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EI - 18274

August 24, 2010

**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL AND POSTAL
SERVICE**

Victoria J. Rutson
Chief
Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Finance Docket No. 35095, The Alaska Railroad Corp. – Petition for Exemption
From 49 U.S.C. § 10901 To Construct And Operate A Rail Line Extension To
Port MacKenzie, Alaska

Dear Ms. Rutson:

I am writing on behalf of the Alaska Railroad Corporation ("ARRC") to follow up on the responses to information requests that were provided to you in a letter dated August 3, 2010. In its earlier letter, ARRC stated that it would update SEA regarding water crossing structures in a separate transmittal. The following material is submitted in further response to SEA information request number 5. As noted in the Draft EIS, the precise location of all proposed bridges and culverts will be determined during final design and permitting.

ARRC has identified the following crossings as ones where a structure conforming with 2008 National Marine Fisheries Service ("NMFS") guidance is likely to differ from what has been proposed to this point.

ME-4.5

Structure size proposed in PEAR: 36 inches
Estimated Q₁₀₀ from PEAR: 35.1 cfs
Channel width from DEIS Section 5.4 (Fisheries): 6 feet
Channel width from DEIS Ch.12 (Navigation): 6 feet

Discussion:

Field investigation of the crossing location and section line road have resulted in this area being considered for mitigation project to include the restoration of the stream channel and removal of the road crossing through the waterway. The railroad crossing now proposed is a 28-foot bridge structure.

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MW-4.6

Structure size proposed in PEAR: 48 inches
Estimated Q_{100} from PEAR: 98.7 cfs
Channel width from DEIS Section 5.4 (Fisheries): 35 feet
Channel width from DEIS Ch.12 (Navigation): 0 feet

Discussion:

ARRC has been unable to find a 35-foot stream channel in this location, or indeed any defined stream channel at all. The observed flow is minimal, and occurs through the middle of large, over-banked wetlands. Based on expected flow conditions, the current proposed crossing is a culvert. If SEA concurs with this assessment, ARRC suggests correcting the DEIS to match that of Chapter 12. If there is determined to be a channel of any size in this location, ARRC will need additional information to adequately consider alternate stream crossing structures.

MW-10.1

Structure size proposed in PEAR: NA
Estimated Q_{100} from PEAR: NA
Channel width from DEIS Section 5.4 (Fisheries): 9 feet
Channel width from DEIS Ch.12 (Navigation): NA

Discussion:

No structure was evaluated in the PEAR at this location. If the field program reveals a need for fish passage in this location, the structure would be sized per the 2008 NMFS crossing guidance as proposed in the mitigation measures. Based upon the information provided to date, the most likely structure would be a 10-12 foot natural bottom plate pipe or arch structure. If fish passage is determined to be unnecessary, the structure will be sized for the anticipated flow which is approximately a 48" culvert. ARRC suggests correcting the channel width discrepancy between chapters 5 and 12.

MW-11.0

Structure size proposed in PEAR: 36 inches
Estimated Q_{100} from PEAR: 25.8 cfs
Channel width from DEIS Section 5.4 (Fisheries): 11 feet
Channel width from DEIS Ch.12 (Navigation): 11 feet

Discussion:

If the field program reveals a need for fish passage in this location, the structure would be sized per the 2008 NMFS crossing guidance as proposed in the mitigation measures.

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Based upon the information provided to date, the most likely structure would be a 28-foot span bridge structure. If fish passage is determined to be unnecessary, the structure will be sized for the anticipated flow which is approximately a 36" culvert.

C1-2.6

Structure size proposed in PEAR: 72 inches
Estimated Q_{100} from PEAR: 148.7 cfs
Channel width from DEIS Section 5.4 (Fisheries): 27 feet
Channel width from DEIS Ch.12 (Navigation): 2 feet

Discussion:

If the field program reveals a need for fish passage in this location, the structure would be sized per the 2008 NMFS crossing guidance as proposed in the mitigation measures. Based upon the information provided to date, the most likely structure would be a two-span 28-foot span bridge structure. If fish passage is determined to be unnecessary, the structure will be sized for the anticipated flow which is approximately a 72" culvert. ARRC suggests correcting the channel width discrepancy between chapters 5 and 12.

HS-1.0

Structure size proposed in PEAR: NA
Estimated Q_{100} from PEAR: NA
Channel width from DEIS Section 5.4 (Fisheries): 18 feet
Channel width from DEIS Ch.12 (Navigation): NA

Discussion:

This channel was not evaluated in the PEAR, and the aerial photograph provided does not show any defined channel at this location. Furthermore, there is a significant discrepancy between chapters 5 and 12 as to whether there is a channel at all. If the field program reveals a need for fish passage in this location, the structure would be sized per the 2008 NMFS crossing guidance as proposed in the mitigation measures. Based upon the information provided to date, the most likely structure would be a 28-foot span bridge structure. If fish passage is determined to be unnecessary, the structure will be sized for the anticipated flow which is approximately a 36" culvert. ARRC suggests correcting the channel width discrepancy between chapters 5 and 12.

HN-4.8

Structure size proposed in PEAR: NA
Estimated Q_{100} from PEAR: NA
Channel width from DEIS Section 5.4 (Fisheries): 9 feet
Channel width from DEIS Ch.12 (Navigation): 20 feet

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Discussion:

This channel was not evaluated in the PEAR, and the aerial photograph provided indicates the channel is likely 9 feet in width. If the field program reveals a need for fish passage in this location, the structure would be sized per the 2008 NMFS crossing guidance as proposed in the mitigation measures, which is anticipated to yield 10-12 foot natural bottom plate pipe or arch structure. However, if the Chapter 12 information proves to be correct, the most likely structure would be a 28-foot span bridge structure. If fish passage is determined to be unnecessary, the structure will be sized for the anticipated flow which is approximately a 72" culvert. ARRC suggests correcting the channel width discrepancy between chapters 5 and 12.

W-20.9

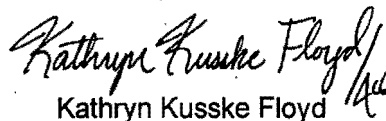
Structure size proposed in PEAR: 36 inches
Estimated Q_{100} from PEAR: 40.6 cfs
Channel width from DEIS Section 5.4 (Fisheries): 7.4 feet
Channel width from DEIS Ch.12 (Navigation): 7.4 feet

Discussion:

If the field program reveals a need for fish passage in this location, the structure would be sized per the 2008 NMFS crossing guidance as proposed in the mitigation measures, which is anticipated to yield 8-10 foot natural bottom plate pipe or arch structure. If fish passage is determined to be unnecessary, the structure will be sized for the anticipated flow which is approximately a 36" culvert.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this material. Thank you as always for your time and efforts in this matter.

Sincerely,


Kathryn Kusske Floyd