

HUNTER EDUCATION &
INDOOR SHOOTING RANGE
Fairbanks, Alaska

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



Prepared by the
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Statewide Design and Engineering Services

in cooperation with the
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
and the
United States Fish and Wildlife Service

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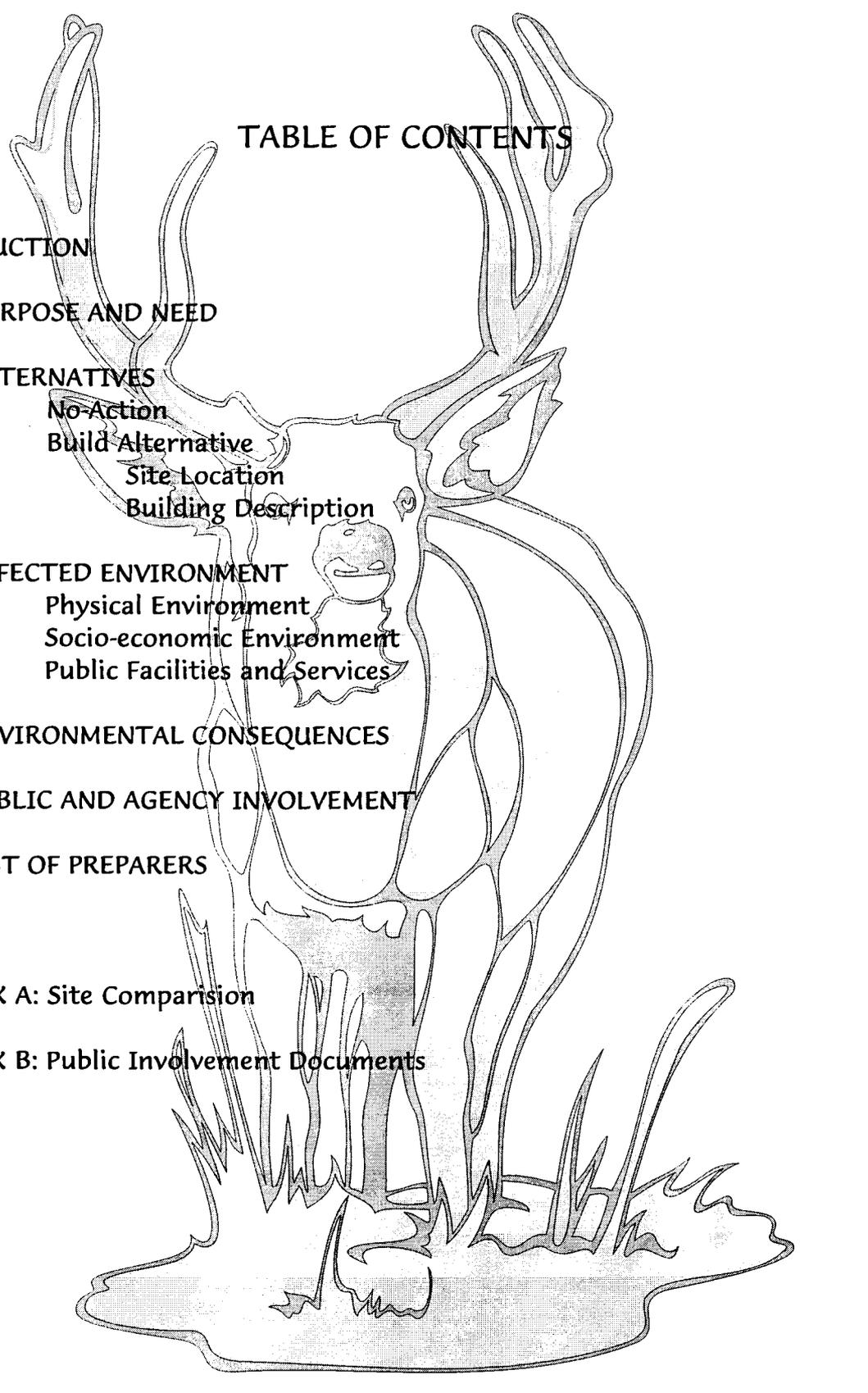


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INTRODUCTION

In 1987 the Alaska Legislature included into the Capitol Improvements Program (CIP) funding for a Hunters Education Building for Fairbanks Alaska. The summarization for this CIP included a 16 point rifle-pistol indoor range, classrooms and storage areas for hunter education classes. Funding for the proposed facility comes from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS) and State Fish and Game funds. These funds are provided by user license and tag fees, and equipment taxes.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) entered into a cooperative agreement with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) for the ADOT&PF to provide engineering expertise for both design and construction management. A steering committee from user groups and the community was also established by the ADF&G to guide the development of the proposed project.



Chapter I

PURPOSE AND NEED

The community of Fairbanks requested the proposed project because of the lack of comparable facilities that are open and available to all. The indoor shooting ranges that currently exist in Fairbanks are open only to members. Thus for many people there is no available in-door shooting range. The Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) maintains an outdoor shooting range that is open to all. However, this facility is not conducive to teaching multiple students. Nor is there any facility provided for classroom instruction.

The proposed facility would provide: 1) hunter education training, 2) basic firearms training, 3) home firearms safety classes, 4) organized shooting programs, i.e. for 4-H clubs and schools, 5) training and classrooms, 6) competitive events, and 7) public



shooting. Additionally, the facility could be used for bow hunting training and testing. This latter use would be compatible with the existing program for bow hunters.

Chapter II

ALTERNATIVES

A. No-action:

This alternative is self-explanatory-nothing would be done. Without this facility, the ADF&G hunter education program would continue to be compromised by the difficulty in finding adequate classroom space and the lack of a safe firing range. Additionally, without this facility there would continue to be no indoor shooting range available to the general public.

B. Build Alternative:

1. Site Location: The ADF&G sent out a 'request' for possible site location. One response was received; from the Tanana Valley Sportsmen Association. This organization proposed using their land west of the University Avenue/Airport Way intersection. Additionally, the College Road site -west of Danaby Street, owned by the ADF&G was considered. The two sites were evaluated prior to a final decision being made. (See Appendix A) The site on College Road was selected for the proposed facility: the College Road land is already owned by the ADF&G and its proximity to the department and personnel. In addition to the expense of either acquiring the land or leasing it, costs would be saved by the ADF&G in operational costs because of its proximity to the regional offices.

2. Building Description: The facility will be approximately 11,000 square feet in a one-story rectangular building. Setbacks from property lines, access points and parking are designed to the latest engineering standards. The site will be landscaped and as much existing vegetation retained so that the facility will fit-in with the neighborhood. The shooting range will initially have 10 'points' (or firing lines). The firing line will be at least 50 feet with a 15-foot safety landing behind the lanes. Future expansion would accommodate another 10 points.

Classrooms will accommodate up to 90 occupants for training and meetings. Bathrooms and storage areas will be included. Storage for classroom materials and shooting

accessories is also proposed for the facility.

Approximately 50 parking spaces for guests will be provided as well as a loading and unloading zone for larger vehicles. The facility will have the normal utility hook-ups such as water, sewer, and power. The building's design takes into consideration the potential noise levels associated with the shooting of firearms.

The training facility is expected to be used daily including weekends. Many classes and events would also be scheduled during evenings, and it is expected that the greatest traffic to the site will be during the "off" peak traffic hours. Ingress/egress to the site will be from College Road, and conform to highway standards.

Potential users include young shooters from scouting and 4-H clubs, high school teams, and other organizations. Hunter education and safety training will be offered for all age participants. Competitive events are also foreseen. When there are no events scheduled the facility will be open and available to the public for practice and target shooting.



It is important that the facility be a good neighbor and fit-in with its environs. For example, access will be from an arterial street, not a residential street. Greenbelts are planned to separate the building and parking lot from adjacent properties. Building setbacks will comply with borough standards.

Chapter III

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A. Physical Environment:

Fairbanks is located in the Tanana Valley of Interior Alaska. The city and the project area are essentially flat though surrounded by hills to the north, west and east. College Road and the project site lie within the Chena River floodplain. Prior investigations by the ADOT/PF indicate that the Chena River floodplain in this area is composed of 0 to 11 feet of silt and sandy silt overlying interbedded layers and lenses of silty sand, sand, gravelly sand and sandy gravel. The gravelly material contains no rocks larger than 2 inches in diameter.

COLLEGE ROAD

CURB CUT & DRIVEWAY

PROPERTY LINE
LOCATION NOT DEFINED

50' VEGETATIVE
BUFFER LINE

50' SETBACK LINE

EXISTING TREE LINE

EXISTING TREE LINE

NEW TREE LINE

LIGHT POLE

LIGHT POLE

GRAVEL PARKING LOT
TOTAL PARKING SPACES
30 SPACES

PAVED
PARKING

ADDITIONAL
PARKING

50' VEGETATIVE
BUFFER LINE

WATER'S EDGE

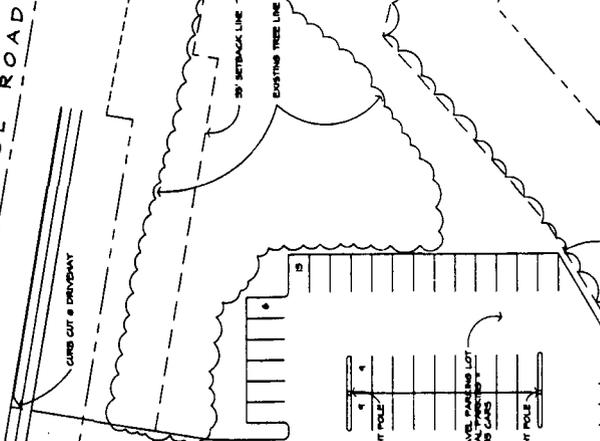
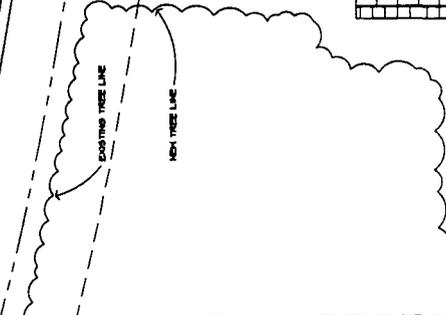
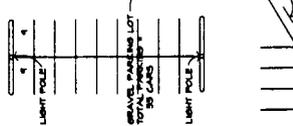
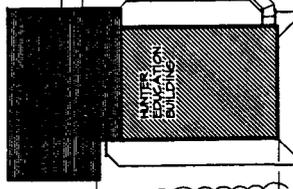
NOTES SLOUGH

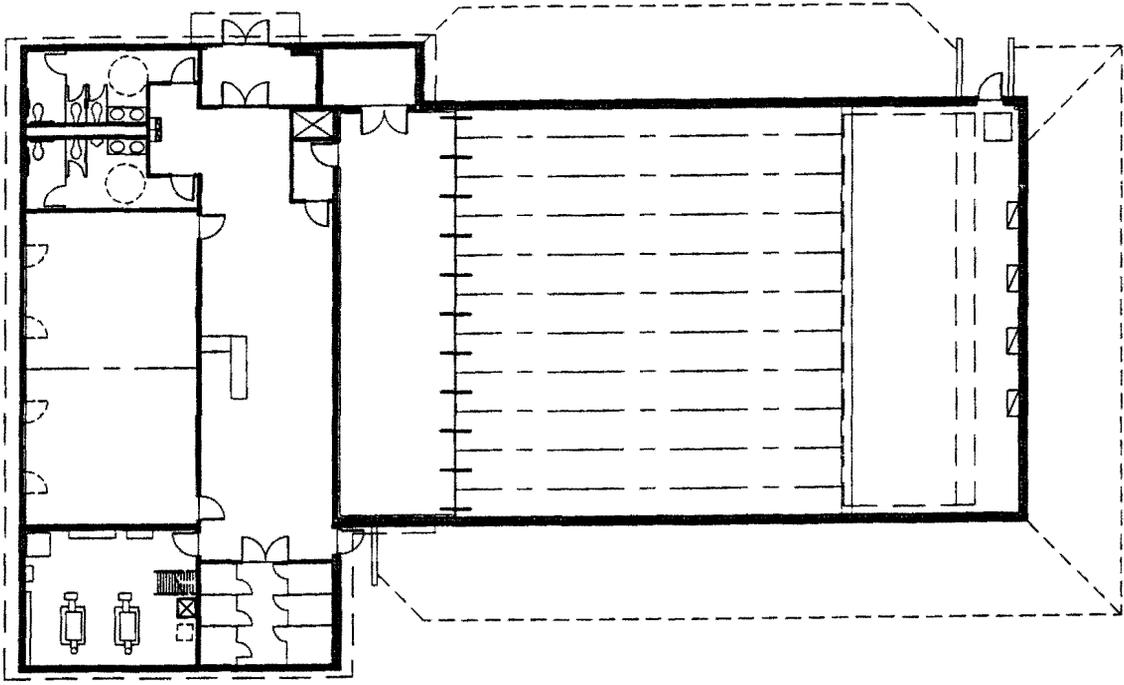
ADDITIONAL
PARKING

50' VEGETATIVE
BUFFER LINE

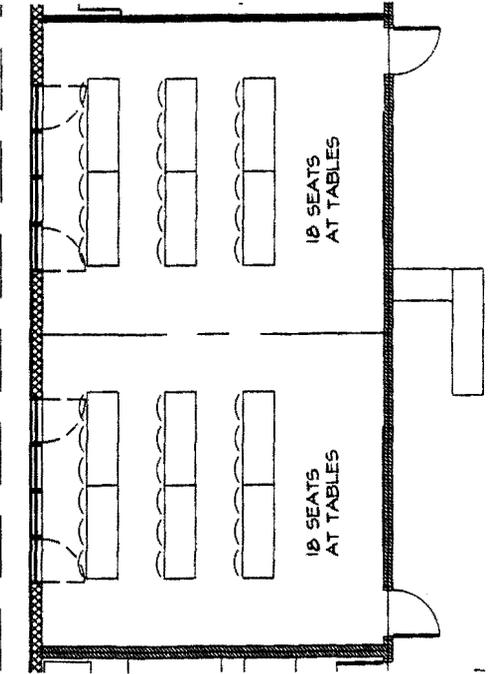
ADDITIONAL
PARKING

PARTIAL SITE PLAN
1" = 50'
NORTH

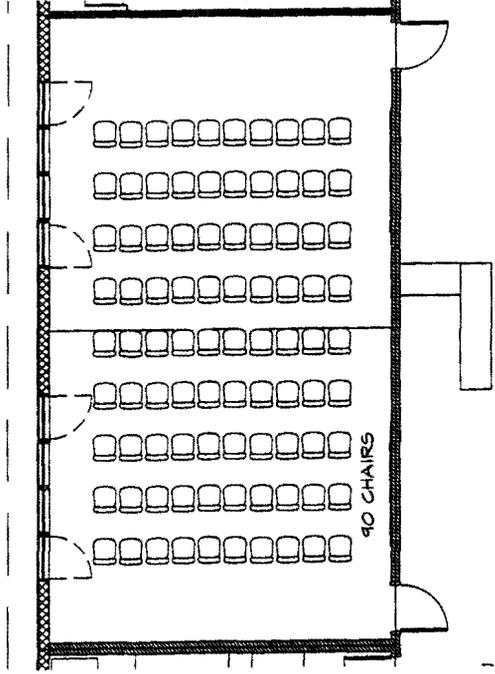




FLOOR PLAN I
1/8" = 1'-0"



CLASSROOM SETUP 1
1/4" = 1'-0"



CLASSROOM SETUP 2
1/4" = 1'-0"

The water table averages 12 feet below the surface. Seasonal fluctuations in the water table occur throughout the year attaining a high in the summer months and a low in the late winter months.

Surface water resources in the project area includes Noyes Slough. Because Noyes Slough is an anabranch to the Chena River (a diverging branch of a stream that reenters the original channel), the water level of the slough is determined in large part by the Chena's water level. Prior studies indicate that five percent of the Chena River is diverted through Noyes Slough (USKH, 1982:35). Often times, during the late summer months Noyes Slough dries up and there are scattered pockets of stagnant water.

Boats that can navigate the stream during high water are limited in size by bridges, beaver dams and log jams and, of course, water level. Recreationalists use Noyes Slough for snowmobiling and dog mushing, and during wetter summers canoeing.

The ADF&G has determined that Noyes Slough is capable of supporting fish. A representative sample of the variety of fish 'likely' to live in the slough include several species of whitefish, salmon, arctic grayling, slimy sculpins, burbot, arctic lamprey, long nose sucker and northern pike.

Animal species historically common to the area include bear, moose, several furbearers, small mammals and birds. Some species are no longer seen in the area due to urban development. Noyes Slough does support a healthy population of muskrats and beaver though. The numerous beaver dams along the slough tend to restrict flow and hinder recreational boaters.

Migratory waterfowl have been enticed over the years to stop-over in Creamer's Field during spring and fall migration. The proposed site is across the street from the field and because of the overgrowth of willow and shrubs the site is not as conducive to waterfowl as the fields across the street are.

B. Socio-economic Environment:

College Road was originally a trail leading to the Ester mining district approximately 10 miles northwest of Fairbanks. When the University of Alaska was established in 1917, the trail was slowly converted to a road and called the College Highway. As Fairbanks, College and the university grew during the 1920's and 1930's land abutting College Road was farmed or largely undeveloped. After World War II, the

eastern portion of College Road was subdivided for residential use. This land between the Alaska Railroad tracks and Creamer's Dairy Farm, was named Lemeta. By 1948, aerial photographs of Fairbanks show Lemeta with the residential streets laid out and a few homes. During the 1950's Lemeta continued to develop and by the 1960's was a well-established neighborhood. During this time and into the 1970's, College Road through Lemeta became a street lined with businesses. The land use along the road changed over the ensuing decades as malls and larger stores moved into the Fairbanks area. Today, many of the businesses abutting the road corridor are offices.

C. Public Facilities and Services: College Road is classified as a major arterial in Fairbanks, and as such, traffic along the road's corridor is a mix of vehicle types. College Road is served by bus service. Other modes of transportation include pedestrians and bicyclists. Existing shared pedestrian/bicycle sidewalks are on both sides of the roadway. They have been designated by the borough as bike routes and are delineated as such in the area bike plan.



Recreational facilities are in the project area. The Fairbanks Lions Recreational Area is on the south side of College Road, while across College Road is the ADF&G Creamer's Viewing area and recreational trails. Under the Federal Highway Administration, a project recently upgraded the viewing area and installed amenities for the public's viewing pleasure.

Chapter IV

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The following matrix summarizes the environmental consequences that could be expected from the proposed project. When a potential negative impact is identified, mitigation to eliminate or lessen its possible affects are presented.

Throughout project development, the ADF&G identified issues and concerns of the public related to the proposed facility. The early and continuous public involvement has ensured that potential issues have been resolved during design. Thus mitigation measures to negate adverse impacts such as in-door air quality and noise levels are incorporated into the facility.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Environmental Consequences	Involvement	Mitigation Measures and Additional Comments
Threatened or Endangered Species	None	
Biotic Communities: Vegetation	√	The site's overgrowth consists of willow, shrub and black spruce. Existing vegetation adjacent to the roadway will be maintained to provide a natural screening for the site, excluding driveway access. Riparian vegetation will also be retained by incorporation of a 50-foot buffer adjacent to Noyes Slough.
Wildlife	√-minor	Minor opportunity for wildlife to inhabit the area.
Fisheries	√	Noyes Slough; however with the 50' buffer zone between the slough and the construction site, no adverse impacts are anticipated.
Farmland: Prime or Unique	None	
Statewide or Local Importance	None	
Coastal Zone	None	
Coastal Barriers	None	
Water Quality	√	The 50-foot buffer will serve to protect the slough's water quality.
Water body Modifications	No	
Wetland Involvement	No	

Environmental Consequences	Involvement	Mitigation Measures and Additional Comments
Floodplain	√	Protected from a 100-flood event by the Chena Flood Control Project.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	None	
Historical/Archaeological Resources	None	Formal coordination between the ADOT/PF and the SHPO on an earlier project on College Road indicates that there are no known or suspected cultural, historical, or archaeological resources at the proposed site.
Air Quality: Non-Attainment Area	√	Traffic generated by the facility is not significant enough to alter the CO levels.
In-door air quality	√-minor	Expressed concern regarding lead from shooting will be mitigated by air filtration specifically designed for in-door shooting ranges.
Noise	None	Traffic generated by the facility would not increase the noise levels along the road. The building's insulation will take into consideration the noise generated by the indoor range.
Visual/Aesthetics	√	Landscaping of the site includes leaving a buffer along the perimeter, therefore, very little change in the visual landscape will change from the view from the road. And, with the 50-foot buffer along the slough, the site will be partially screened along the south side as well.
Land Use	√	Change from undeveloped to developed. The local zoning commission has approved the request to develop the site.

Environmental Consequences	Involvement	Mitigation Measures and Additional Comments
Social	√-minor	Some residents view the use of guns in any circumstances adversely. The whole concept of a 'hunter education' building is to train novices in the correct and proper use and respect of guns.
Public Facilities & Services	√-minor	Tie-in to existing utility systems.
Pedestrian & Bicycle Facilities	√	The site will be accessible to non-motorized and pedestrian users.
Relocation:	None	
Residential		
Business		
Farm		
Non-Profit Organization		
Economic	√-minor	Construction of the facility will create short-term economic impacts. Long-term beneficial or adverse impacts are not anticipated.
Cumulative Impacts	None	
Indirect/Secondary Effects	None	
Energy	None	
Hazardous Waste	None	No apparent evidence exists, nor does past use indicate the potential for discovering hazardous materials. No on-site fueling operations will be allowed on the site.
Construction	√	Noise impacts will be minimized by limiting the times that loud or heavy equipment can operate. Air borne dust will be minimized by watering the site. Water quality will be maintained by Best Management Practices

Permit Summary:

Corps 404/10	<u>No</u>	ADF&G Title 16	<u>No</u>
Floodplain	<u>No</u>	Coast Guard	<u>No</u>
NPDES	<u>No</u>	Other	<u>None</u>



Chapter V.

Public & Agency Involvement

The ADF&G has coordinated all efforts for agency and public involvement. Beginning in early 1997, public and agency involvement attempted to involve all concerned persons. The following summary indicates the efforts expanded to date.

A. On February 11, 1997 a letter was sent to over 200 area residents containing a brief description of the proposed project. The letter provided the names and phone numbers of ADF&G contacts who could provide additional information and answer questions. (The Fairbanks North Star Borough Community Planning office provided the mailing list.) Four people contacted the ADF&G for additional information or to express support or concerns. The issues identified were summarized by the ADF&G (see Appendix B).

B. During the spring of 1997, Ms. Cathy Harms, Public Affairs for the ADF&G discussed the proposal on local news, and answered questions called-in by listeners.

C. June 5, 1997 a second letter was mailed to neighborhood residents to invite them to an Open House.

D. June 17, 1997 the ADF&G hosted an *Open House* to explain to all interested persons, the proposed project. Seven neighbors attended while others wrote to the department or stopped in to the regional offices. Issues and concerns expressed through the Open House are summarized in Appendix B.

E. August 5, 1997 the ADF&G testified before the FNSB Planning Commission in anticipation of obtaining a Conditional Use Zoning reclassification of the proposed site for the facility.



Chapter IV

LIST OF PREPARERS

- A. Alaska Department of Fish & Game
Cathy Harms, Public Affairs Officer
David James, Regional Wildlife Management Coordinator

- B. Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Elizabeth L. Engle, P.E., Design Project Manager
Christine A. Storey, Environmental Analyst

APPENDIX A

SITE COMPARISON



FINAL REPORT

Qualitative Comparison of the ADF&G College Road Site with the TVSA Airport Way Site for the Hunter Education Indoor Shooting Range

August 25, 1997

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- Administration of Hunter Education Program**
- Concerns of Adjacent Property Owners**
- Construction Schedule**
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- Geotechnical Analysis**
- Hunter Education Outdoor Activities**
- Potential for Compatible Development**
- Public Access**
- Vehicle Access and Traffic Flow**
- Zoning**
- ADF&G Mission**

Administration of Building

ADF&G: The College Road site is close to the existing ADF&G regional office. If ADF&G assumes direct maintenance and operation responsibilities of the facility, physical proximity makes the job easier in terms of logistics. However, ADF&G intends to seek a contractual agreement to operate and maintain the facility, in which case, the advantage of nearness to the ADF&G office is diminished although not negated because monitoring of the contractor will be required. If the contractual agreement for maintenance and operation should ever prove unworkable, ADF&G would by default become directly responsible, and proximity would again be an advantage.

TVSA: The location of the TVSA property would be disadvantageous if ADF&G is directly in charge of maintenance and operation. If maintenance and operation are contracted out, the distance of the TVSA property from the ADF&G regional office would be a relatively minor disadvantage.

Conclusion: Physical proximity argues in favor of the ADF&G property.

Administration of Hunter Education Program

ADF&G: ADF&G administers the Hunter Education and Hunter Services Programs which will be conducted in this facility. The close proximity of the ADF&G property to the existing Fish and Game regional office will minimize transit time of the regional hunter education coordinator and other ADF&G staff between the facility and the ADF&G office.

TVSA: The TVSA site on Airport Way is a 6-8 minute drive of about 3.5 miles from the regional ADF&G office on College Road. This would translate into some additional cost for ADF&G personnel to transit between the two structures.

Conclusion: The ADF&G property is the more efficient site for the administration of the hunter education program. Although this argues in favor of the ADF&G property, the disadvantage of the TVSA site in terms of additional cost to ADF&G administration of the hunter education program is a relatively minor consideration.

Concerns of Adjacent Property Owners

ADF&G: The ADF&G property is adjacent to a residential area to the west and southwest. This requires a substantial outreach effort to contact local landowners by mail and public meetings to identify issues and concerns. The design of the project must address those issues and concerns. To date, the majority of comments favor or do not object to the project. There is also opposition. There are two critical junctures in the process of addressing opposition by local property owners. The first is obtaining conditional use approval from the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) Planning Commission, which is addressed below under "Zoning." The second is successful completion of an Environmental Assessment which is required because federal aid money will be used for this project. This assessment must take into consideration public opposition as well as support for the alternative sites. Obtaining final approval of the EA will require staff time and possibly other resources to ensure as much as possible that the EA will survive challenges. Ultimately, there is no guarantee of success and, even if successful, delay of construction is a concern.

TVSA: TVSA and surrounding property are zoned "light industrial" which allows archery and shooting ranges. There is one commercial enterprise on the west side and a private residence and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources on the east boundary. All have a long history of coexisting with the TVSA indoor range currently located on that property. Here too, an environmental assessment will be required, but zoning variances will not be required.

Conclusion: The public involvement process identified several property owners that are opposed to construction of the facility on the ADF&G property. This opposition could possibly result in prolonging or even preventing approval of the EA. Because no effort has been made to solicit public opinion about building on the TVSA property, it is impossible to objectively compare the two sites on this basis. However, it seems reasonable to believe that opposition from local landowners is unlikely given that an indoor shooting range already exists on the property. This argues in favor of the TVSA site.

Construction Schedule

Adherence to the design and construction timetable is important for three reasons. 1) Late requests for bids are likely to compete with requests for bids from other projects. This tends to result in higher bids, hence higher construction costs. 2) Late requests for bids tend to result in later start times for construction, further delaying completion. 3) A delay could postpone construction until the 1999 season. Legislative sponsors of the CIP and supervisors within ADF&G headquarters warn that further delay in the start of construction may encourage diversion of the funds to a different project, perhaps elsewhere in the state.

ADF&G: Progressing with plans to build on the ADF&G property should keep the building project on schedule. The schedule is designed for a timely (February 1998) release of a request for construction bids.

TVSA: A decision to build on TVSA property can occur only after successful negotiations between TVSA and ADF&G are completed. Lengthy negotiations could delay construction. Therefore, if negotiations with TVSA are initiated, it would be important to stipulate a negotiation schedule and deadline that would ensure adherence to the appropriate construction schedule.

Conclusion: Building the facility on the ADF&G property avoids the necessity for negotiations with TVSA and enhances the likelihood of timely initiation of construction. However, a properly devised negotiation schedule with TVSA and adherence to decision deadlines would also ensure timely initiation of construction either on the TVSA site or, by default, on the ADF&G site. Therefore, neither site offers an advantage over the other.

Geographic Accessibility

A location at or near the center of human population distribution and on main transportation routes in the greater Fairbanks area is most convenient to the public. The area circumscribed by the Steese Expressway, Mitchell Expressway, Parks Highway, Geist Road, University Avenue, College Road, and Johansen Expressway fits this description. Both the ADF&G and TVSA properties are within this area.

ADF&G and TVSA: Both properties are in the area described above, and are located on main transportation routes. They are located in different parts of town which respectively favor different regions of the community.

Conclusion: There is no advantage of one property over the other.

Geotechnical Analysis

The type of soil on which the facility is built can impact the cost of construction. Soil of the inappropriate type (e.g., containing ice) must be removed and replaced before construction of the foundation footings may begin. This adds to the cost of construction, or in this case, reduces the amount of fixed construction funds that may be spent on the building itself.

ADF&G: The soil on the ADF&G site was tested with two drill holes. The soil is not the best, but is suitable for construction. The actual building site will be assessed with additional drilling to determine if soil removal and backfill will be necessary. There are unofficial reports of the site being used as a landfill in years past. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation is not aware of any official records, and it is not a DEC "listed" site. If refuse is encountered during drilling or excavation, it may have to be removed.

TVSA: The soil on the TVSA site was not tested. However, drilling records from adjacent DNR property indicate, in general, better quality soil than at the ADF&G site. The records also show some areas not suitable for building. Therefore, until test drilling is accomplished here, there is no basis for an objective comparison with the ADF&G site.

Conclusion: It is not possible to assign an advantage to either site because of the need for additional drilling information. This is crucial information because the type of soil can have a major impact on the cost of constructing the building. Additional drilling should be conducted to address this important question.

Hunter Education Outdoor Activities

Hunter education classroom and indoor shooting range activities in the proposed facility may be enhanced by proximity to associated outdoor features such as an archery proficiency course and a basic hunter education field course including watercraft exercises.

Archery Proficiency Course

ADF&G: There is an IBEP archery proficiency course on Creamer's Refuge on the opposite (north) side College Road. The archery course is within moderate walking distance of the site via a traffic light-controlled intersection at College and Danby. It is unlikely that either the facility or its parking lot would

be used by archery participants to access the course because it would be far more convenient to drive to the currently-used parking area near Creamer's barn. The barn is also where the large 3-D targets are stored.

TVSA: There is an archery range on the TVSA property. It would have to be modified to meet the requirements of an IBEP proficiency course. The course would be within easy walking distance of the facility. The written materials required to run the archery course could be stored in the proposed facility and be relatively convenient to the course instructor. The large 3-D targets would require a separate storage area because it is unlikely that there will be enough room in the proposed facility.

Firearms Field Course

Currently, about one-half the basic hunter education courses in Fairbanks incorporate a field course. This consists of a variety of outdoor exercises intended to give hands-on training with such things as target identification, getting in and out of boats, and crossing fences or other obstacles.

ADF&G: Current field course activities are conducted on the opposite side of College Road within moderate walking distance of the proposed site. There is sufficient, although more restricted, space to conduct these activities next to the proposed facility. Also, watercraft exercises could be conducted on Noyes slough.

TVSA: Sufficient space to conduct a field course is immediately adjacent to the facility on the TVSA property, and it allows easy access to the Chena River for watercraft exercises.

Additional Considerations: It is unlikely that future economic development will displace the use of ADF&G property for archery and field course activities. The ADF&G property is state-owned and as such is untaxed public trust land with a fairly high certainty that it will not succumb to economic pressures for development. This assures that the archery and field course activities will be allowed into the indefinite future. In contrast, the future status of the TVSA property is less predictable. It is private, taxable land in a prime location on the Chena River. Although difficult to predict, it is not unreasonable to speculate that future economic market forces may eventually require TVSA to sell property or develop income-generating enterprises, usurping the space needed for archery and field course activities. Stipulating use of the outdoor facilities within the legal agreement for land use for the Hunter Education and Indoor Shooting Range facility would be necessary to ensure the future availability of these features.

Conclusion: The archery and field course attributes associated with the ADF&G site, while less than ideal, are adequate to meet the needs of the hunter education program. Archery (after modification) and current field course options that exist on the TVSA land are much more convenient for Hunter Education classes. If the use of the outdoor facilities on the TVSA property are legally stipulated, the TVSA site is the better choice.

Potential for Compatible Development

The concept of developing additional structures or facilities that enhance shooting opportunities to the public is appealing. However, differences of opinion exist as to whether compatible development will allow the Hunter Education facility to better serve the community of Fairbanks. No specific proposals for compatible development have been made at this time.

Conclusion: In the absence of specific proposals for compatible development, it is impossible to assign advantage to one site over the other.

Public Access

ADF&G: The ADF&G property is state-owned and is therefore equally accessible to all members of the public within the constraints for which the property is managed.

TVSA: The TVSA property is private property which means public accessibility is subject to the constraints of private ownership. A contractual agreement with TVSA for the actual building site and adjacent outdoor activities (discussed above) could resolve this issue.

Conclusion: Public accessibility on the ADF&G property is a relatively straight forward procedure. Public accessibility on the TVSA property is a less certain matter unless contractual agreements are reached that assure the same degree of public access on TVSA land as on ADF&G land. If agreement is secured, neither site has an advantage over the other.

Vehicle Access and Traffic Flow

ADF&G: Access to the Fish and Game property is directly off College Road, an undivided four lane road. Neither a west nor an east approach on College Road offers a turn-out lane. The entrance property is located roughly 550 feet from the traffic light controlled intersection of College and Danby. Some have argued that this situation results in less than optimum safety. The Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT) reviewed this issue and concluded that it meets required safety standards.

TVSA: Access to the TVSA property is via an undivided two lane frontage road that parallels and intersects Airport Way. Airport Way is a divided four lane road. There are no turn-out lanes on the two lane road. The nearest exit from the two-lane road (Boat Street) onto Airport Way occurs at a four-way intersection that has turn out lanes from both the west and east. The Airport Way intersection is currently proposed for the installation of traffic lights for safety reasons. Installation is not actually scheduled, but will probably take place within the next five years.

Conclusion: Presently, vehicle access and traffic flow at the two sites, although different in many respects, appear to be comparable in terms of safely entering and exiting the sites. At this time, neither site offers an advantage over the other. If and when traffic lights are installed at the intersection near the TVSA property, an advantage would rest with the TVSA property.

Zoning

ADF&G: The ADF&G property is zoned “rural agriculture” which does not permit construction of the proposed facility. Therefore, it was necessary to submit a “conditional use” (CU) application to the FNSB Planning Commission which they approved on August 5, 1997. The public has until August 20 to file an appeal. The conditional use is specific to the proposed structure. Future expansion that exceeds the list of restrictions on the CU approval would require seeking permission from the Planning Commission.

TVSA: The TVSA property is zoned “light industrial” which permits construction of the proposed facility. This avoids the necessity of submitting a conditional use application to the Borough Planning Commission. It also allows for future expansion without seeking approval of the Commission.

Conclusion: The TVSA site offers the advantage of less complicated zoning restrictions.

ADF&G Mission

The mission of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game’s Division of Wildlife Conservation is to serve multiple uses of wildlife, including consumptive and non-consumptive.

ADF&G: One of the earliest premises for the shooting range CIP request was the concept that a facility devoted primarily to consumptive uses of wildlife would be a valuable, symbolic addition to the non-consumptive infrastructure that has built up at Creamer’s Migratory Waterfowl Refuge. It would help reinforce not only the image of what ADF&G stands for, but make a strong statement to the public about

the overriding compatibility and legitimacy of diverse uses of wildlife and the need to continually strive for common ground among these diverse uses.

TVSA: Building the facility on TVSA land may obscure or negate efforts to foster a relationship between consumptive and non-consumptive uses or users of wildlife.

Conclusion: Maintaining and developing a visible reminder of the commitment of ADF&G to consumptive as well as nonconsumptive uses and users at Creamer's Refuge argues in favor of the ADF&G property.

APPENDIX B

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
DOCUMENTATION**



Conditional Use Narrative

ADF&G Proposed Hunter Education Classroom/Indoor Shooting Range July 3, 1997

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is asking for Conditional Use approval to construct a hunter education classroom and indoor shooting range facility on Fish and Game land that is adjacent to, but not part of, Creamers' Migratory Waterfowl Refuge. This 6.4 acre parcel is currently zoned rural agriculture and is located at the intersection of College and Danby, situated between College Road, Noyes Slough, and Pine Street. The purpose of this proposed facility is to support the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's hunter education program, and other indoor shooting programs in the Fairbanks area.

The Alaska State Legislature approved a capital improvement project of two million dollars plus another one half million dollar contingency fund to construct this facility. The proposed facility is a single one-story building of approximately 11,000 square feet with indoor classrooms for 75-100 people, and indoor shooting lanes for 16-20 shooters using small bore rifles or handguns. No shooting will be allowed outside the facility. The discharge of firearms inside the range will be inaudible outside the building, and nearly inaudible in the classrooms inside the building. Architectural design will take into account the desirability of a structure that is visually compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. Vegetation that currently screens residential areas will not be altered. There will be parking space for 50 vehicles.

The operation schedule for this facility has not been determined at this time. Although we anticipate fewer hours at present, the facility may operate during normal business hours. It will also be active on some weekends and evenings to as late as 10:00 PM. This schedule accommodates volunteer instructors and range officers who must work at their normal jobs and school-aged hunter education students. All shooting will be under the supervision of designated range officers who will strictly enforce safe, responsible handling of firearms. Volunteer instructors who have met ADF&G qualifications or ADF&G personnel will be in charge of classroom activities.

ADF&G plans to use the facility to provide several types of Hunter Education classes:

- General Hunter Education classes average about 20 students plus instructors and run three hours per night for six to seven nights. We hope to offer between one and two hunter education classes per month, resulting in about 12 vehicles present per night for up to 14 nights.
- Bowhunter education classes run eight hours over two to four days with about 20 students plus instructors. We hope to offer up to two bowhunter education classes per month, resulting in about 14 vehicles present during each of 4 nights.

If two classes are held simultaneously, up to 26 vehicles could be present for 12-14 nights.

- If the range is not occupied with hunter education students, other shooters could add as many as 20 people and 5-10 vehicles.
- About three times per year large Hunter Services clinics may be held at the facility which would result in 100 people and up to 50 vehicles for a one-day session.

The Hunter Education Shooting Range is proposed for this parcel of ADF&G land for several reasons. First, it is not part of Creamer's Refuge, and building the facility here would not conflict with the Creamer's Refuge Management Plan, which was developed over a two year period with the local people who volunteered to sit on the Creamer's Advisory Group. Second, although this parcel is zoned rural agriculture its relatively small size and location south of College Road make it impractical for agriculture use. Third, because ADF&G already owns this parcel, it would avoid having to use CIP funds for land purchase. This way, all funds could be used for design and construction. Fourth, the parcel's proximity to the regional ADF&G office would simplify administration of the proposed facility.

Public Involvement Efforts

ADF&G Proposed Hunter Education Classroom/Indoor Shooting Range July 3, 1997

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) proposes to construct a Hunter Education Classroom and Indoor Shooting Range facility on ADF&G property at the intersection of College and Danby roads. This construction requires "Conditional Use" approval from the Planning Commission because the property is zoned "rural agriculture -5." ADF&G has tried to contact neighbors and land owners in the vicinity of the property to learn their concerns, questions, and to identify issues relating to this proposal. To date, ADF&G has notified the public in the following ways:

1. On February 11, 1997 a letter (attached) was sent to 208 neighborhood land owners with a brief description of the project. The letter provided the names and phone numbers of ADF&G contacts who could provide additional information and answer questions. The Borough Community Planning office provided the mailing list. Four people called for additional information or to express support or concerns. The issues they identified are included in the list below.
2. During her monthly appearance on "News Views," (a call-in radio talk show on KFAR) in March, April and May 1997 Cathie Harms discussed the proposal and answered questions called in by listeners.
3. On June 5, 1997 a letter (attached) was sent to the same group of 208 property owners to invite them to an open house meeting on June 17, 1997 to discuss the proposed project. An errata letter was sent on June 11 1997 to correct a mistake in the June 5 letter. Seven neighbors who attended and others who either wrote, called or stopped by another time are listed on the last page of this report. ADF&G appreciates the efforts made by these people to communicate their concerns, support or disapproval about the proposal and has continued to correspond with them on this project.

The concerns or objections identified by the means explained above are listed below. Although this list focuses on potentially negative aspects of the project, it is worth noting that most of the comments received so far are in support of the proposal. (See attached letters.)

1. Public safety

Shooting The presence of the shooting facility may worsen an on-going problem of careless and illegal shooting of air rifles at wildlife and other miscellaneous targets along the slough. This occasionally results in property damage such as broken windows.

Response: The Hunter Education program focuses on safety and ethics and, in the long run, can help reduce the problem of illegal or irresponsible shooting. In addition, the presence of instructors and/or students at the facility could help dissuade people from this behavior.

Traffic The facility could result in an undesirable increase in the amount of traffic on College Road, and the entrance to the facility could be a traffic hazard.

Response: Although traffic to the parcel would increase, it is unlikely that traffic along College Road would increase because many hunter education classes are currently held at the ADF&G office. The Department of Transportation reviewed the question of access and concluded that it is adequate.

Security The presence of a building may attract a criminal element intent on breaking in to steal firearms.

Response: Security is a serious concern of ADF&G as well. The facility will be designed with security as a priority, and firearms and ammunition will be held in a secure vault. Access will be regulated by ADF&G.

Schools The school district may have objections to the presence of shooting activity in the vicinity of the existing and proposed schools.

Response: The Superintendent of School's office verbally indicated no objections to locating the facility on this parcel. Written comments will be forthcoming.

2. Noise

Traffic The elimination of trees to provide a building site may allow more traffic noise to reach the adjacent residential homes. Also, the facility will increase the traffic to the area, thereby adding to the noise.

Response: The building must be at least 35 feet from College Road, and at least 50 feet from Noyes Slough and private property, and could be set back even farther. Existing vegetation would remain within the setbacks. The number of trees to be cut would depend on where the building is located. The building could be constructed in the open area requiring a minimum of trees to be cut, or it could be partially hidden by existing

spruce trees. These decisions would be made after an architect is selected and more discussion with neighbors takes place.

Traffic to the site would increase. The architect will be asked to minimize noise potential through placement of parking and landscape architecture.

Shooting If the building is not soundproof, shooting on range may be audible outside of the building.

Response: Shooting will be inaudible outside the building.

3. Loss of Habitat

Vegetation This development would destroy natural vegetation and open areas, further eroding the existing natural green belt.

Response: Some natural vegetation would be lost. The amount and location would depend on where the building would be located, and would be determined after an architect is selected and more discussion with neighbors takes place. The open portion of the parcel (which is currently used as a snow dump) is large enough to hold the building and most of the proposed parking, and constructing the facility there would require the least disruption of vegetation. However, construction in the open area would be most visible to neighbors across Noyes Slough.

Wildlife The building may be detrimental to the wildlife that currently uses the area such as ducks, beavers, muskrats, and songbirds.

Response: Some natural vegetation would be lost, and wildlife dependent on that vegetation would be displaced. Wildlife currently using Noyes Slough should not be disturbed because construction must be at least 50 feet away from the Slough.

4. Neighborhood Concerns:

Appearance The building is a potential eyesore, will it blend in with the neighborhood? Will it require a fence? If so, this may be incompatible with the existing neighborhood.

Response: Appearance of the building will be designed by the architect. ADF&G prefers that the building fit in with the surroundings and that concerns of neighbors be considered before the design is finalized.

Compatibility The existing undeveloped lot may be more compatible with the residential neighborhood than an indoor shooting range would be. The "greenbelt" is just as compatible, or more so, with the mission of Fish & Game as the proposed hunter education/indoor range facility.

Response: Having an undeveloped lot nearby is desirable for many people. However, the parcel in question was purchased with a combination of Alaska Fish and Game Fund money (from hunting licenses and tag fees) and Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration money (from the federal tax on firearms and ammunition), and therefore is subject to Federal Aid program constraints. For instance, it is not legal to use Federal Aid land as a park, a picnic area or a snow dump. These constraints have been stretched for many years, and the Federal Aid coordinator for Alaska is encouraging ADF&G to resolve this situation. An acceptable solution is to use it for the proposed facility.

Appropriateness It may be inappropriate to encourage the use of firearms around schools, bike paths, and parks.

Response: The facility would only encourage safe, ethical and legal use of firearms. Only indoor shooting would be allowed on the premises. Indoor shooting ranges are increasingly being constructed in shopping mall districts in many states.

Property values The proposed project could decrease property values of neighbors.

Response: Realtors contacted indicated that property values nearby a state built and maintained facility would most likely remain stable or increase.

Communication Neighborhood property owners must be kept apprised of all phases of this proposed construction. The lack of information quickly leads to misunderstandings and suspicion.

Response: ADF&G appreciates the efforts of neighbors to share their concerns. We intend to keep people informed through mailings and phone calls. We also hope neighbors can attend Hunter Education/Shooting Range Steering Committee meetings which are posted on the Hot Line, 459-7308.

5. Alternate location

Elsewhere Why not put it in a non-residential area?

Response: The Capitol Improvement Project approved by the Legislature allotted a total of 2.5 million dollars for construction of a Hunter Education/Shooting Range facility. No money was allotted for purchase of property.

On refuge It may be more appropriate to site the facility across the street on the north side of College Road on refuge property.

Response: During a two year planning effort for Creamer's Refuge, members of the Creamer's Advisory Group were staunch in support of limiting development within the boundaries of the Refuge. In recognition of the time and effort spent by members of the Fairbanks community to reach compromises regarding refuge management, ADF&G prefers to honor the management plan.

6. Expanding bureaucracy

More government This is an example of expanding government. A facility like this should not be built with government funds. If it is built with government funds, government will have to hire more people to run it.

Response: The money for this facility was raised by the tax on firearms and ammunition and the sale of hunting licenses and tags. No private funds have been proffered at this time for this kind of facility. A decision has not been made to hire more state employees to run this facility. ADF&G is exploring the idea of entering a cooperative agreement or a contract with a third party organization or business to operate the building.

Additional public input will be sought after the conditional use application is submitted and before the Planning Commission meeting on August 5, 1997. An update will be provided at that time.

AK-R

**Appendix A: List of Public contacts on Hunter Education/Shooting
Range Proposed Project**

Public present at July 17, 1997 meeting:

Amelia Houtchens	452-7800	225 Pine St., FAI 99709
Mary Wyatt	456-1037	217 Spruce St., FAI 99709
David Hollowell	456-1037	217 Spruce St., FAI 99709
Don Galbreath	456-5727	1220 Bunnell St., FAI 99709
Alan Armbruster	457-1457	1637 Willow St., FAI 99709
Patty Whitehead	456-8222	1601 Suncha Cir., FAI 99709
John Whitehead	456-8222	1601 Suncha Cir., FAI 99709

Staff personnel present :

Cathie Harms, ADF&G
 Roger Seavoy, ADF&G
 David James, ADF&G
 Betsy Engle, ADOT

Additional contacts:

Marion & Jane Parrish	NA	201 Aurora Dr., FAI 99709
Dan Hoffman	458-0224	1743 Willow St., FAI 99709
DJD Enterprises	451-5572	1600 College Rd., FAI 99709
Gary Roth	456-8729	1728 Bridgewater Dr., FAI 99709
Virginia Kawasaki	456-5195	1620 Suncha Cir., FAI 99709
Lyn Mackler	452-4461	FNSB School District