

# History & Trajectory of the West Susitna Industrial Corridor



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# What to Expect



- I. Who is the Susitna River Coalition?
- II. Importance of the Susitna
- III. West Susitna Industrial Corridor Basics
- IV. History of West Susitna
- V. Current Status of the Project
- VI. How to Track the Project & Stay Engaged

# The Susitna River Coalition

- Grassroots organization based in Talkeetna, Alaska
- Represents the entire Susitna Watershed
- Monitors and engages in watershed issues
- Watershed Watchdog





# Why Care about the Susitna Watershed?



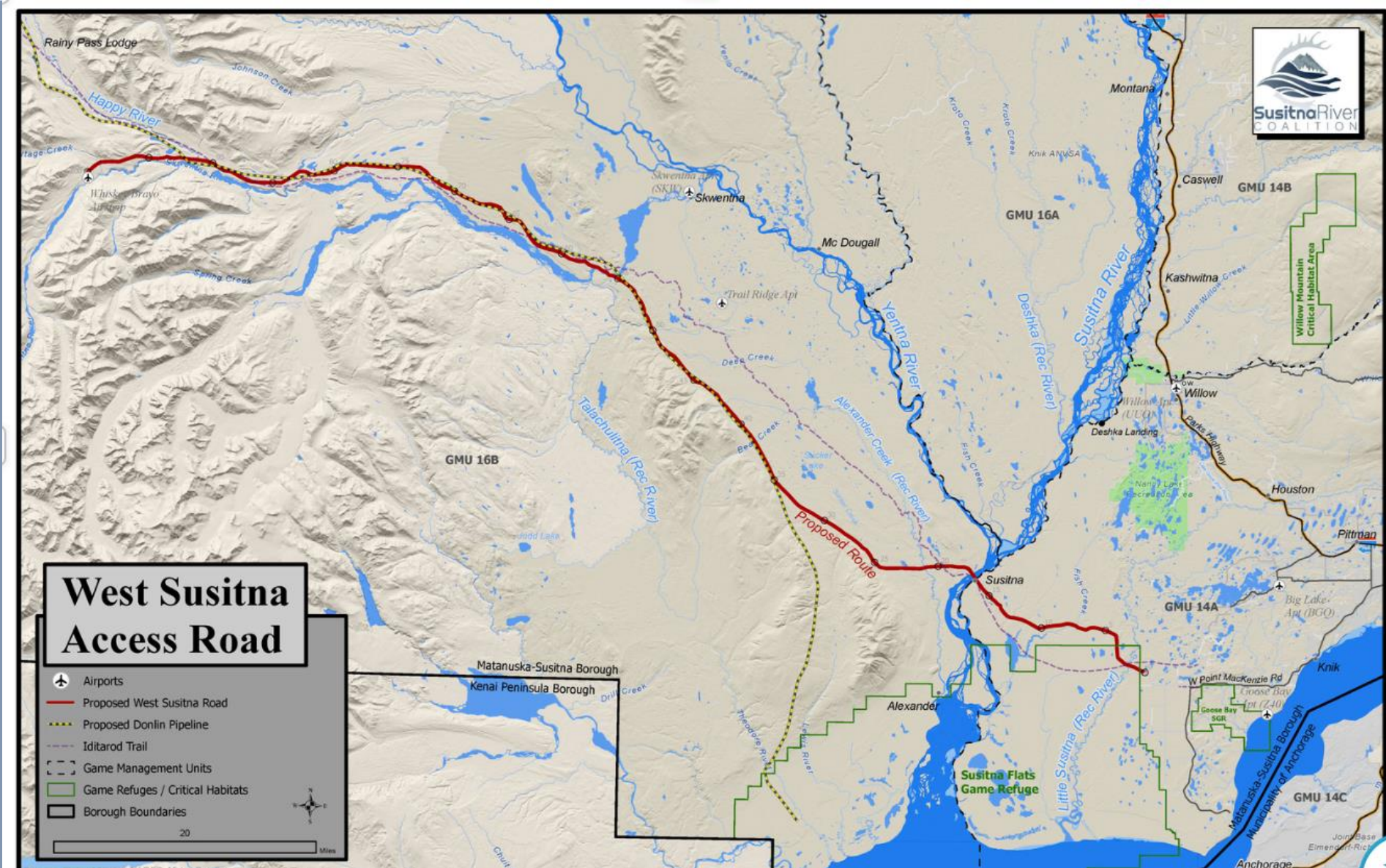
# What's Special about the West Su?



**"The point of this magnificent landscape is that it's accessible wilderness.** It's hunting. It's fishing. It's recreation. It's snowmachining. It's the opportunity for the majority of (the) Alaskan populace, based in Anchorage, Wasilla and Palmer, to have access to Alaska.... **"And here are these grandiose projects that would utterly devastate the quality of Alaskan life** that those of us who either know the Susitna Valley, live here or have visited value most about it."

Rick Leo, ADN, 2013

# West Susitna: Mega-Project Basic Stats



# 2013: Roads to Resources



## West Susitna

Reconnaissance Study for Access to Resource Development Opportunities

### *Roads to Resources*

**Money Spent:  
\$250,000**

#### Overview

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities' (DOT&PF) Roads to Resources Program initiated the West Susitna Access Reconnaissance Study in January 2013. The purpose of this reconnaissance-level study is to evaluate and consider the need for surface access to resource development opportunities west of the Susitna River in Southcentral Alaska. This study aims to identify locations that may benefit from a proposed surface connection. The study will:

- » Identify resource development opportunities west of the Susitna River.
- » Identify one or more potential crossings of the Susitna River.
- » Identify one or more potential transportation corridors to access identified resources.

# Phase I Predevelopment: 2019-2020

- First agreement between 3 major players
- Goal to study feasibility of routes
- Minimal opportunity for public input

**Money Spent on Phase I:  
\$200,000**

**Money Spent to Date:  
\$450,000**





# Phase II Predevelopment: 2020-2021



- Explore two potential routes more intently
- Major goal of outreach.
- One AIDEA open house: locals opposed

**Money Spent on Phase II:  
\$310,000**

**Money Spent to Date:  
\$760,000**

# Phase III Predevelopment 2021-2022

- Introduced 12/7/21 to MSB Assembly: AIDEA unable to answer basic questions
- 12/21/22: Heard again before a new MSB Mayor & Assembly
- Phase III approved: MSB tasked with public outreach

**Money Spent on Phase II:**

**\$8.5 million**

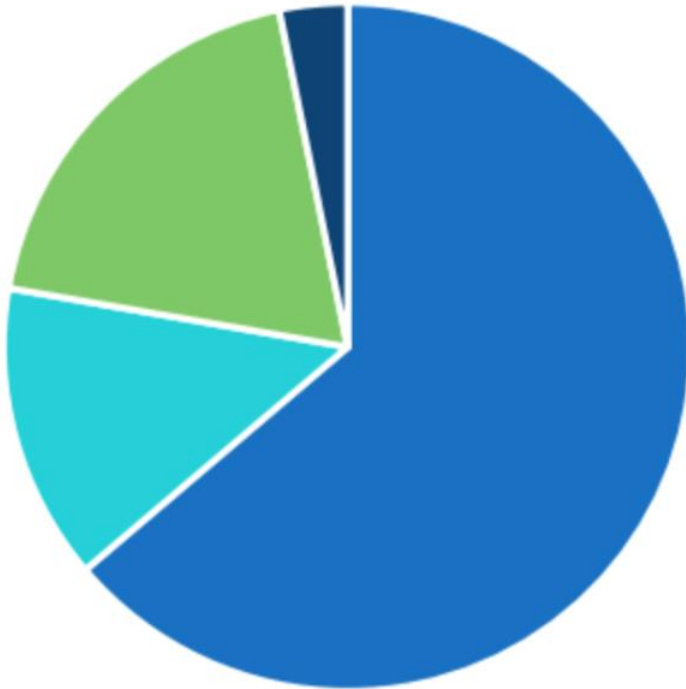
**Money Spent to Date:**

**\$9.26 million**

# Mat Su Borough Outreach 2021-2022

Do you support the road?

■ No ■ Yes ■ Yes, but only if it is public ■ Undecided



Do you support the road? (Public Meeting 2)

■ No  
■ Yes  
■ Yes, but only if it has public access




# 404 Wetland Permitting: 2022-?

- May 2022: AIDEA submitted 404 Wetland permit to the Army Corp. of Engineers
- Deemed incomplete after 1<sup>st</sup> submission
- September 23, 2022, permit application deemed complete pending more information



# AIDEA Information Purchase: 2022

DocuSign Envelope ID: 5607BC84-7D3F-48BE-95B9-52D527941743

		Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority 813 W. Northern Lights Boulevard Anchorage, AK 99503-2495	Purchase Order# <b>PO#010344</b>
<b>BILL TO:</b> AIDEA 813 West Northern Lights Blvd Anchorage, AK 99503 (907) 771-3000		<b>PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:</b> CONTRACT NO: 22101 22101 AIDEA: West Susitna Access Data Purchase POINT OF CONTACT: Kelly Noble PHONE NUMBER: (907) 771-3909	<b>DATE OF ORDER:</b> May 6, 2022
<b>COMPANY CONTACT NAME:</b> Stacey Stone	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b> Sstone@hwb-law.com	<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b> knoble@aidea.org	<b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b> Data/Information Purchase in support of USACE permit application for West Susitna Access Project, Port Mackenzie Route (PMR).
<b>CONTRACTOR:</b> Holmes Weddle & Barcott, PC 701 W. 8th Ave. Suite 700 Anchorage, AK 99501			

Note: This order constitutes a binding commitment between the state and the contractor listed herein. Unauthorized modification without the expressed prior approval of the purchasing authority will result in a financial obligation on the contractor and/or unauthorized state personnel. "By providing goods or services through this PO you are certifying that you are eligible to receive federal funding and not on a debarred or suspension list under 29 CFR Part 29."

ITEM #	QTY	UNIT	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	EXTENDED PRICE
1	1	LS	West Susitna 'PMR' Route Data / Information Purchase to support USACE permit application	\$445,852.07	\$445,852.07
			Purchase of data pertaining to the West Susitna Access Road Project that was performed by a third party. Package consists of:		
2	1	EA	> West Susitna Access PMR Material Site Recon Tech Memo Final 20211022.pdf		
3	1	EA	> WSA CulturalFieldworkReport 20220224 With Data Gap Analysis.pdf		
4	1	EA	> Wetlands and Waterbody PJD 20211213_PJDR_WSA_PMR.pdf Figures WSA_PJDR.pdf Folder: Appendices App_A, App_B, App_C, App_D, App_E		
5	1	EA	> GIS Data - Port Mackenzie Route Only 20211215_wetlandsdata_jdr_pmr_southroute.zip		

<b>Prepared by:</b> AIDEAAP@aidea.org	BY EMAIL: AIDEAAP@aidea.org BY MAIL: Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority 813 W. Northern Lights Boulevard Anchorage, AK 99503-2495	Page 1 of 1	<b>TOTAL NOT TO EXCEED</b> \$445,852.07
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REF	TYPE	NUMBER	AMOUNT	DATE	PROC TRACKING NO	PROJECT
1	PO	10344	\$445,852.07	05/06/22	22101	Data / Information Purchase
2						

<b>Purchasing Authority Name:</b> Kelly Noble AIDEA Executive Director Alan Weitzner	<b>Title:</b> Contracting Officer Alan Weitzner	<b>Purchasing Authority's Signature:</b> Kelly Noble	<b>Telephone Number:</b> 907-771-3909
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\*\*\*\*\*Please print, sign, date below and return page 1 of this purchase order in acknowledgement.\*\*\*\*\*

Printed Name & Title: Stacey Stone, Attorney Holmes, Weddle & Barcott, PC Signature: <i>Stacey Stone</i> Date: 5/9/2022
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1. P.O. # and receiving agency name must appear on all invoices and documents relating to this order.  
 2. The state is registered for tax free transactions under Chapter 32, IRS code. Registration number 92-73-0006 K. Items are for the exclusive use of the state and not for resale.

- Data was bought from unknown studies in 2022
- Data intended to fill many significant knowledge gaps

**Money Spent on AIDEA information Purchase: \$490,000**

**Money Spent to Date: \$9.75 million**

# DOT draft STIP Plan: A Brand Shift

Ryan Anderson, P.E.  
*Commissioner*



Department of Transportation  
and Public Facilities

www.DOT.Alaska.Gov

Juneau, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** July 27, 2023 *Press Release: 23-0025*

**Contact:** Shannon McCarthy, 907-269-0448, [shannon.mccarthy@alaska.gov](mailto:shannon.mccarthy@alaska.gov)

**West Susitna Access Changes Agencies, Changes Focus to Public Rec Road**  
*Project will now be a 15-mile public roadway and bridge across the Susitna.*

**Money Spent if DOT moves Forward:  
\$82.5 million**

**Total Money Spent if DOT moves forward:  
\$92.25 million**

1004 comments. 398 related to West Su 54 supported the project , 344 opposed 13% in favor, 87% opposed to the project.

# Accurate Cost Estimates?

## Cooper Landing highway project estimate more than doubles in cost

By Elizabeth Earl for the Anchorage Daily News

Updated: August 3, 2023

Published: August 3, 2023



Using Cooper Landing Example:

First 15 miles and a bridge across the Su: >\$165 million

\$450 million in 2017 is  
>\$1 billion in 2023

# Mat-Su Borough 2024 Legislative Priorities

- A. **CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE WEST SUSITNA ACCESS ROAD** – Design and construct an access road to open vast acreage on the west side of the Borough to agriculture, commercial use, forestry, materials extraction, public recreation, resource management, and settlement. The road will help develop the area between the Little Susitna (Little Su) and Susitna (Big Su) Rivers, opening approximately 200,000 acres. The project also puts the State near the doorstep of 6 million acres of land on the other side of the Big Su with oil and gas, mineral, agricultural, timber, and many other resources.

Borough Assembly Meeting:

November 21, 2023 at 6PM

COMMENT



# Project Concerns



# How can you stay informed?

**Keep in touch with the Susitna River Coalition!**

**Contact us:**

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**Susitna River Coalition phone: 907-733-5400**

**[www.susitnarivercoalition.org](http://www.susitnarivercoalition.org)**

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