



U.S. ARMY GARRISON, ALASKA QUARTERLY UPDATE FOR ALASKA NATIVE TRIBES

May 2006, Issue 7

This is a quarterly update on U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska activities and issues that might be of interest to federally recognized tribes in Alaska.

Potlatch in Eagle

USAG-AK commander Colonel Donna Boltz and staff Amanda Shearer and Jennifer Elksen traveled to Eagle, Alaska, to participate in a potlatch hosted by Chief Isaac Juneby and the Eagle Village IRA Council.

The fourth annual potlatch was held on February 11, 2006, and provided a wonderful opportunity for guests to gain a better understanding of the subsistence lifestyle. Representatives from several agencies attended, including the National Park Service,

the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Tana Chiefs Conference. Guests were asked to introduce themselves and to talk about how they work with the Eagle Village IRA Council through their agencies. The potlatch meal was delicious and included several fish and moose dishes.

Eagle Village IRA Council graciously provided several meals for us during our stay. We sincerely appreciate everyone's generosity during our visit. Thanks goes to all those involved in the planning and preparation of the subsistence potlatch.



COL Donna Boltz presents the Fort Wainwright blanket to Chief Isaac Juneby at the 2006 Annual Subsistence Potlatch in Eagle.

Right: COL Donna Boltz, Chief Isaac Juneby, Amanda Shearer and Jennifer Elksen at Old Eagle Village.



Below: Chief Isaac Juneby of Eagle and Jennifer Elksen, USAG-AK Cultural Resource Manager.



Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Construction and the Operation of a Battle Area Complex and a Combined Arms Collective Training Facility within U.S. Army Training Lands in Alaska

Staff from the U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska (USAG-AK) met with tribal representatives from the Upper Tanana region to discuss the "Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Construction and the Operation of a Battle Area Complex (BAX) and a Combined Arms Collective Training Facility (CACTF) within U.S. Army Training Lands in Alaska." This proposed action involves the construction of two training ranges on Army lands in Interior Alaska, to include a rural training component (BAX) and an urban training component (CACTF). Colonel Donna Boltz hosted the luncheon on April 5, 2006, in Fairbanks with tribal representatives attending from Dot Lake, Eagle, Healy Lake, Northway and Tanacross.

During the first portion of the meeting, Ms. Carrie McEnteer provided an overview of how the project has changed since USAG-AK last met with tribes regarding this topic in December 2004. Since that time, the Army has spent approximately 16 months conducting field work and doing additional studies on cultural resources, hydrology, wildlife, and wetland delineations. The Army also analyzed an additional siting alternative. She discussed how previous tribal comments on the project have been

incorporated into the current draft, such as concerns about potential effects on seasonal moose movement, springtime migratory bird and waterfowl migration, location of cultural resources at Donnelly Dome, and the potential increase of large military vehicle convoys on state highways. For the remainder of the meeting, Ms. Jennifer Elsken led a detailed

Proposed mitigation measures to address issues voiced by tribes during the first draft, include:

- Conduct consultation with tribes on cultural resource management issues;
- Propose a traditional cultural property survey at the Donnelly Training Area;
- Conduct archeological surveys to identify cultural resources and share those findings in the form of the annual archeological reports with interested tribes;
- Conduct soil and water quality monitoring program to manage and monitor military training;
- Manage natural resources on an ecosystem-wide basis through the Army's Natural Resources Conservation Program;
- Conduct annual wildlife and bird surveys, and use adaptive management strategies based on survey results;
- Educate active duty Soldiers on hunting/fishing and Alaska Native cultural awareness;
- Comply with existing safety measures for military convoys;

discussion regarding archaeological sites that will be impacted by the project siting of the BAX at the preferred alternative location, Eddy Drop Zone. She discussed the possibility of a field trip visit to the site for tribes during excavation this summer. Maps were available to help facilitate discussions regarding areas of concern to the tribes. Tribal representatives suggested USAG-AK also contact Denakkanaaga Inc., Fairbanks Native Association and Tanana Chiefs Conference for the contact information of

other people, including elders, who may know important information about the site.

The official comment period for the SDEIS, which was open for 45 days, closes on May 18, 2006. A final EIS is expected to be available in late June 2006. A 30-day waiting period is required between the release of the final EIS and approval of the Record of Decision (ROD).

USAG-AK Methodology for the 2006 Archaeological Field Season

USAG-AK plans to undertake several archaeological inventories and evaluations during the 2006 summer field season. The focus of this work will involve:

- The survey of firing fans associated with training ranges on Fort Wainwright's Yukon and Donnelly Training Areas;
- Evaluations to determine eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places of archaeological sites that may be impacted by future development on the Donnelly Training Area, including the BAX CACTF; and,
- Numerous smaller Section 106 surveys at Fort Wainwright's main post, the Donnelly Training Area, and Fort Richardson.

Detailed information on the areas to be surveyed and the methodology that will be used to accomplish the surveys is provided in USAG-AK's methodology report "Methodology: U.S. Army Alaska 2006 Range Developments Section 106 Archaeological Inventory and Evaluation Fort Richardson and Fort Wainwright." The methodology report is available for review and has also been sent out to several tribes. *Please contact Amanda Shearer, USAG-AK Native Liaison, at (907) 384-3263 to request a copy.*

Update on Army Alternative Procedures to Section 106

USAG-AK is working to finalize the Historic Properties Component (HPC) of the Integrated Cultural Resource Management Plan (ICRMP), which implements the Army Alternate Procedures (AAP) to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Under the AAP, tribes and other stakeholders will continue to be involved in cultural resource decisions on a project-by-project basis through the Army's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The AAP will save time for all parties involved, since tribes and stakeholders will have previously agreed on the standard operating procedures (SOPs) by signing the HPC. Tribes and stakeholders will have the opportunity to be involved in cultural resource

decisions earlier through the NEPA process than in the past with the Section 106 process, which is typically done after NEPA.

Comments from tribes on the HPC have been extremely useful in identifying a number of areas needing further clarification or explanation. These comments covered technical issues associated with cultural resources management and the role of NEPA in the AAP. USAG-AK and the Army Environmental Center have reviewed the comments for incorporation into the third and final draft HPC. An updated draft of the HPC is currently available for review by tribes and consulting parties. *Please contact Amanda Shearer, USAG-AK Native*

Liaison, at (907) 384-3263 to request a copy.

After USAG-AK finalizes the HPC, it is subject to an internal Army review process. It is anticipated that the final draft of the HPC and updated ICRMP will be available for public review in September 2006. The draft environmental assessment addressing the HPC will also be released for public review at this time. Copies will be mailed to participating tribes and will also be available on the Internet. Tribes will have 30 days to review the documents and submit final comments. This will be the last comment review period prior to the publication of the final document. There will be a signing ceremony for those tribes interested in signing the HPC.

Quarterly Meeting with Upper Tanana Tribes

Staff from the U.S. Army Garrison, Alaska (USAG-AK) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Alaska District, traveled to Tanacross for the second quarterly meeting with the Upper Tanana Inter-Tribal Coalition (UTIC). The UTIC is made up in part by federally recognized tribes from Dot Lake, Eagle, Healy Lake, Northway, Tanacross and Tetlin.

The working meeting was held on February 13, 2006, at the Tanacross Community Hall. Agency representatives brought maps to help facilitate discussions regarding areas of concern to the tribes. Several topics were discussed:

- USAG-AK provided an update on research regarding tests done at the Gerstle River Test Site during the late 1950s and early 1960s. USAG-AK is interested in getting information from tribes on observed areas of concern at the Gerstle River Test Site.
- Cultural concerns for old villages and campsites were expressed by Tanacross.
- USACE handed out a fact sheet on the Gerstle River Expansion Area. Work at the Gerstle River Expansion Area has been completed and the land has been turned over to the State of Alaska.
- The Haines-Fairbanks Pipeline Remediation Services solicitation, a performance based contract advertised by the Regional Contracting Office on Fort Richardson, was discussed.
- USACE began to explain their portion of work on the Haines-Fairbanks Pipeline. Corridor discussion was delayed for a meeting on the same topic the next day.
- There was a discussion about the general process for small business contracting.

The third quarterly meeting is scheduled to be held on May 24, 2006, at Dot Lake Village. USAG-AK truly appreciates the candidness of the UTIC tribes and thanks Tanacross for hosting the meeting.

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