



# West Susitna Access Project Update

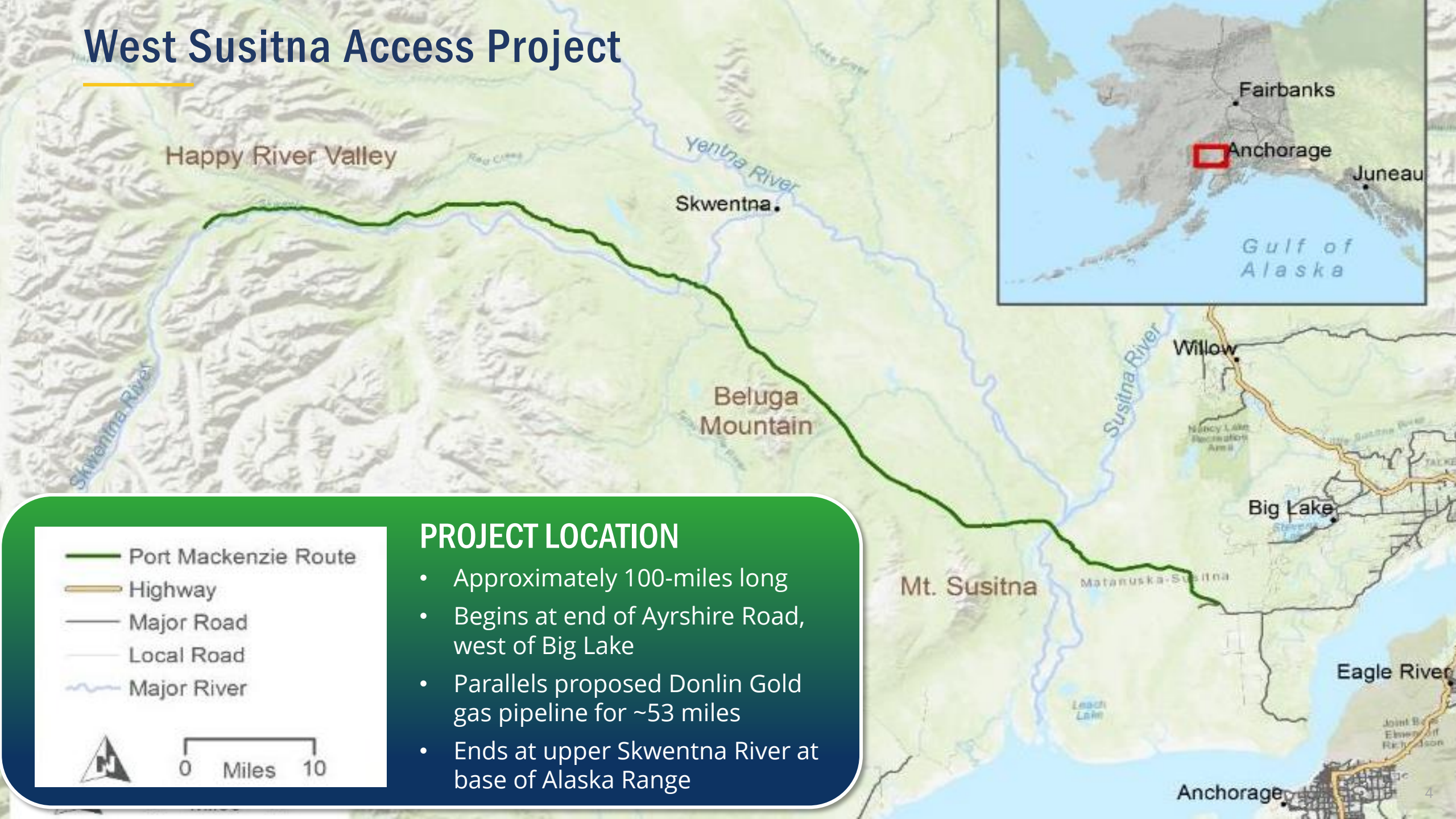
AIEA Board Meeting

March 6, 2024

Brandon Brefczynski, Deputy Director

[www.aidea.org](http://www.aidea.org)

# West Susitna Access Project



## PROJECT LOCATION

- Approximately 100-miles long
- Begins at end of Ayrshire Road, west of Big Lake
- Parallels proposed Donlin Gold gas pipeline for ~53 miles
- Ends at upper Skwentna River at base of Alaska Range



# 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, coal, and platinum potential; more than 3,000 active mining claims within the basin



## Oil & Gas

Active oil and gas exploration in the northern Cook Inlet; nine oil and gas producing units and fields in the study area



## Alternative Energy

Opportunities including geothermal and hydroelectric projects, and woody biomass resources



## Recreational Resources

Opportunities for snowmachining, fishing, hunting, boating, recreational mining, and use of cabins



## Forestry

700,000+ acres available for harvest; enhances emergency response & fire prevention



## Agricultural Resources

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

# 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.

# West-Su Access Current Status

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## AIDEA & DOT&PF Projects

# Current Status – Overview

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- Prior to July 2023, the West-Su Access Project was entirely driven by AIDEA and funded by a FY22 capital appropriation of \$8.5 million.
- However, the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) released the 2024-2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) that included funding for a separate project that provides access to the west side of the Susitna River.
- While AIDEA's project scope has changed, work is still underway to evaluate, permit, and ultimately construct a road to the proposed terminus at the Whisky Bravo Airstrip (MP 100).

# Current Status – DOT&PF Project

- July 2023: West-Su Access Road included in DOT&PF’s proposed 2024 – 2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP)
- March 1, 2024: STIP resubmitted to FHWA, pending approval
- Revised DOT plan involves two stages
  - Stage 1 (Child Stage):
    - ✓ 17 miles of new 24’ wide road
    - ✓ 2 bridges across Little Susitna River & Fish Creek
    - ✓ Boat launch facility accessing the Susitna River
  - Stage 2 (Preconstruction & Parent Final Stage):
    - ✓ 5 miles of new 24’ wide road from end of Stage 1 to the west bank of Alexander Creek
    - ✓ 2 bridges across Susitna River and Alexander Creek
  - **100% public access**
- Total Budget: \$76.4 million
  - Federal: \$69.5 million
  - State: \$6.9 million
- Construction begins in 2025, completion in 2027

West Susitna Access Road [Stage 1]					
Project Costs	2024	2025	2026	2027	2024-2027
	\$0	\$18,220,000	\$0	\$0	\$18,220,000
Construct a new road to and across the Susitna River, connecting the contiguous highway system to State recreation lands west of the Susitna River. Construct a boat launch facility accessing the Susitna River.					
34206 [Parent Preconstruction Stage]					
34461 [Child Stage 1]: Construct approximately 17 miles of a 24’ wide new road from the project BOP at Little Su Road to the south bank of the Susitna River, and two bridges across the Little Susitna River and Fish Creek. Construct a boat launch facility accessing the Susitna River.					
34206 [Parent Final Stage 2]: Construct approximately 5 miles of a 24’ from the end of the Stage I project to the proposed material site just west of Alexander Creek, including a bridge across the Susitna River and Alexander Creek, connecting the contiguous highway system to State recreation lands west of the Susitna River.					
Location	Matanuska-Susitna Borough				STIP ID
Program	AHS - Alaska Highway System				<b>34461</b>
Appropriations/Apportionments					
Surface Transportation Block Grant; Bridge Program					
Allocations/Suballocations					
STBG Flex; Bridge INFRA					
Construction Year(s)	2025				
Phases	Construction; Utilities				
DOT Region	Central Region				

West Susitna Access Road [Parent and Final Construction]					
Project Costs	2024	2025	2026	2027	2024-2027
	\$4,000,000	\$4,100,000	\$100,000	\$50,010,058	\$58,210,058
Construct a new road to and across the Susitna River, connecting the contiguous highway system to State recreation lands west of the Susitna River. Construct a boat launch facility accessing the Susitna River. <b>34206 [Parent Preconstruction Stage]</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 34461[Child Stage 1]: Construct approximately 17 miles of a 24’ wide new road from the project at Little Su Road to the south bank of the Susitna River including two bridges across the Little Susitna River and Fish Creek. Construct a boat launch facility accessing the Susitna River.</li> <li>• <b>34206 [Parent Final Stage 2]: Construct approximately 5 miles of a 24’ from the end of the Stage I project to the proposed material site just west of Alexander Creek, including a bridge across the Susitna River and Alexander Creek, connecting the contiguous highway system to State recreation lands west of the Susitna River.</b></li> </ul>					
Location	Matanuska-Susitna Borough				STIP ID
Program	AHS - Alaska Highway System				<b>34206</b>
Appropriations/Apportionments					
Surface Transportation Block Grant; Bridge Program; Advance Construction Used					
Allocations/Suballocations					
STBG Flex; STBG <5; AC; HIP OSB					
Construction Year(s)	2027				
Phases	Design; ROW; Construction				
DOT Region	Central Region				

# Current Status – AIDEA Project

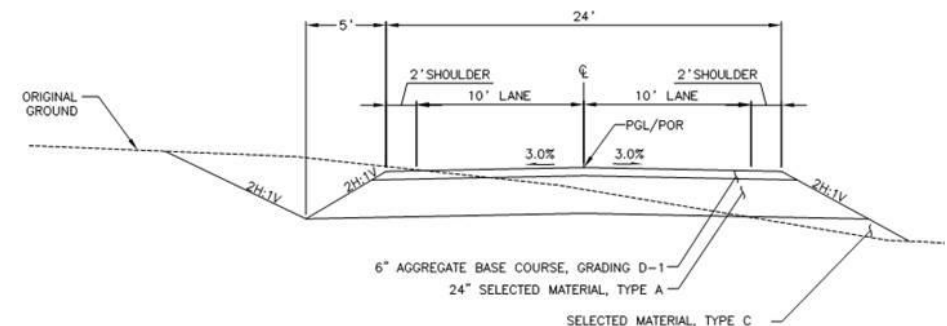
- AIDEA withdrew its 2023 USACE permit application upon DOT&PF's announced project
  - The scope of AIDEA's project had materially changed given DOT&PF proposal to construct a significant portion of the proposed road.
- AIDEA is continues to advance the development of a West-Su Access Route beyond the proposed DOT&PF Stage 2 terminus:
  - 78-mile road west of Alexander Creek to the Whiskey Bravo Airstrip
  - 24' wide road
  - 7 proposed bridges
  - Ongoing discussions with stakeholders, *e.g.*, DNR, Resource Stakeholders, Local Businesses, Mat-Su Borough
- FY22 Capital Budget Appropriation to AIDEA for West-Su Access Development
  - Initial Appropriation: \$8.5 million
  - Current Balance: ~\$4.5 million (pre-field season encumbrance)
- 2024 field season planning underway
  - Analyze data gaps in the following areas:
    - ✓ LiDAR Acquisition and Mapping
    - ✓ Alternatives Conceptual Engineering
    - ✓ Cultural Resources Studies
    - ✓ Wetlands Studies
    - ✓ Fish Studies
    - ✓ Visual Resource Studies
- Estimated 2024 Field Season Cost: ~\$1.6 million



West Susitna Access Project  
2024 Field Season

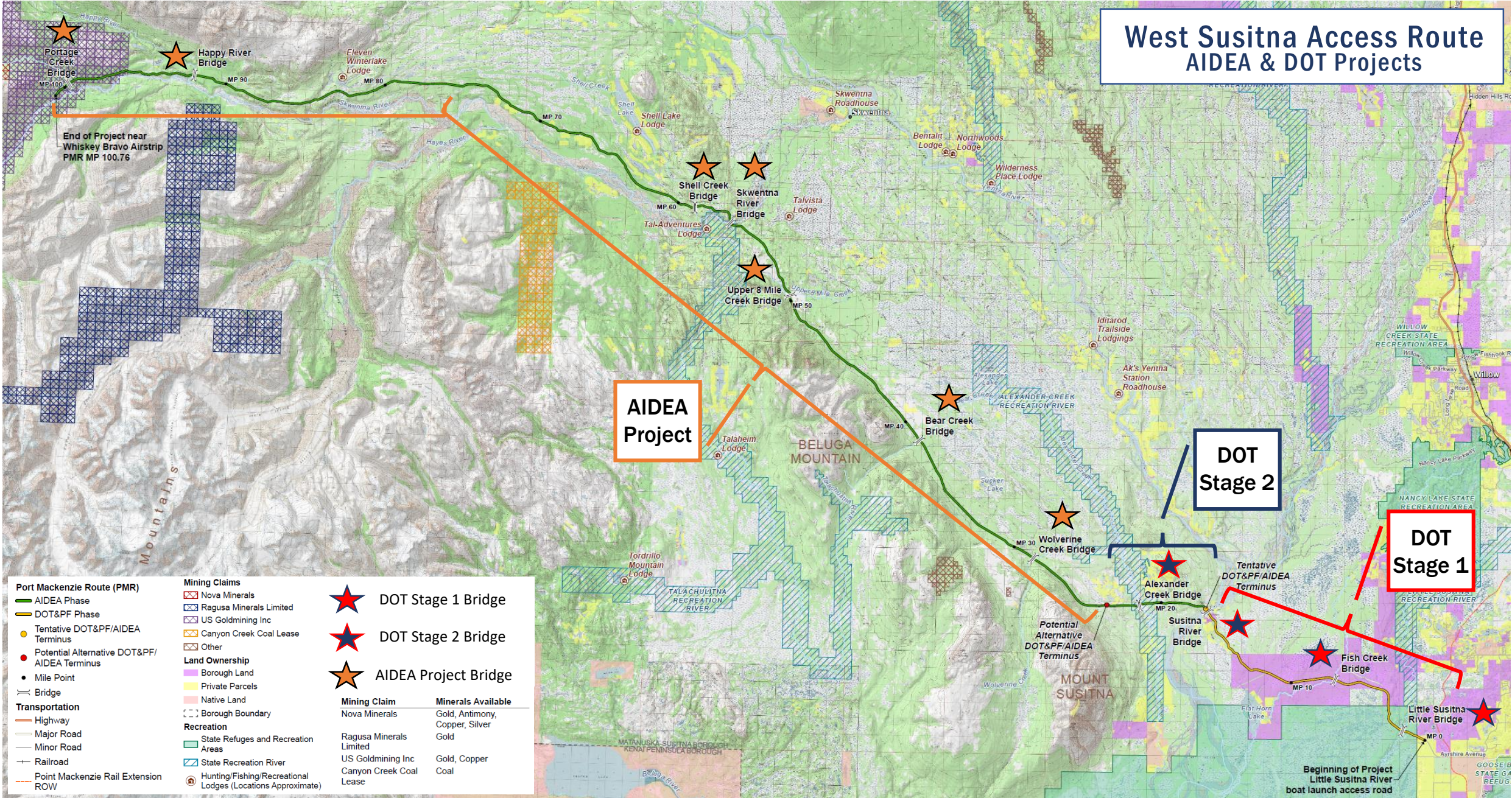
All field season deliverables to be submitted to AIDEA by EOY 2024

Next Step: Re-engage U.S. Corps of Engineers to begin the permit application process





# West Susitna Access Route AIDEA & DOT Projects



**AIDEA Project**

**DOT Stage 2**

**DOT Stage 1**

<b>Port Mackenzie Route (PMR)</b>		<b>Mining Claims</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: red; font-size: 2em;">★</span> DOT Stage 1 Bridge</li> <li><span style="color: blue; font-size: 2em;">★</span> DOT Stage 2 Bridge</li> <li><span style="color: orange; font-size: 2em;">★</span> AIDEA Project Bridge</li> </ul>															
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">—</span> AIDEA Phase</li> <li><span style="color: yellow;">—</span> DOT&amp;PF Phase</li> <li><span style="color: yellow;">●</span> Tentative DOT&amp;PF/AIDEA Terminus</li> <li><span style="color: red;">●</span> Potential Alternative DOT&amp;PF/AIDEA Terminus</li> <li><span style="color: black;">●</span> Mile Point</li> <li><span style="color: black;">—</span> Bridge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="border: 1px solid red; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Nova Minerals</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid blue; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Ragusa Minerals Limited</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid purple; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> US Goldmining Inc</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid orange; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Canyon Creek Coal Lease</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Other</li> </ul>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td><b>Land Ownership</b></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><span style="background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Borough Land</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><span style="background-color: pink; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Private Parcels</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><span style="background-color: lightblue; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Native Land</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><span style="border: 1px dashed black; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Borough Boundary</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><span style="background-color: lightgreen; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> State Refuges and Recreation Areas</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><span style="border: 1px solid blue; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> State Recreation River</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">H</span> Hunting/Fishing/Recreational Lodges (Locations Approximate)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			<b>Land Ownership</b>		<span style="background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Borough Land		<span style="background-color: pink; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Private Parcels		<span style="background-color: lightblue; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Native Land		<span style="border: 1px dashed black; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> Borough Boundary		<span style="background-color: lightgreen; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> State Refuges and Recreation Areas		<span style="border: 1px solid blue; display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px;"></span> State Recreation River		<span style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px;">H</span> Hunting/Fishing/Recreational Lodges (Locations Approximate)
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<b>Transportation</b>		<b>Mining Claim</b>	<b>Minerals Available</b>																
<span style="color: orange;">—</span> Highway		Nova Minerals	Gold, Antimony, Copper, Silver																
<span style="color: grey;">—</span> Major Road		Ragusa Minerals Limited	Gold																
<span style="color: grey;">—</span> Minor Road		US Goldmining Inc	Gold, Copper																
<span style="color: black;">—</span> Railroad		Canyon Creek Coal Lease	Coal																
<span style="color: orange;">—</span> Point Mackenzie Rail Extension ROW																			



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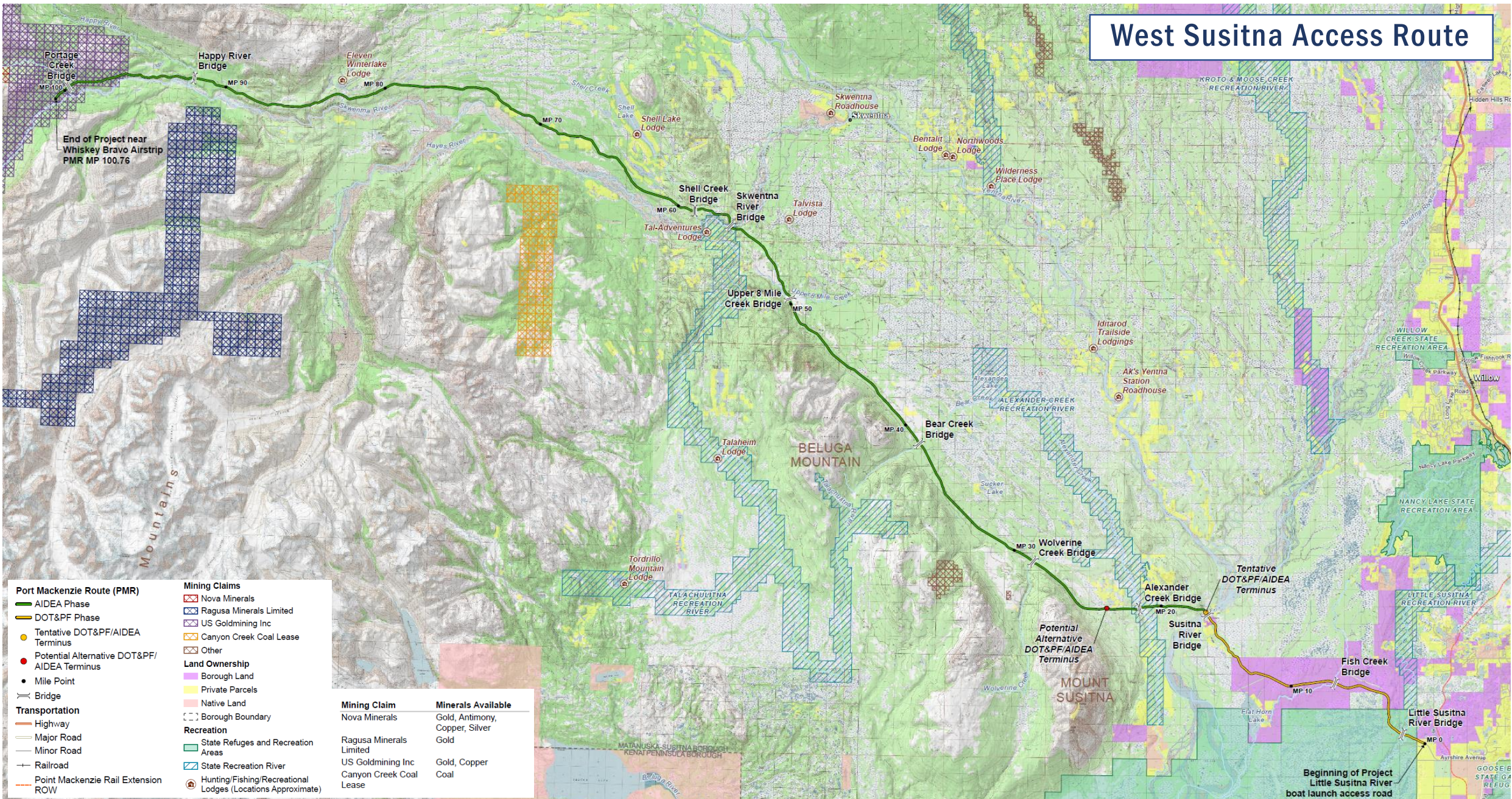


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Questions?



# West Susitna Access Route



**Port Mackenzie Route (PMR)**

- AIDEA Phase
- DOT&PF Phase
- Tentative DOT&PF/AIDEA Terminus
- Potential Alternative DOT&PF/AIDEA Terminus
- Mile Point
- Bridge

**Transportation**

- Highway
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Railroad
- Point Mackenzie Rail Extension ROW

**Mining Claims**

- Nova Minerals
- Ragusa Minerals Limited
- US Goldmining Inc
- Canyon Creek Coal Lease
- Other

**Land Ownership**

- Borough Land
- Private Parcels
- Native Land
- Borough Boundary

**Recreation**

- State Refuges and Recreation Areas
- State Recreation River
- Hunting/Fishing/Recreational Lodges (Locations Approximate)

Mining Claim	Minerals Available
Nova Minerals	Gold, Antimony, Copper, Silver
Ragusa Minerals Limited	Gold
US Goldmining Inc	Gold, Copper
Canyon Creek Coal Lease	Coal