

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME HABITAT AND RESTORATION DIVISION

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: Kathryn Swaggart  
Project Environmental Coordinator  
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
Juneau

DATE: November 8, 1999

FILE: 71835

FROM: Ben Kirkpatrick  
Habitat Biologist

SUBJECT: Skagway Airport Improvements Site Visit

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On November 4, 1999 Cliff Douglas, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT); and I conducted a site inspection along the Skagway River. Our primary intent was to examine areas that need to have trees removed to comply with FAA Part 77 Safety Standards, and possible mitigation options related to the increased impacts. We also discussed inriver excavation that remains to be completed and visited Pullen Creek to assess progress regarding the habitat improvements. The following are my observations and recollections from this inspection.

Cliff indicated that no trees will need to be removed on from the west side of the main channel of the Skagway River, except for the approach on the north west end. It was agreed that stumps of at least a foot would remain to allow the root systems to survive and continue to provide bank and bar stabilization. All cut brush will be removed to a pile and burned or otherwise disposed.

Several mitigation options were discussed in the following order of preference. Excavate the remenant channel in the north west airport safety zone. This channel could be excavated to a depth equal to the adjacent Skagway River channel, this would allow for off channel rearing during high water. Place additional habitat rocks along the Skagway River channel to provide holding areas for emigrating and outmigrating salmonids. Further excavate a small channel that starts near the north end of the runway and runs along a wooded area adjacent to the runway to provide additional off channel rearing. These mitigation options will need to be discussed further and have exact details worked out.

The new culvert into the Skagway Harbor has been placed and partial excavation of the daylight area has been started. Currently the existing culvert continues to carry Pullen Creek to the harbor. It was noted that the old slide at the end of the existing culvert has been washed away, Pullen Creek now dumps onto riprap at lower tides. The steep sides of the daylight area,

combined with the presence of utility lines and the existing culvert, will combine to make creation of this mitigation area a difficult proposition.

At this time construction of the grade control structure has not been started. It is recommended that DOT take measurements to find the level of the river bed compared to the bridge, to determine the amount of cover around bridge abutments.

I appreciate the cooperation of DOT in conducting this inspection.

cc: Bill Hanson, ADF&G, Douglas\*  
Staff, ADF&G, Haines\*  
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Carl Schader, DEC, Juneau\*  
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