



ANGOON AIRPORT

Environmental Impact Statement



Federal Aviation Administration – Alaskan Region Airports Division Newsletter

December 2011

A Message from the FAA



Dear Angoon Community,

As 2011 draws to a close, I find myself reflecting on the contact our EIS team has had with you this year and the tremendous value of those visits and conversations to the project. As with most EIS projects, the team members spend much of their time analyzing data, writing reports and chapters, and completing assignments. This work is, of course, essential to the success of the project, but as you can imagine, most of it takes place in front of a computer screen, on the telephone, and at a desk far away from the physical location of Angoon where the airport is proposed. I believe that it is important for our team to have perspective and keep firmly in mind the real people and physical environment behind this project. It has been particularly meaningful for us to hear firsthand the questions, ideas, and even frustrations of Angoon community members throughout the year.

I chose the picture above because it was taken as we waited for our flight to Angoon in September. As you recall, we announced in the spring of this year that we would begin to send a representative of the project team to the Angoon community every other month during the summer and early fall to hold informal meetings. This was a “new” approach – usually the EIS team only comes to the community when there is an “official” meeting required by a regulatory process. Our team decided to take this approach because it had been a long time between official meetings. I was receiving phone calls and other

correspondence from the community, and I knew that people were concerned about the status of the project. In response, we released our community visit calendar, letting people know when we would be coming to visit. We sent flyers with pictures and more information as our visit times drew near.

In May, July, and September our Project Coordinator, Jamie Young, came to the community to talk with you, provide information, and bring your input back to me and FAA. I was thrilled to be able to come to the community myself for our September visit, and to reconnect with my friends in Angoon. We spent the day talking with people at the community center and the senior center—the weather that day drove many people indoors to visit with us and kept us in Angoon for the night as well. The onset of fall and winter weather was a pointed reminder of the importance of this airport project to so many of you. As we chatted about our cancelled seaplane flights that day, many stories were told about the challenges of getting to and from the community.

This year, we have written a newsletter after each community visit in order to address the questions and comments that came up. We will continue this practice into 2012. Newsletters in the beginning of next year will focus on the issues and questions that have been regularly brought up in meetings and conversations with community members. For this final newsletter of 2011, we wanted to do something a little different. The sections that follow focus on what we learned from you in 2011 and what we will do with the information we learned in the coming year. It is important to me that you know your concerns are heard and taken into account. I am very grateful for your input and questions, as this helps us build a better EIS document. As always, if you have ideas, topics, or questions that you would like to see addressed in this newsletter or elsewhere, please let me know. I hope you have a wonderful holiday season and New Year!

Best wishes,

*Leslie Grey
FAA Alaskan Region Airports Division
Angoon Airport EIS Project Manager*

What did FAA and the Angoon Airport EIS team learn from the members of the Angoon Community in 2011?

Throughout the year, we learned directly from community members that they have concerns, ideas, and comments about a wide range of issues. The EIS team has heard your concerns, and we will continue to document them, talk with you about these issues, and address them in the EIS document, newsletters, and community meetings.

The following lists themes and topics of concern to the Angoon Community in 2011, shown with pictures taken this year of our Team visits with the community. Thank you for welcoming our Team!



Economics:

unemployment, job creation, timber harvesting, employment opportunities, long-range community planning, future economic and community development, hydroelectric projects, maximizing economic potential of the airport roads and runways, land acquisition



Cultural Resources:

preservation of Tlingit culture, oral histories, locations of cultural resources on the island, sensitivity of resources in and near proposed airport locations, cultural differences



Subsistence:

hunting, hunting ranges, hunting rules and restrictions around the airport, fuel contamination of fish resources, plants of importance to the community, subsistence interviews conducted with elders and other community members



Aviation:

size and types of aircraft, navigational equipment, insurance, fare prices, runway lights, nighttime medical emergencies, helicopter landing sites, medevac jets, long-range planning for jets, relative expenses of land- and water-based aircraft, runway lengths



The Airport:

who controls the airport, long-term maintenance, safety, emergency response, fire, power, buildings, facilities



The EIS:

public comment periods, sharing information with the community, time frames, schedules, agencies, stakeholders, roles and responsibilities, noise, wildlife, critical habitat, stormwater, wind, ANILCA Title XI



Airport Location Alternatives:

original range of alternatives, current alternatives, rationales for eliminating previous alternatives, pros and cons of current alternatives, proposed action, no action alternative

What will we do with what we've learned?

Collecting and documenting your concerns and input is a critical step, but we understand that you want answers and action as well. The following describes some of the steps we are taking now and in 2012 to ensure that you have the information you need and that important issues are taken into account in the EIS process.

Incorporating concerns into the EIS: We document your concerns very carefully and compare them against our reports, EIS chapters, and data to ensure that we are covering all of our bases in our descriptions of the environment and resources affected by this project and our evaluation of possible effects of the project. We are also keeping track of the areas of particular concern for community members as we compile the document. In this way, we will be prepared to help you find the information you are most interested in when the draft EIS is ready for your review.

Enhancing our newsletters: As you know from previous newsletters, when we learn of your concerns, we address them in a "question and answer" format if possible. Some concerns are more complex, and we develop tables and graphics to explain them. When the same questions come up again and again, we often address them multiple times in different ways, as people understand and process information in different ways. In 2012, we plan to develop "special topic" newsletters that focus on more complex questions that often come up repeatedly, such as how airport location alternatives were chosen.

Joining Facebook: Newsletters, flyers, and visits allow us to respond to your questions quickly. We will continue to use these tools in 2012, and we will add new ones. For example, during our last community visit we were told that many community members use Facebook to keep in touch with friends and relatives and to learn about events. In response to this feedback, in January we will launch the Angoon Airport EIS Project Facebook page, where we will post real-time updates on the progress of the EIS, answer your questions, respond to your posts, and share pictures, website links, schedule updates, and other information about the project.

How can I stay involved?

Our team is very interested in your feedback throughout the life of the project, and we are always interested in your thoughts on the best way to keep in touch with the community. We will continue to discuss options with you at community meetings, and through paper and electronic mailers. As always, you can submit comments online through our website, www.angoonairporteis.com, or you can contact Leslie Grey, the FAA project manager listed here. We will be in touch with the community at important milestones in the project, as well as at other times just to check in.

How to Contact Us

If you have any questions about the proposed project or the EIS, please, contact:



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