



West Susitna Access Project Update

Matsu Borough Port Commission Work Session Meeting

January 10, 2025

AIDEA Mission

Our mission is to “promote, develop, and advance the creation of jobs and economic development in Alaska by providing various means of financing and investment.”

(AS 44.88.010)



Investing in Alaskans

What does AIDEA do?

- Investing in Alaskans since 1967
- Alaska's Development Finance Authority
- Financially Self-Sustaining Public Corporation
- \$495 million in dividends declared to Alaska since 1996
- Directed over \$3.5 billion into economic development in Alaska





West Susitna Access Project

West Susitna Access Project Video



https://www.aidea.org/Portals/0/InfrastructureDevelopmentResources/WSAP%20Overview%20FINAL_H264_HD.mp4?ver=yBpHZXCSxEI4kfv0R8HusA%3d%3d

Project Purpose

West Susitna Surface Access Reconnaissance Study

<https://dot.alaska.gov/roadstoresources/westsusitna/>

The purpose of this project is to construct a 78-mile industrial access toll road, separate from the DOT&PF public project that ends west of Alexander Creek, to unlock over 6 million acres of state lands, enhance access to private lands within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, improve access to valuable resources, and stimulate economic development for the State of Alaska and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.



Provide access to the public for fishing, hunting, and recreation!

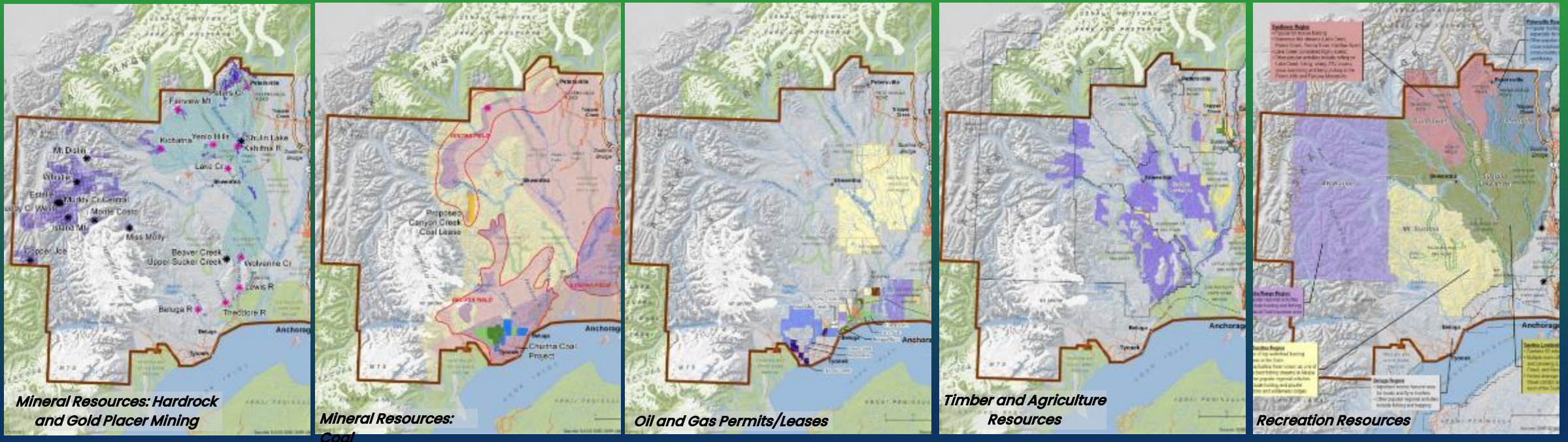
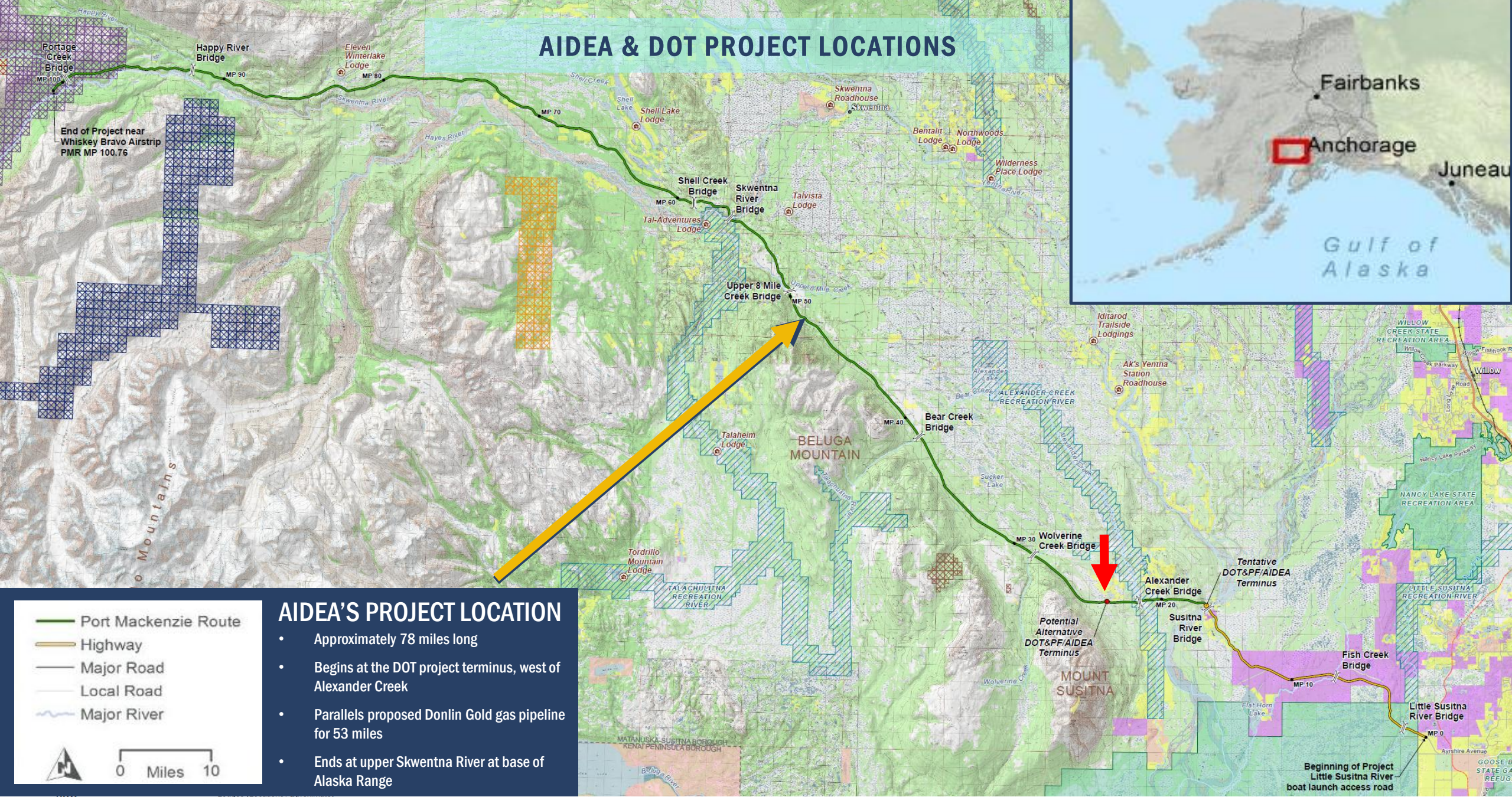


Figure Source: West Susitna Access Reconnaissance Study Transportation Analysis Report (DOT&PF 2014)

AIDEA & DOT PROJECT LOCATIONS

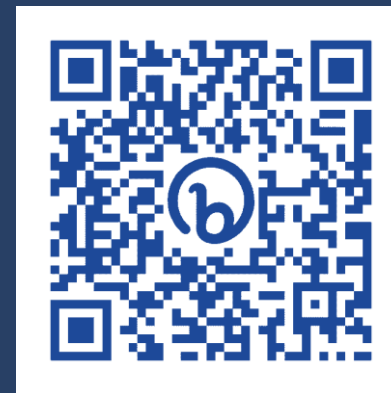


AIDEA'S PROJECT LOCATION

- Approximately 78 miles long
- Begins at the DOT project terminus, west of Alexander Creek
- Parallels proposed Donlin Gold gas pipeline for 53 miles
- Ends at upper Skwentna River at base of Alaska Range



Economic Study Highlights



Project Benefits

Provide safe and efficient road access from the existing highway system in proximity to existing port facilities and population centers in Southcentral Alaska to resources in the Fish Creek NRMU and western Yentna and Skwentna River Basins that increase job growth and economic development opportunities.



Mineral Resources

Copper, gold, silver, and platinum potential; more than 3,000 active mining claims within the basin.



Recreational Access

Many opportunities including snowmachining, fishing, hunting, boating, recreational mining, and use of cabins.



First Responder Access

Ability to provide first aid, fire response, and other emergency access in the area.



Energy Resources

Active energy exploration in the in the areas west of the Susitna River, including Upper Cook Inlet where active oil and gas producing fields exist in the study area.



Forestry/Timber Harvest

More than 700,000 acres available for harvest; enhances fire suppression.



Agricultural Resources

More than 65,000 acres of land identified for potential agricultural uses.



Alternative Energy

Opportunities for clean energy projects, including geothermal, hydroelectric, solar, wind, carbon capture and sequestration, and biomass resources.

Access to Critical Minerals

The road would access areas known to contain significant deposits of hard rock minerals such as gold, silver, & copper.

Table 7. Mineral Exploration Projects, West Susitna Study Area, 2022

Project	Owner	Land Ownership	Resources	Inferred Resource	Status
Estelle	Nova Minerals Limited	State of Alaska	Gold, copper, silver	6.6 Moz.	Moderate exploration
Whistler	GoldMining Inc	State of Alaska	Gold, copper	2.8 Moz.	Significant exploration
Island Mountain	GoldMining Inc	State of Alaska	Gold, copper	2.0 Moz.	Significant exploration
Raintree West	GoldMining Inc	State of Alaska	Gold, copper	1.6 Moz.	Significant exploration
Canyon Creek	Alaska Asia Mining Company	State of Alaska	Coal	165 Mmst.	Moderate exploration

Source: Nova Minerals Limited, GoldMining Inc, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and UAA ISER.

Potential Timber and Agriculture Opportunities



Table 19. Estimated Value of Forest Resources in the Study Area

Area/Subregion	Forestland Acres	Estimated Direct Economic Value
Alaska Range Subregion	45,000	\$5,000,000
Mt. Susitna Subregion	219,000	\$24,400,000
Susitna Lowlands Subregion	319,000	\$35,500,000
Fish Creek NRMU	11,946	\$1,300,000
Total	594,946	\$66,200,000

Sources: Matanuska-Susitna Borough 2019 Natural Resource Management Unit Plan, Alaska DNR 2011 Susitna Matanuska Area Plan, 2007 MSB Market Analysis and Timber Appraisal.

Table 21. Estimated Annual Value of Agricultural Resources in the Study Area

Area/Subregion	Agricultural Acres	Estimated Direct Economic Value
Mt. Susitna Subregion	7,000	\$1,600,000
Susitna Lowlands Subregion	38,000	\$8,800,000
Fish Creek NRMU	3,500	\$800,000
Total	48,500	\$11,200,000

Sources: Matanuska-Susitna Borough Asset Management Plan: Natural Resource Management Units, Alaska DNR 2011 Susitna Matanuska Area Plan. United States Department of Agriculture Census of Agriculture 2017.



Potential Jobs and Wages for Borough Residents

Project	Operating Jobs	Operating Wages (\$millions)	Total Jobs Impact Range	Total Wage Impact Range (\$millions)
Estelle	200-400	\$24-\$47	380-960	\$38 - \$90
Whistler	500	\$59	950 - 1,200	\$95 - \$115
Island Mountain	360	\$42	680 - 860	\$65 - \$80
Raintree West	230	\$27	450 - 550	\$40 - \$55
Canyon Creek	300	\$35	500 - 1,000	\$50 - \$70

Source: University of Alaska Anchorage, Institute of Social and Economic Research; Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development; and McKinley Research Group estimates.



Current Status & Updates

Current Status – AIDEA Project

- 2024 field season reporting is wrapping up.
 - Activities and data collected include the following:
 - ✓ LiDAR Acquisition and Mapping
 - ✓ Alternatives Conceptual Engineering
 - ✓ Cultural Resources Studies
 - ✓ Wetlands Studies
 - ✓ Fish Studies
 - ✓ Visual Resource Studies
 - ✓ Material Site Reconnaissance



The graphic features a white silhouette of a mountain range against a yellow background. Below the mountains, the text "West Susitna Access Project" is written in a large, dark font, with "2024 Field Season Update" in a smaller font underneath.


West Susitna Access Project
2024 Field Season Update


**All field season deliverables to be submitted
to AIDEA by February 15, 2025**


**Next Step: Re-engage U.S. Corps of Engineers to
begin the permit application process under the Post Sackett rules**

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Thank You!
