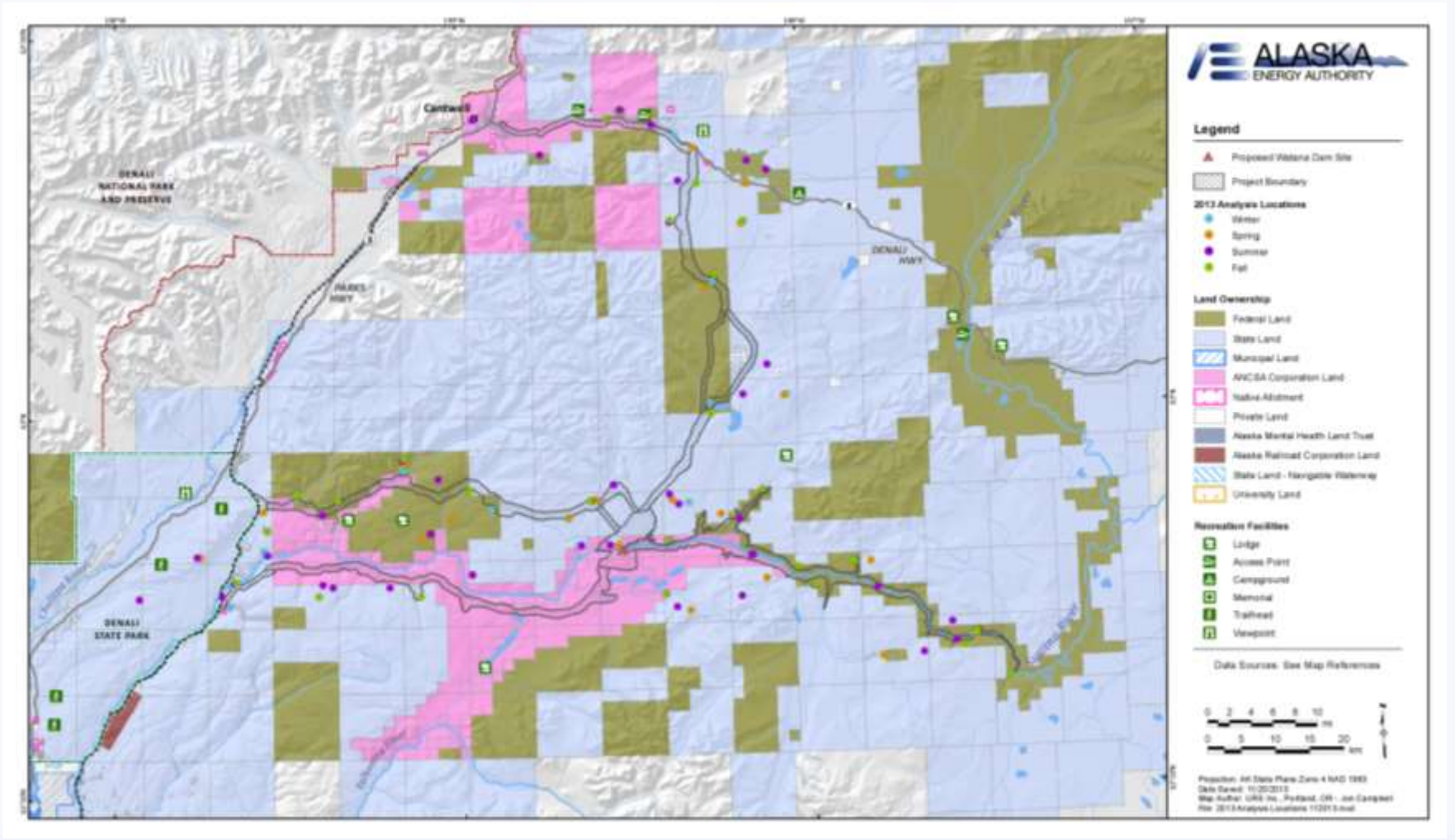


Downriver from Dam



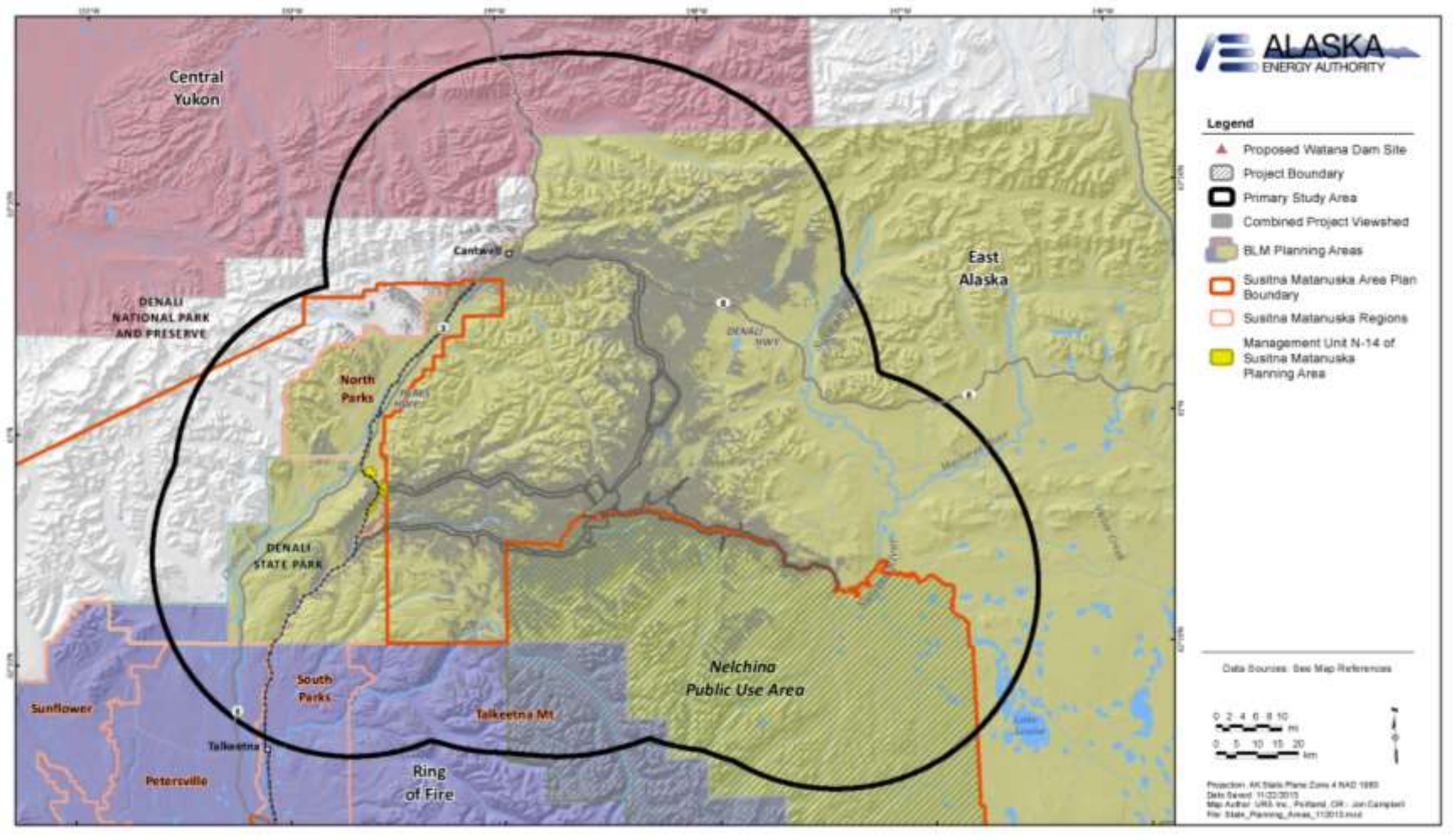
- No variances occurred in methods used to develop viewshed models

Study 12.6 Status – Analysis Locations



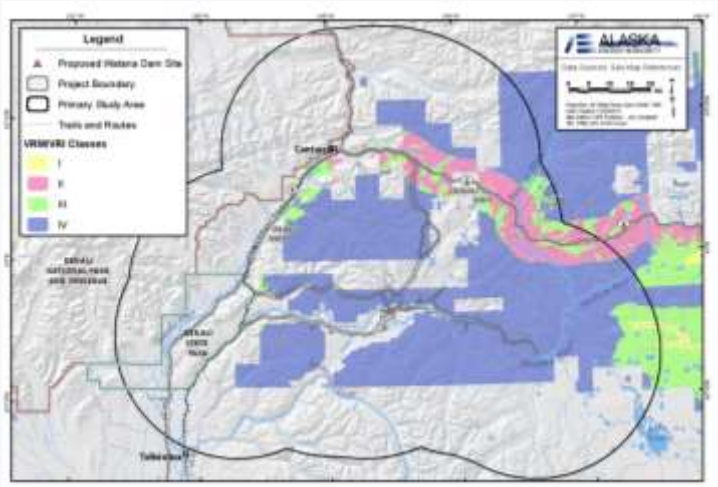
- No variances occurred in methods used to select Analysis Locations

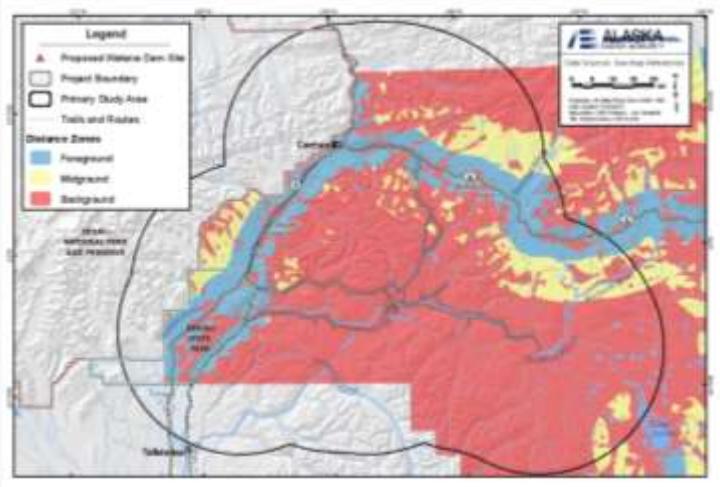
Study 12.6 Status – Baseline Data Collection

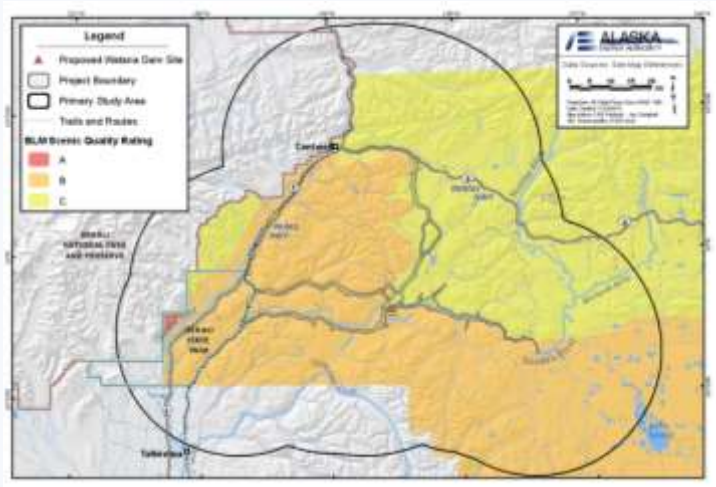


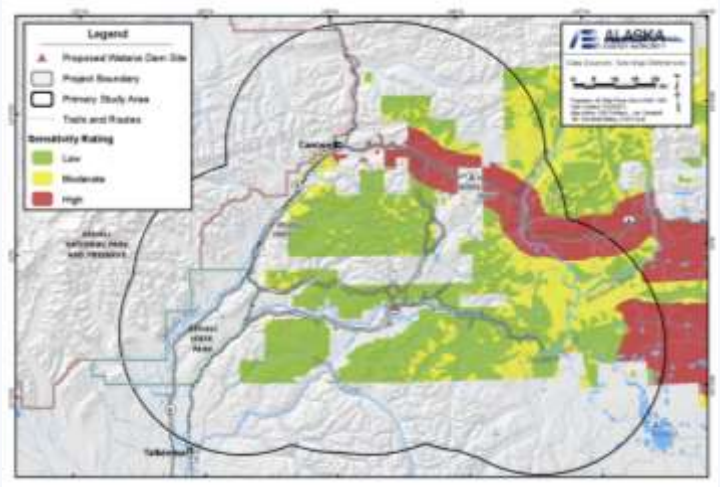
- No variances occurred in methods used to conduct Plan review

Study 12.6 Status – Baseline Data Collection









- No variances occurred in methods used to gather baseline data

Study 12.6 Status – Baseline Data Collection

Location Information		
AL Number: SU173	**AL Type:** LCP	**Date(s) Surveyed:** 7/21/13
Jurisdiction: Federal	**Land Owner / Mgmt. Agency:** BLM	**Simulated View:**
Location Name: Nenana River Overlook		
Description:		
Landscape Character Type: Chulitna-Nenana River Valley		**Season:** Summer
AL Focus: South toward Nenana River, Denali Corridor, and Denali Highway		**Co-dominant/Dominant Viewer Direction:**
AL Distance Zone(s): FM / B		**Approximate Distance to Project (miles):** 0.7
Landscape Visibility		
Context of Viewers (Existing): N/A (LCP)		
Context of Viewers (Post-Project): To be determined.		
Metrics		
Scenic Attractiveness: A		**Scenic Integrity:** High
Rationale: Landscape character attributes of the colorful, rugged mountains; bright mosaic of green colors across the valley; the Nenana River; and Denali Highway combine to provide variety in visual elements. The enclosure of the landscape and extent of views to the west contribute to positive aspects of unity, coherence, and harmony to result in scenic quality that is unique and outstanding within this portion of the study area. Scenic integrity is high as the valued landscape character appears intact.		
Landscape Absorption: Moderate to low due to the dense spruce forest located adjacent to the Denali Highway. Some increase in absorption could be achieved in areas located immediately adjacent to the Highway.		
Narrative		
Purpose: SU173 is situated on BLM land located north of the Denali Highway and Nenana River. The purpose of this AL is to assess potential change in visual resources that may result from construction and operation of the Denali Corridor, including the proposed transmission line and associated right-of-way and potential improvements to the Denali Highway. The view being analyzed is directed to the south and provides the perspective of a superior (elevated) viewing position. The AL type is an LCP. **Landscape Character:** SU173 is within the Chulitna-Nenana River Valley River Valley LCT. The landscape appears as a broad, U-shaped river valley that is large scale. To the south, views are limited to the foreground/middleground distance zone by the Chulitna Mountains. Downriver to the west, views extend to the background and seldom seen distance zones. Though distinct earthen colored domes and peaks are evident in the mountain ranges, the silhouette of the ridgeline appears largely contiguous. Exposed rock at the mountain tops is rugged and rough with directional lines from grey scree. Colors are brown, grey, black, and pink. Color is dominated by the mosaic of greens imparted by spruce trees and upland shrubs/tundra vegetation. Spruce forest is dense and contiguous across the		

valley floor, creating irregular diagonal to curved lines at the upper edge of their elevation distribution The Nenana River is a dominant feature, appearing as a flat, smooth, wide, reflective, and grey line tha winds in and out of visibility. The Denali Highway, located above the river to the south, appears as a straight to broadly curving grey line characterized by intermittent visibility as it passes through the gently hills of the river valley.

The proposed Denali Corridor would be situated immediately south of and parallel to the Denali Highway, approximately 0.7 miles south of AL SU173. Since the transmission line right-of-way would follow the Denali Highway, it would not introduce a new line type to the landscape, although it would appear larger and thicker.

- No variances occurred in methods used to assess baseline data

Study 12.6 Status - Soundscape

- **Unattended long-term (LT) monitors** -- minimum of 24 continuous hours and up to a single week
- **Attended short-term (ST) monitors**-- deployed for 15-20 minutes duration each.

Variances

- No variances occurred in methods used to measure baseline soundscape

Study 12.6 Status – Assessment of Downriver Study Area

Methods

- **Question-Answer** approach to substantiating the downstream determination made in the June 2014 ISR Study 12.6.

- For each question, a set of **indicators** was established to inform a response to each question.

- **Interdisciplinary Coordination** -- Recreation Resources (Study 12.5), Recreation River Flow and Access (Study 12.7), the Fish and Aquatics Instream Flow (Study 8.5), Geomorphology (Study 6.5), Riparian Vegetation (Study 11.6), and Ice Processes (Study 7.6).

Study 12.6 Status – Assessment of Downriver Study Area

Results Based on OS-1a and OS-1b

- Changes to river flow, stage, sediment load, and ice cover in the Lower River Segment would occur; however they are considered to be within the normal range of variability.

- The Lower River Segment expected to remain a wide, low-gradient, braided, and turbid river.

- River uses not expected to change; consequently there would be no shift in predominant viewer groups.

- As such, extending the Aesthetics Resources Study downstream of Talkeetna is not warranted.

Steps to Complete Study 12.6

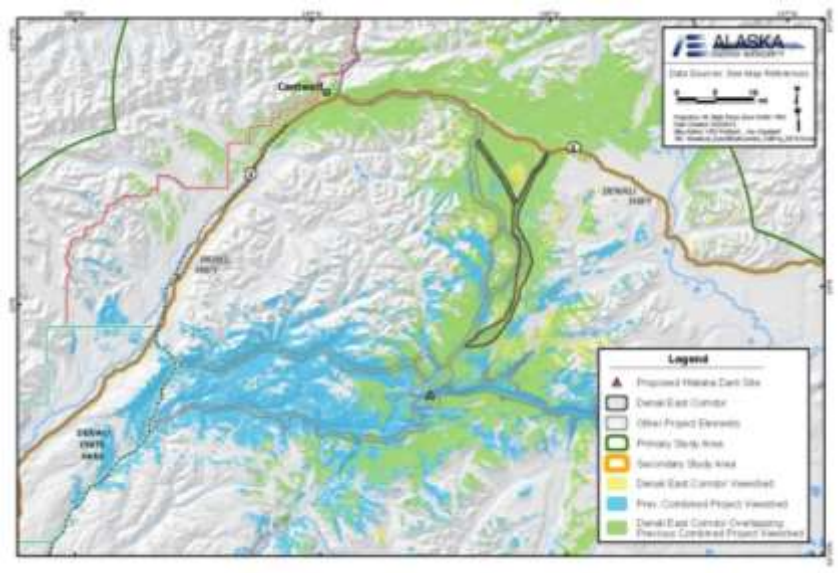
To complete this study, AEA will implement the methods in the Study Plan except as described in Section 7.1.2. These activities include:

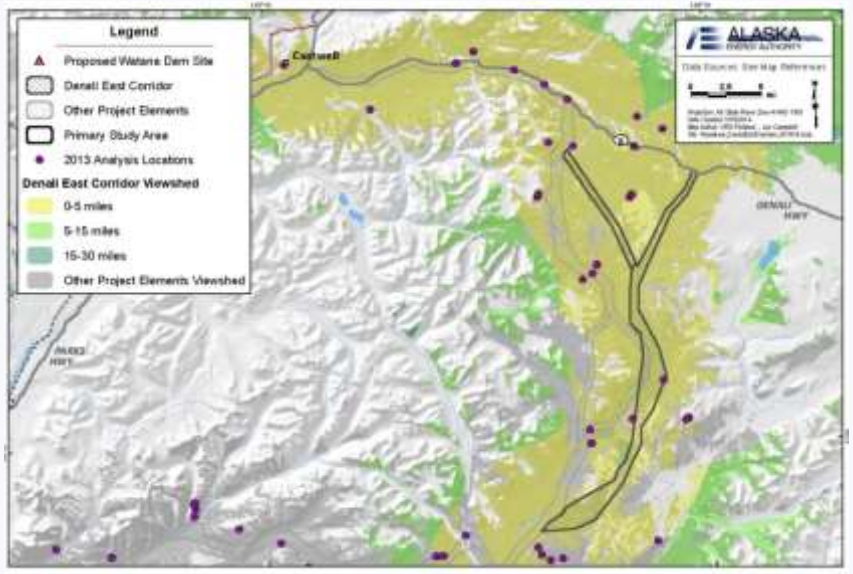
- **Develop viewshed models** for pre- and post-Project conditions of the inundation zone of the Susitna River to depict expected changes in viewshed areas (RSP Section 12.6.4)
- **Baseline data collection** of basic landscape components (RSP Section 12.6.4)
- Complete **Focus Groups** (RSP Section 12.6.4)
- Produce **photosimulations** to illustrate the expected visibility of Project components (RSP Section 12.6.4)
- **Modeling of Project sound levels** to complete the soundscape analysis (RSP Section 12.6.4)

Modifications to Study 12.6

- No modifications to the Study Plan methods are needed to complete the study and meet the Study Plan objectives.

- However, the study area has changed from that described in the RSP (Section 12.6.3) with the addition of the Denali East Option road and transmission line corridor to the study area.





Licensing Participants Proposed Modifications to Study 12.6?

- Agencies
- CIRWG members and Ahtna
- Public