

Kenai Peninsula Borough

Planning Department

MEMORANDUM

TO: Blair Martin, Planning Commission Chair
Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Commissioners

THRU: Melanie Aeschliman, Planning Director *MA*

FROM: Bryan Taylor, Planner *BT*

DATE: May 5, 2021

RE: Comment Period for Jims' Landing Access Improvements Project Draft
Environmental Assessment

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is seeking public comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Jims' Landing Access Improvements project, located on the east end of Skilak Lake Road at Sterling Highway MP 58. The comment period for the draft will be open from May 5 to June 19, 2021.

The Cooper Landing Advisory Planning Commission received the enclosed notice of the comment period for the project and would like to hold a public hearing on the EA. Because it is an advisory body, any comments from the APC will need to come before the Planning Commission prior to being submitted to the USFWS. This will give the Planning Commission an opportunity to forward the comments directly or offer its own comments, taking into consideration those from the Cooper Landing APC. An informational public meeting on the project will be held on May 19, 2021. Meeting details are available on the notice.

If the Cooper Landing APC makes a recommendation to submit comments, or if the Planning Commission would like to submit comments on its own, I will prepare a resolution for your June 14 meeting to consider submitting comments.

Project information and the EA are available at: <https://usfws-jims.blogspot.com/>

encl.



April 30, 2021

Janette Cadieux
Cooper Landing Advisory Planning Commission
P.O. Box 694
Cooper Landing, AK 99572

Subject: Notice of Availability of Draft Environmental Assessment for the Jims' Landing Access Improvements Project, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska.

Dear Ms. Cadieux:

PND Engineers Inc. (PND), on behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), is providing this Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Jims' Landing Access Improvements Project, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska. Your agency has been identified as an agency that may have an interest in the Service's proposed project based on your jurisdiction by law and/or special expertise. The Service is seeking public comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Jims' Landing Access Improvements project.

The Service proposes improvements to the Jims' Landing facility, consisting of transportation access, parking areas, and boat ramp improvements. The Jims' Landing boat ramp and parking facility is within the Skilak Wildlife Recreation Area, which is a component of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. This recreation site offers important recreational opportunities (e.g., boat ramp for boat launch and retrieval on the upper Kenai River) between the Russian River and Skilak Lake. The Kenai River is important resource and provides habitat for spawning salmonids and other fish species.

The purpose of this proposed action is to address recreation needs, public safety, and access requirements of Jims' Landing day use facility by improving the boat launch and retrieval area, and facilitating traffic and pedestrian flow with improved roads, parking areas and signage. Protection of the wetland, riverine, and riparian habitats is integral to the purpose and need of the proposed action.

The Service, ADF&G and ADNR have worked together to combine scientific data, public input, and institutional knowledge to develop the Draft Environmental Assessment. The Draft Environmental Assessment analyzes the impacts of three alternatives with two off-site parking options to resources of Jims' Landing and the Refuge

The draft Environmental Assessment will be made available from May 5, 2021 to June 19, 2021 at the following web addresses: <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/kenai/> & <https://usfws-jims.blogspot.com/>.

Public Comments

Public comments on the draft Environmental Assessment may be submitted by any of the following methods:

U.S. Post: You may submit written comments to PND Engineers Inc., 1506 W. 36th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99503.

Email: Comments may also be sent via e-mail to jimslanding@pndengineers.com.

PUBLIC MEETING

A virtual public meeting will be held on May 19, 2021 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm AKST (or until the end of any questions/comments).

The Web Link for Virtual Public Review and Comment Meeting via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84402555712?pwd=dTZhN2tyMXR2WEduZDRlSIB2K1F4dz09>

Meeting ID: 844 0255 5712

Passcode: 083127

If you cannot use Zoom or do not have web access, you may call the Alternative Call-in Number: +1 (669) 900-6833

The meeting will consist of a live presentation followed by a question-and-answer session. Questions can be submitted in writing during the meeting. General comment instructions will be provided during the meeting and on the website <https://usfws-jims.blogspot.com/>.

If you have any questions regarding the meeting or your agency's participation, please contact Anna Kopitov, PND NEPA coordinator, at (206) 940-7068 or akopitov@pndengineers.com or Alexandra West Jefferies, PND Project Manager, Email: ajefferies@pndengineers.com at (907) 561-1011.

Thank you for your cooperation and interest in the Jims' Landing Access Improvements Project.

Sincerely,



Anna Kopitov
NEPA Coordinator
Consultant Team

Enc. Legal Notice

Cc: Steve Miller, USFWS, Project Leader
Amy Klein, USFWS, Project Manager/Contracting Officer's Representative
Alexandra West Jefferies, PND Engineers, Inc., Project Manager, Consultant Team
Paul Kendall, PND Engineers, Inc., P.E., Vice President, Consultant Team

LEGAL NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
JIMS' LANDING IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is seeking public comments on a draft Environmental Assessment of the Jims' Landing Access Improvements project on the Kenai River. The Kenai River is important habitat for spawning salmonids and other fish species. The Service proposes improvements to the Jims' Landing facility, consisting of transportation access, parking areas, and boat ramp improvements. The Jims' Landing boat ramp and parking facility is within the Skilak Wildlife Recreation Area, which is a component of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. This recreational site offers important recreational opportunities (e.g., boat ramp for boat launch and retrieval on the upper Kenai River) between the Russian River and Skilak Lake.

The purpose of this proposed action is to address recreation needs, public safety, and access requirements of Jims' Landing day use facility by improving the boat launch and retrieval area, and facilitating traffic and pedestrian flow with improved roads, parking areas and signage. Protection of the wetland, riverine, and riparian habitats is integral to the purpose and need of the proposed action.

The Service, ADF&G and ADNR have worked together to combine scientific data, public input, and institutional knowledge to develop a Draft Environmental Assessment. The Draft Environmental Assessment analyzes the impacts of three different alternatives to resources of Jims' Landing and the Refuge

The Draft Environmental Assessment will be made available from May 5, 2021 to June 19, 2021 at the following web addresses: <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/kenai/> & <https://usfws-jims.blogspot.com/>.

A 45-day public comment period will begin on May 5, 2021 and end on June 19, 2021.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT MEETING

A virtual public review and comment meeting will be held on May 19, 2021 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm or until questions and comments have ended. The meeting will consist of a review of the project and environmental assessment followed by a comment period. Comment instructions will be provided during the meeting and on the website <https://usfws-jims.blogspot.com/>. The Public Review and Comment Meeting is intended to serve as part of the NEPA process.

The Web Link for Virtual Public Review and Comment Meeting via Zoom:

Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84402555712?pwd=dTZkN2tyMXR2WEduZDRISlB2K1F4dz09>

Meeting ID: 844 0255 5712

Passcode: 083127

If you cannot use Zoom or do not have web access, you may call the Alternative Call-in

Number: +1 669-900-6833

Public comments on the draft Environmental Assessment may be submitted by any of the

following methods or as noted in **ADDRESSES**:

Reasonable Accommodations

Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate in either of the virtual public scoping meetings should contact the PND Engineers, Inc. office, using one of the methods listed in **ADDRESSES** as soon as possible. In order to allow sufficient time to process requests, please make contact no later than one week before the date of the public meeting. Information regarding this proposed action is available in alternate formats upon request.

ADDRESSES

Availability of documents: You may obtain copies of the public scoping materials on the internet at <https://usfws-jims.blogspot.com/> or by email (see **For Further Information**) or by telephone at (907) 561-1011.

You may submit written comments to PND Engineers Inc., 1506 W. 36th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99503. Comments may also be sent via e-mail to jimslanding@pndengineers.com.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

Alexandra West Jefferies, PND Project Manager, Email: jimslanding@pndengineers.com, Telephone: (907) 561-1011 or Anna Kopitov, NEPA coordinator, Email: akopitov@pndengineers.com.

Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.