



ANGOON AIRPORT

Environmental Impact Statement



A Message from the FAA

Hello Angoon Community!



The month of September marks our final informal visit to Angoon this year. I would like to thank you for again welcoming Project Coordinator Jamie Young during her July visit. As occurs after each of her visits, I met with the EIS team in the following months to discuss all of the questions, comments, and concerns that you shared with her. We found that

the community had many specific questions about the airport project, the proposed airport itself, and the different agencies and stakeholders involved. As with our last newsletter, we have tried to answer as many of your questions as we can in the sections that follow.

I am happy that we are able to answer quite a few questions from the community in this newsletter. However, there are almost always some questions that our team is not able to address, even though they involve the airport. Sometimes these questions involve future plans that we can't predict, and sometimes they are outside of the area of FAA responsibility. We don't want to make guesses that could mislead the community, so we didn't address them here. However, we will be clear about which questions we are not able to answer, and whenever possible point you to a different source of information.

I would also like to acknowledge that sometimes we answer your questions by explaining that the requested information will be contained in the EIS document. I understand that this can be a frustrating answer to receive when you are seeking information. Please know that we do our best to give you all the information we can as soon as it is available to the public.

Finally, I am very pleased to be joining Jamie for our September visit to the community, at which time you will receive this newsletter. I am looking forward to talking with all of you. In particular, I would like to hear your ideas on how we can best keep in touch with you over the winter. We will continue our informal visits in 2012, but we want to continue to communicate with you and hear your ideas and concerns between now and then.

Best wishes,

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

Questions asked about the Angoon Airport Project during the July Visit

Q: Why is the time frame to build the airport so long?

We understand that many residents of Angoon feel that they have been waiting for this airport for more than three decades—and that it is frustrating to see the airports completed in other small Southeast communities like Kake. While the complete history of the Angoon Airport Project is too long to summarize here, we wanted to point out one important difference between Angoon and these other completed projects: only Angoon requires a proposal to put an airport in a national monument and wilderness area. The fact that the State of Alaska DOT&PF's proposed airport at Angoon is in the Monument–Wilderness Area adds considerations to this project that didn't exist for the other communities. Summaries of these considerations are contained within the March and July newsletters.

Q: What is going on with the other agencies involved in the EIS?

Many community members asked us questions about the roles and current activities related to the EIS of the State of Alaska DOT&PF, the Forest Service, the City of Angoon, the Angoon Community Association, and Kootznoowoo Inc., and how they are involved in the airport project and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Specifically, the community wanted to know what other agencies besides FAA have authority and decision-making abilities in the process. We have explained these roles in the graphic below, with more details following.

AGENCY:	FAA	State of Alaska DOT&PF	Forest Service	City of Angoon	Angoon Community Association	Kootznoowoo, Inc.
ROLE:	Lead agency for EIS and Record of Decision	Project sponsor	Cooperating agency	EIS stakeholder, landowner	Federally recognized tribal government	EIS stakeholder, landowner
WHAT THAT ROLE MEANS:	Oversees preparing EIS; approves airport layout plan	Proposed Alternative 3a to FAA	Either agrees with FAA's EIS and Record of Decision or issues their own	Provides information on plans for land use	Must be consulted with by FAA	Provides input on airport locations, land transactions, depending on selected location
DECISION-MAKING:	Recommends approval or disapproval of ANILCA application, Alternative 3a	Would own and operate airport if constructed	Recommends approval or disapproval of ANILCA application, Alternative 3a	No decision-making role in alternative selection	FAA must consider input; ACA has no decision-making role	No decision-making role in EIS

Roles and decision-making responsibilities of agencies and stakeholders in the Angoon Airport EIS.

FAA is the lead agency for the EIS and the Record of Decision. They oversee the preparation of the EIS and approve any Airport Layout Plan selected through the EIS process. The FAA will also recommend approval or disapproval of the ANILCA Title XI application, if the DOT&PF submits one for one of the airport locations in the Monument–Wilderness Area.

The **State of Alaska DOT&PF** is the project sponsor. They have requested construction funding and approval of the Airport Layout Plan for their proposed airport location (Airport Alternative 3a) from the FAA. The DOT&PF would own, operate, and maintain any airport constructed as a result of the EIS.

The **Forest Service** is a “cooperating agency” in the EIS. They will have to either adopt (agree with) the FAA’s EIS and Record of Decision or issue their own Record of Decision. They also have to recommend approval or disapproval of the ANILCA Title XI application if the State of Alaska DOT&PF submits one for one of the airport locations in the Monument–Wilderness Area.

The **City of Angoon** is a “stakeholder” in the EIS and a landowner. The City provides information about plans for land use, but the City does not have a role in decisions about the selection of an alternative.

The **Angoon Community Association** is the federally recognized tribal government, and the FAA must consult with ACA. The FAA must consider the ACA’s input about issues related to the airport that might affect tribal members, but the ACA does not have a formal decision-making role in the project.

Kootznoowoo, Inc. is another stakeholder in the EIS process, as well as a landowner. They provide input about how the different airport alternatives would affect the corporation, and they would be involved in land transactions if an alternative on corporation lands was selected. They do not have a decision-making role in the project.

Q: We keep hearing rumors that the project may not happen and that funding is an issue. Are these rumors true?

Our FAA team can assure you that the Angoon Airport EIS project has not been halted for any reason. The EIS project is still going forward. It is not unusual for rumors to circulate concerning the future of such long-term projects, and FAA would inform the community if the EIS project were delayed for any reason. NEPA, which guides our EIS project, does not require that all the details of project funding be established at this point in the process, and it is not unusual for project proponents such as the DOT&PF to continue working toward securing funding during the EIS process.

Q: Has any long-term planning been done to allow large jets to land in Angoon?

In earlier stages of the project, the FAA and DOT&PF carried out “aviation plans” for the proposed airport. In this planning process, we looked at the likely demand for air travel in Angoon over the next 15 to 20 years. It was determined from these plans that a 3,300-foot runway would be enough for at least 15 years. After 15 years, it was suggested that a 4,000-foot runway may be needed. Because of this, all of the runways at the alternative airport locations considered in the EIS can be expanded from 3,300 to 4,000 feet. So, the long-term planning that has been done looks out 20 years, and it was determined that there was not a need for an airport that could accommodate large jets in that time.

Q: Is this project subject to the Roadless Rule?

We understand that many people are wondering about how the Roadless Rule will influence projects all across Alaska. Fortunately, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), Title XI, applies to our project because of the proposed airport locations in the Monument–Wilderness Area. As discussed in more detail in the last two newsletters, if one of the airport locations in the Monument–Wilderness Area is identified as the preferred alternative in the Final EIS, an ANILCA application will be prepared that’s sent with the EIS to the President and Congress for approval. If the EIS and application are approved in this way, then it will be possible to construct the access roads, even under the Roadless Rule. To put it another way, the ANILCA process supersedes the Roadless Rule.

Q: After the airport is built, will there be fuel containment and contamination prevention plans?

We understand that a number of community members have expressed concerns about the lakes where coho were found, particularly near airport location Alternative 4, in the Monument–Wilderness Area. Plans to contain and prevent fuel contamination of these lakes from the airport would be premature at this point, since FAA has not selected a preferred alternative. However, you can be assured that any of the airport locations in the Angoon area would be required to have fuel containment and spill prevention plans as part of the permit for construction and operation. The plan would need to include measures satisfactory to protect all water bodies.

Q: Will aircraft be able to land in Angoon at night?

Some community members have asked us if the airport runway will have lights for nighttime operation. Our team is very aware of your concerns about medical emergencies that may occur at night. FAA has similar concerns, and addresses these important issues in the upcoming EIS document. At this time, we understand that the runway would have “on-demand” pilot-operated lights. That is, the runway would indeed have lights, but they would not be on all the time. As pilots approach the airport, they would remotely turn on the lights.

Q: Are there construction drawings for the airport locations that we can see?

We are right now in the process of preparing airport site plan layouts, which are essentially drawings of the airport, runways, and other facilities at each of the three locations. We are preparing these layouts for the EIS document so that we can understand the environmental, aviation, and engineering components at each of the three sites. Because these site plan layouts are only being used to compare the impacts associated with different locations, they are not the final design plans used to construct an airport. However, you will be able to see these early site plan layouts in the EIS document and get a sense of what the airport facilities would include. The detailed design and construction drawings will not be prepared until after the EIS is complete and a site for the airport selected.

Q: Why was there *ever* a bridge proposed across Favorite Bay?

In the last (July) newsletter, we discussed why the proposed bridge across Favorite Bay is no longer included in the access alternatives. When we visited the community, some members wondered why it was ever considered in the first place, given sensitivity of the community and other stakeholders to the likely impacts to visual, marine, and subsistence resources. In the early days of our research, the bridge across the bay was considered because it would provide a much shorter route from the Angoon city center to the DOT&PF's proposed airport locations on the Monument-Wilderness Area (Alternatives 3a and 4). We thought it possible that this shorter route would have fewer impacts on wetlands and terrestrial habitat and had the benefit of not crossing Favorite Creek, a salmon stream. As you know, we decided that the impacts would indeed be greater, and we eliminated this route from further consideration.

Q: Will the "fast ferries" make the Angoon Airport Project unnecessary?

At our last meeting with the community, there was some discussion about the possibility that the Angoon ferry terminal will be renovated to accommodate fast ferries from Sitka. FAA is not able to provide information on any renovations to the terminal, but we wanted to respond to the question of whether Angoon would need a land-based airport if more frequent ferry service became available. Earlier in the "aviation planning" process for the EIS, our team considered the effect fast ferry service would have on the need for an airport in Angoon. The FAA concluded that travel demand for an airport was still high enough to move forward with the EIS, even if fast ferries become available before the airport is built.

Q: Which of our questions will be answered in the EIS document?

There are a number of questions and topics that were brought up by community members that our team is not able to answer at this time, because we are still working on the EIS. However, we want to give you any information we can. In the next edition of the newsletter we will provide more information about questions you raised such as impacts to private landowners and how and why alternative airport locations were eliminated.

Q: Which of our questions can't FAA answer, and who can?

We know how frustrating it can be to not get the answers to your questions. We want you to know that we heard all of your questions and concerns, even the ones that are outside of our jurisdiction. As with the previous question, in the next edition of the newsletter we will discuss some of these topics, such as employment opportunities for community members resulting from the proposed airport, the relative expense of water and land based air travel, and fire and safety concerns.



Q: How can I stay involved?

Good question! We would like your feedback on the best way to keep in touch with you over the winter. 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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