

FAIRBANKS FIELD OFFICE Regulatory Division (1145) CEPOA-RD P.O. Box 35066 Fort Wainwright, Alaska 99703

# Public Notice of Application for Permit

PUBLIC NOTICE DATE: May 3, 2022

**EXPIRATION DATE:** June 2, 2022

REFERENCE NUMBER: POA-2022-00034

WATERWAY: Gillespie Creek

Interested parties are hereby notified that a Department of the Army permit application has been received for work in waters of the United States as described below and shown on the enclosed project drawings.

All comments regarding this Public Notice should be sent to the address noted above. If you desire to submit your comments by email, you should send it to the Project Manager's email as listed below or to regpagemaster@usace.army.mil. All comments should include the Public Notice reference number listed above.

All comments should reach this office no later than the expiration date of this Public Notice to become part of the record and be considered in the decision. Please contact John Sargent at (907) 347-1803, toll free from within Alaska at (800) 478-2712, by fax at (907) 753-5567, or by email at John.C.Sargent@usace.army.mil if further information is desired concerning this notice.

APPLICANT: Brett Nelson, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

AGENT: N/A

<u>LOCATION</u>: The project site is located between Latitude 62.7789114° N., Longitude 145.4682574° W.; and Latitude 62.8566343° N., Longitude 145.4738913° W.; Milepost 167 to 173 Richardson Highway, near Paxson Lake, Alaska.

# SPECIAL AREA DESIGNATION: N/A

<u>PURPOSE</u>: The applicant's stated purpose is to improve safety and bring this section of the Richardson Highway up to current design standards. The project is needed because the Richardson Highway throughout this corridor is substandard. This narrow section of roadway was last upgraded in 1953 and reflects the design standards of the time. The existing paved surface has two 12-foot travel lanes with many areas without a gravel shoulder. The pavement is in need of replacement and areas of the road are experiencing embankment and foundation settlement. The road embankment is steep and its alignment has numerous sharp horizontal and vertical curves that limit sight distance and exceed current design standards. Drainage problems exist in several areas due to undersized or failing culverts

<u>PROPOSED WORK</u>: DOT&PF proposes to reconstruct the Richardson Highway between mileposts 167 and 173. The scope of work includes reconstructing the road with 12-foot lanes and 6-foot-wide paved shoulders, reduce existing steep vertical grades and flatten horizontal and vertical curves, grading ditches to drain and replacing failing or undersized culverts, improve turnouts, replace roadway signs, realign the highway around Meiers Lake (MP 170), and build a temporary access road to access a retired material site where unusable material will be placed to reclaim the site.

Approximately 94,500 cubic yards of type A/C and 400 cubic yards of riprap Material would be deposited into 24.9 acres of wetlands and waters of the U.S. as a result of work required to reconstruct and realign the highway, flatten foreslopes to 4:1, grade ditches to drain ponded water, and remove and replace damaged, undersized, or failing culverts along the project corridor. Currently there are two 6-foot diameter cross culverts at Gillespie Creek. These will be replaced with one 12-foot diameter fish passage culvert. Materials that do not come from project excavations will come from within the permitted boundaries of the DOT&PF owned Meiers Lake Material Source (MS 71-3-008-5) located at Richardson Highway MP 169.5.

All work would be performed in accordance with the enclosed plan (sheets 1-12), dated May 2, 2022.

<u>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:</u> An Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fish Habitat Permit was issued on April 29, 2022.

<u>APPLICANT PROPOSED MITIGATION</u>: The applicant proposes the following mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, and compensate for impacts to waters of the United States from activities involving discharges of dredged or fill material.

### a. Avoidance and Minimization:

The majority of construction will maintain the highway along its current alignment.
 In areas where the highway shifts away from the original alignment, the roadway will be obliterated, meaning the asphalt will be removed and the surface will be scarified. For approximately 100-feet at the beginning and end of these sections

the abandoned highway embankment will be removed down to existing (surrounding) ground elevations and will be seeded to promote re-vegetation and prevent erosion. This will discourage use of the abandon portions of the highway by motor vehicles following completion of the project.

- The majority of the road reconstruction and realignment will occur either above OHW or in uplands.
- Existing drainage patterns will be maintained or enhanced wherever possible, including replacement of damaged or failing cross culverts with pipes of equal or larger size. Existing 24 inch drainage culverts will primarily be replaced with 36 inch or larger culverts to ensure sufficient hydraulic capacity and improve hydrologic connectivity. Culvert replacement will help improve water quality by reducing scour and erosion, reduce flooding, and provide improved habitat connectivity, resulting in some amount of ecological uplift for existing streams and wetlands adjacent to the roadway.
- In-water work at Gillespie Creek will be limited to what is needed to remove the two existing 6-foot diameter culverts, reestablish the channel to its natural drainage configuration, and place the new 12-foot diameter fish passage culvert with substrate and riprap armoring.
- The contractor will place fill material and riprap below OHW during periods of low flow.
- Material stockpiles and staging areas will be located in uplands or previously disturbed areas.
- Wetlands and stream banks left with exposed soils as a result of construction will be seeded with a native, perennial grass seed mixture to provide vegetation stabilization. Project contract specs include utilization of certified weed-free seed mixture. Seed containing prohibited noxious weeds will not be incorporated in the project.
- Disturbed upland areas, vegetated prior to the project and left unprotected by improvements, would be stabilized and re-vegetated. Ground disturbances in these areas will be addressed by measures such as raking slopes, seeding, fertilizing and mulching as well as the BMP's mentioned above. This will minimize erosion and sediment transport and help establish vegetative cover, thereby minimizing short-term and long-term impacts to adjacent and downstream waters.
- Wetland water quality will be protected during construction through best management practices (BMPs) and appropriate erosion and sediment control measures (i.e.: silt fences and 25-foot vegetative buffers) will be implemented on or at the perimeters of disturbed soil surfaces to minimize the transport of sediment to waters of the U.S., and disturbed areas will be seeded with native perennial grasses.
- Any incidental fill placed in the 10-foot work areas designated as wetlands will be completely removed and those wetlands restored.
- In accordance with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recommendations, mechanized vegetation clearing will be avoided during the migratory bird nesting

window for the project area (May 1 through July 15), except at sites which have been sufficiently disturbed or altered.

b. Compensatory Mitigation: The applicant has not proposed compensatory mitigation for the unavoidable loss of wetlands.

<u>WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION</u>: A permit for the described work will not be issued until a certification or waiver of certification, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (Public Law 95-217), has been received from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

<u>CULTURAL RESOURCES</u>: The lead Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities has assumed the Federal lead agency for the U.S. Department of Transportation and is responsible for compliance with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has reviewed the Section 106 documentation from the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and concurs with their findings and determinations.

<u>ENDANGERED SPECIES</u>: No threatened or endangered species are known to use the project area.

We have determined the described activity would have no effect on any listed or proposed threatened or endangered species and would have no effect on any designated or proposed critical habitat, under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 844). Therefore, no consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is required. However, any comments they may have concerning endangered or threatened wildlife or plants or their critical habitat will be considered in our final assessment of the described work.

<u>ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT</u>: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996, requires all Federal agencies to consult with the NMFS on all actions, or proposed actions, permitted, funded, or undertaken by the agency, that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

The project area is within the known range of Chinook salmon and sockeye salmon. The project is rearing habitat for Chinook salmon and migratory habitat for sockeye salmon.

We have determined the described activity would not adversely affect EFH in the project area.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION: The Corps fully supports tribal self-governance and government-to-government relations between Federally recognized Tribes and the Federal government. Tribes with protected rights or resources that could be significantly affected by a proposed Federal action (e.g., a permit decision) have the right to consult with the Alaska District on a government-to-government basis. Views of each Tribe regarding protected rights and resources will be accorded due consideration in this process. This public notice serves as notification to the Tribes within the area potentially affected by the proposed work and invites their participation in the Federal decision-making process regarding the protected Tribal right

or resource. Consultation may be initiated by the affected Tribe upon written request to the District Commander during the public comment period.

<u>PUBLIC HEARING</u>: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, reasons for holding a public hearing.

EVALUATION: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity and its intended use on the public interest. Evaluation of the probable impacts, which the proposed activity may have on the public interest, requires a careful weighing of all the factors that become relevant in each particular case. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. The outcome of the general balancing process would determine whether to authorize a proposal, and if so, the conditions under which it will be allowed to occur. The decision should reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal, must be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving 404 discharges, a permit will be denied if the discharge that would be authorized by such permit would not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's 404(b)(l) guidelines. Subject to the preceding sentence and any other applicable guidelines or criteria (see Sections 320.2 and 320.3), a permit will be granted unless the District Commander determines that it would be contrary to the public interest.

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

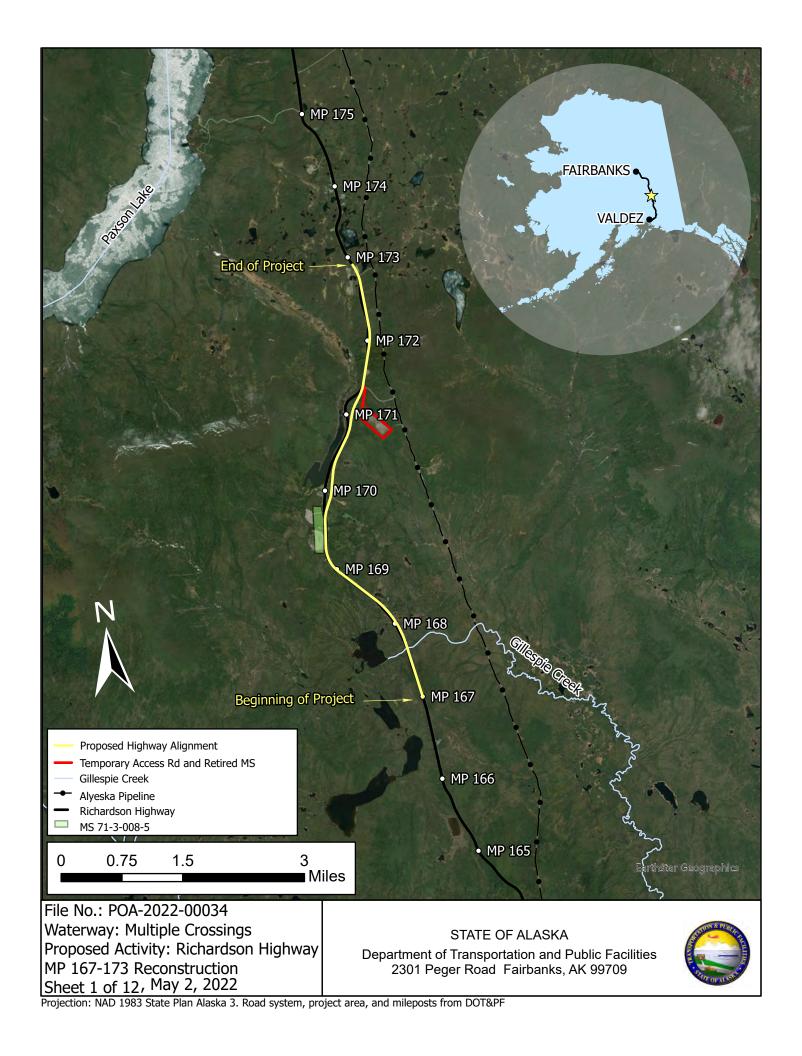
<u>AUTHORITY</u>: This permit will be issued or denied under the following authority:

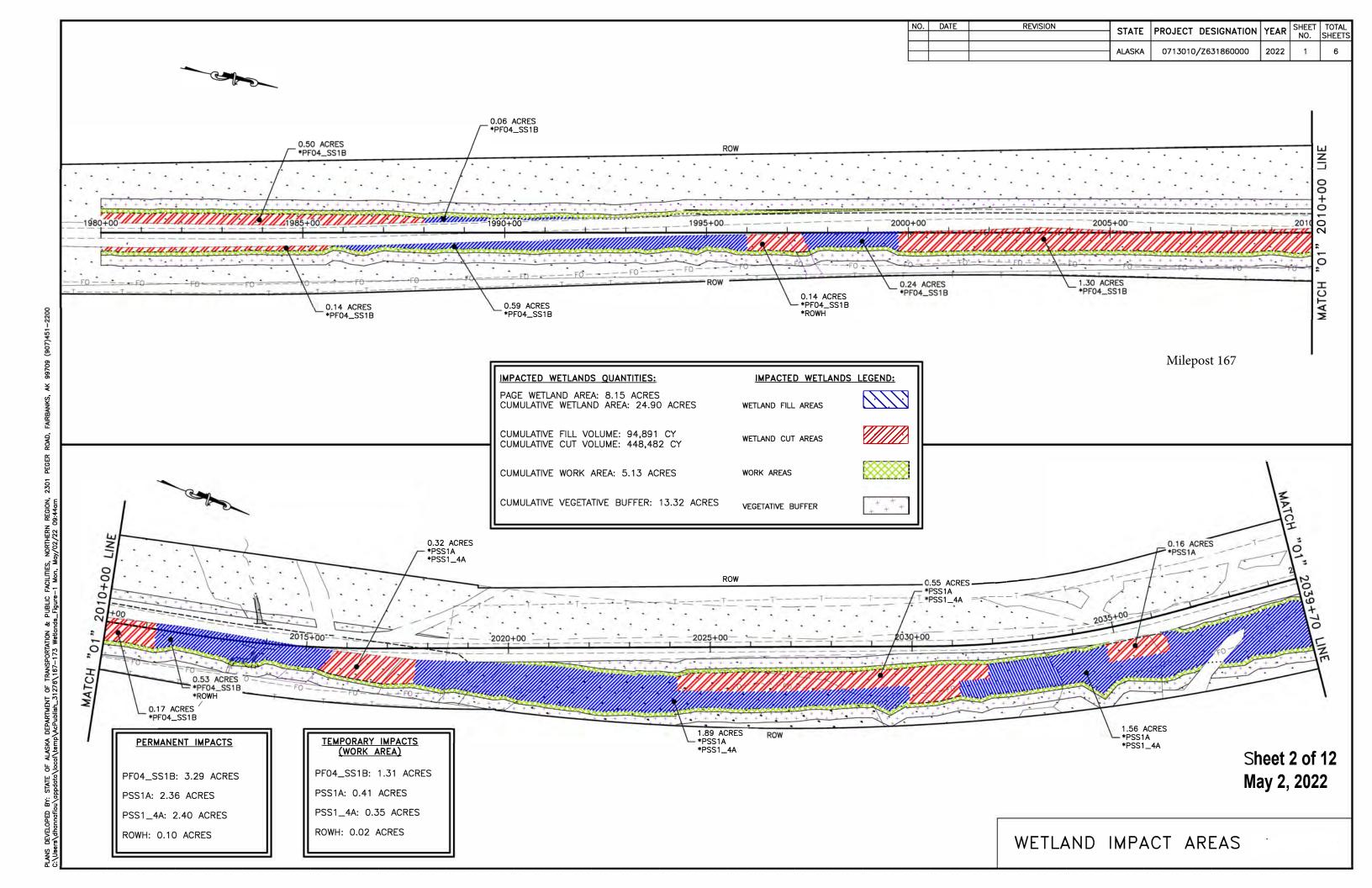
(X) Discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States – Section 404 Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). Therefore, our public interest review will consider the guidelines set forth under Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (40 CFR 230).

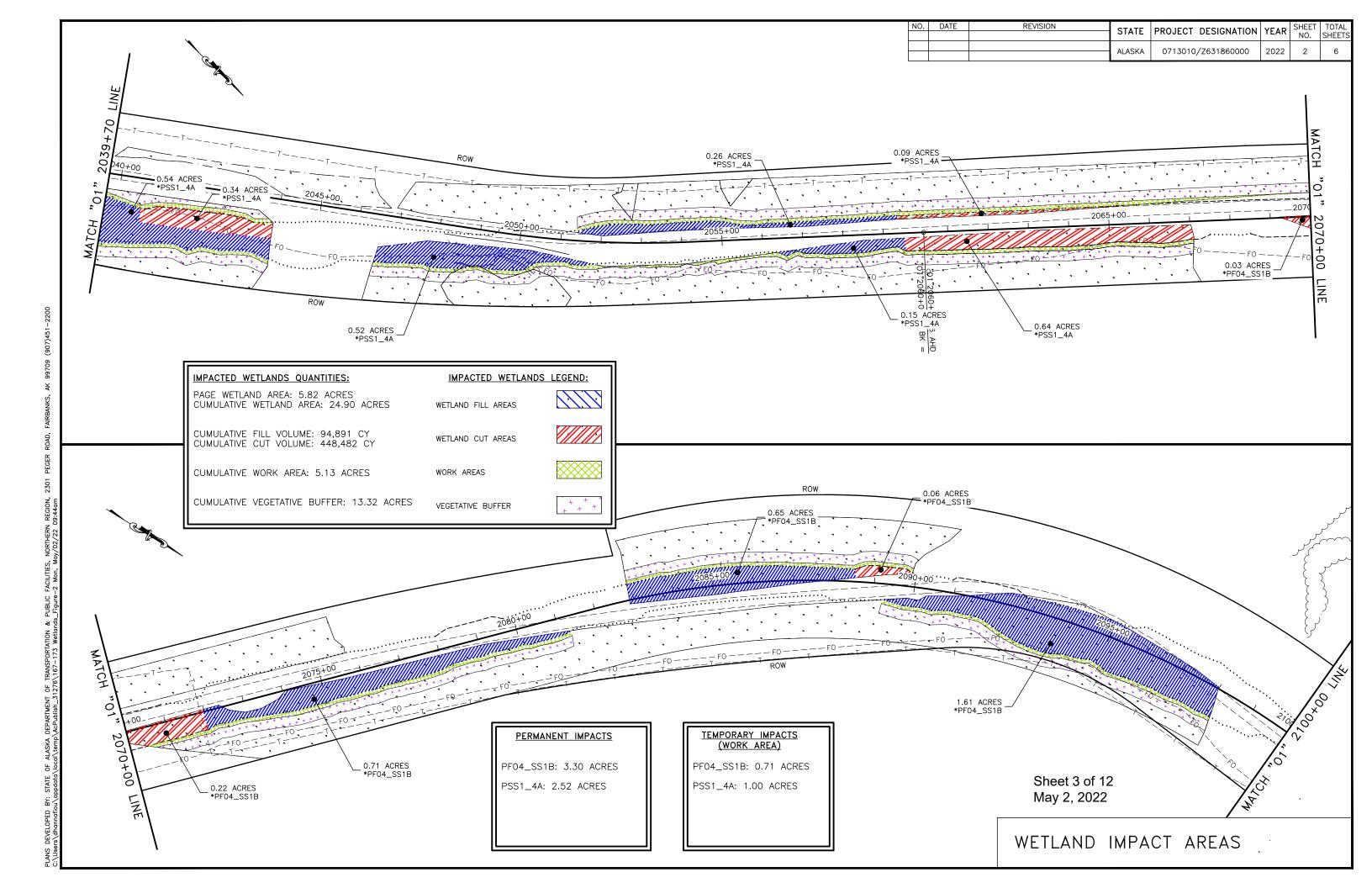
Project drawings and a Notice of	Application for St	tate Water Qualit	y Certification	are enclosed
with this Public Notice.				

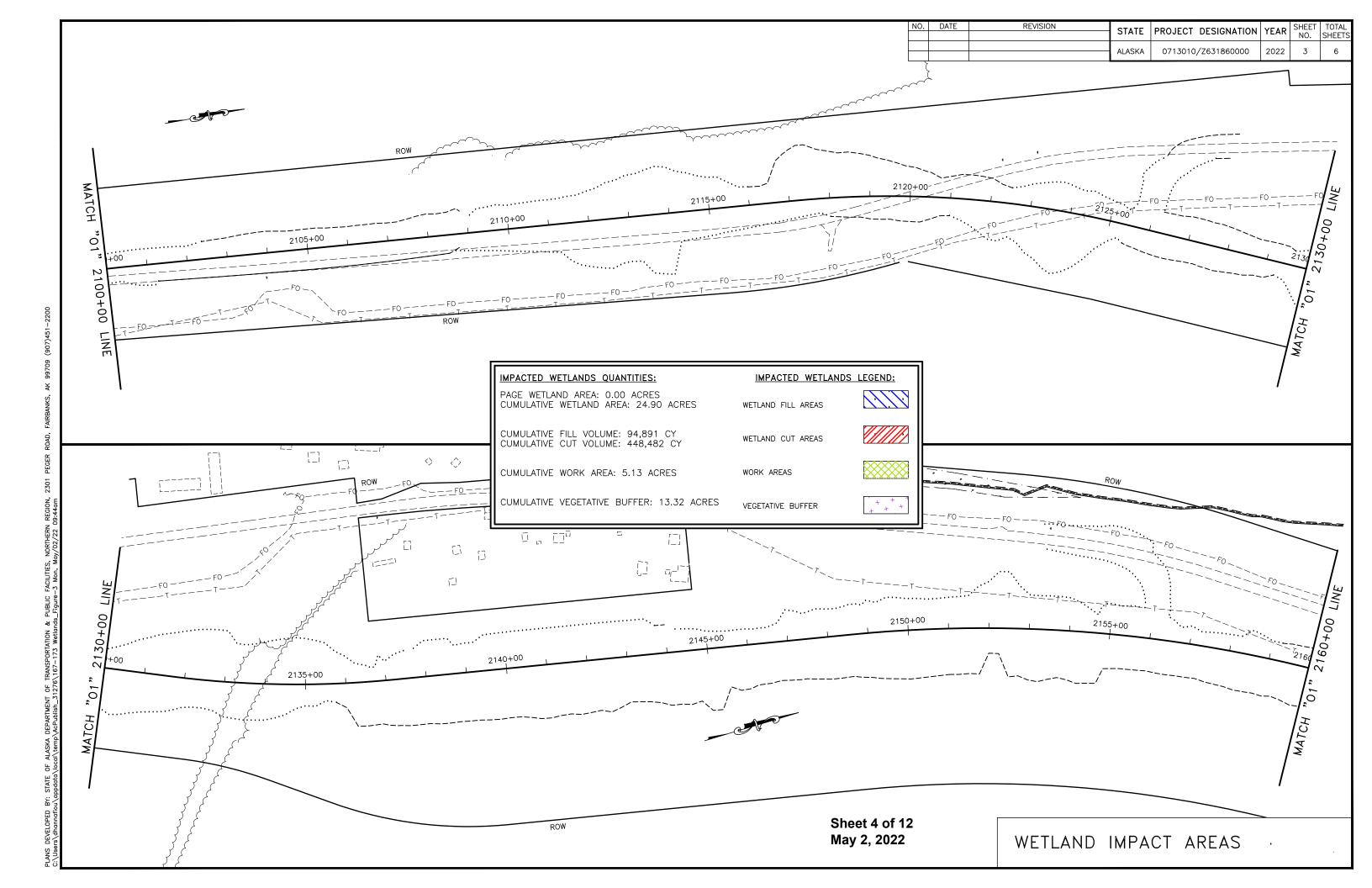
District Commander U.S. Army, Corps

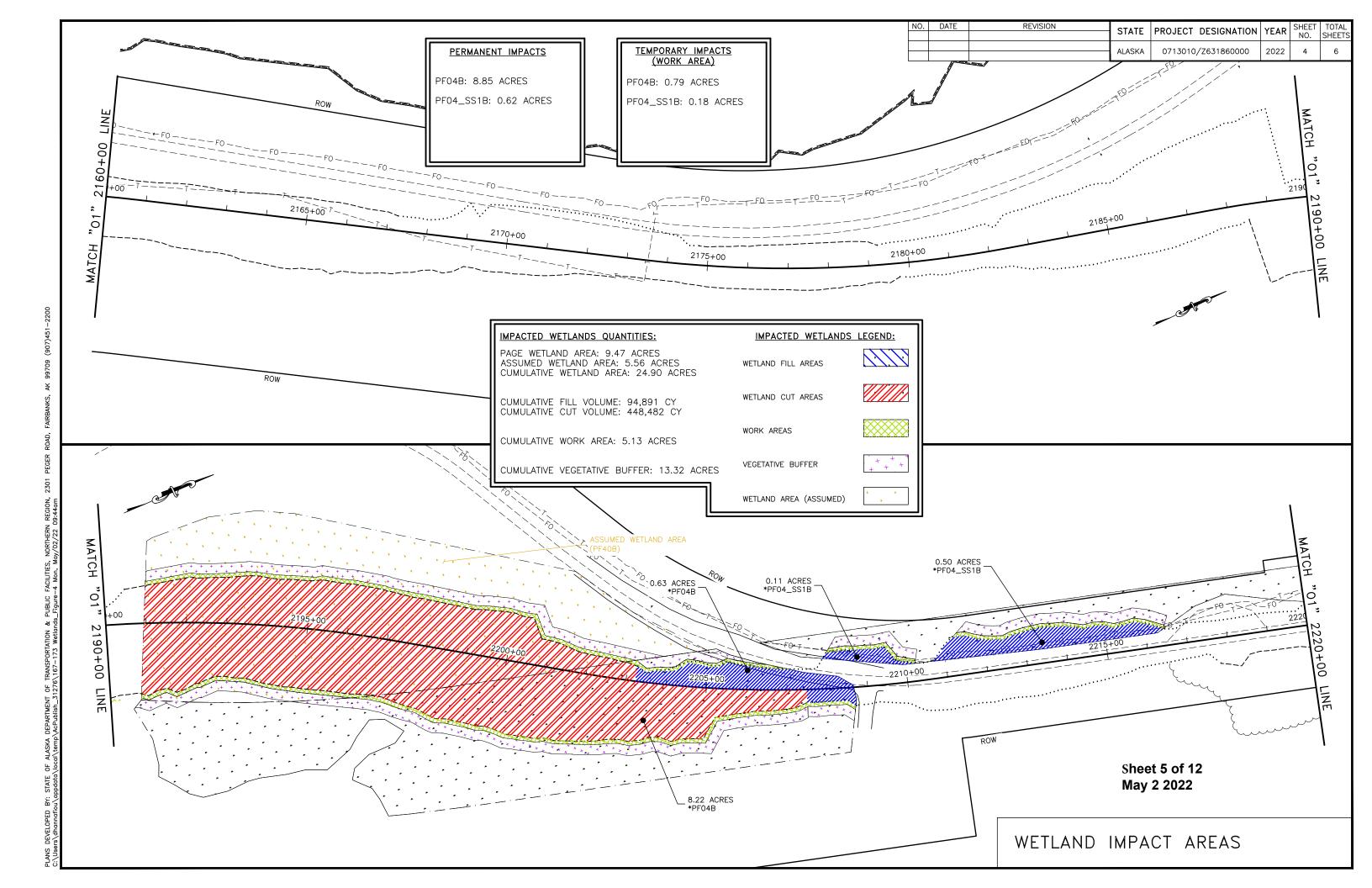
Enclosures

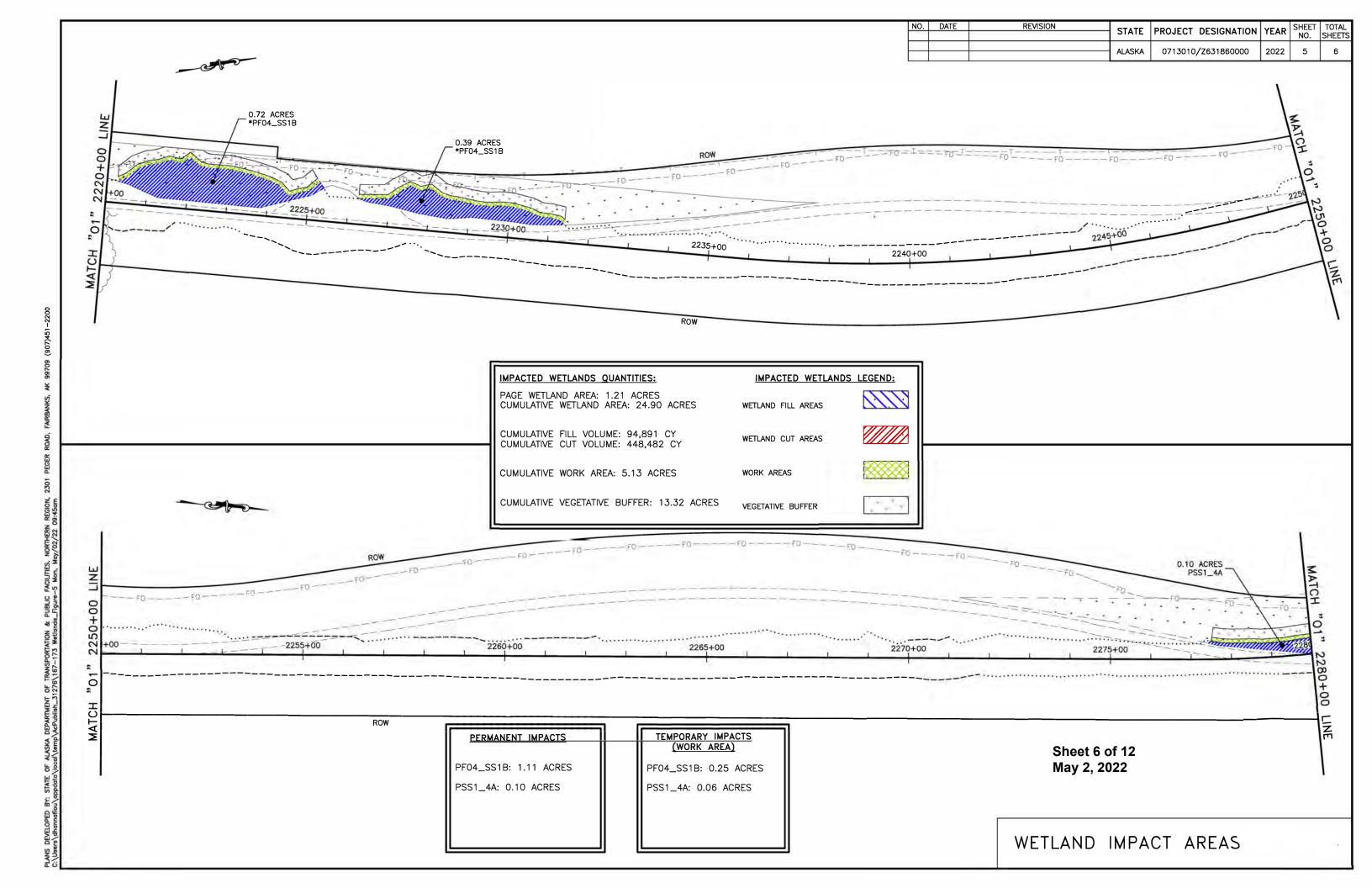


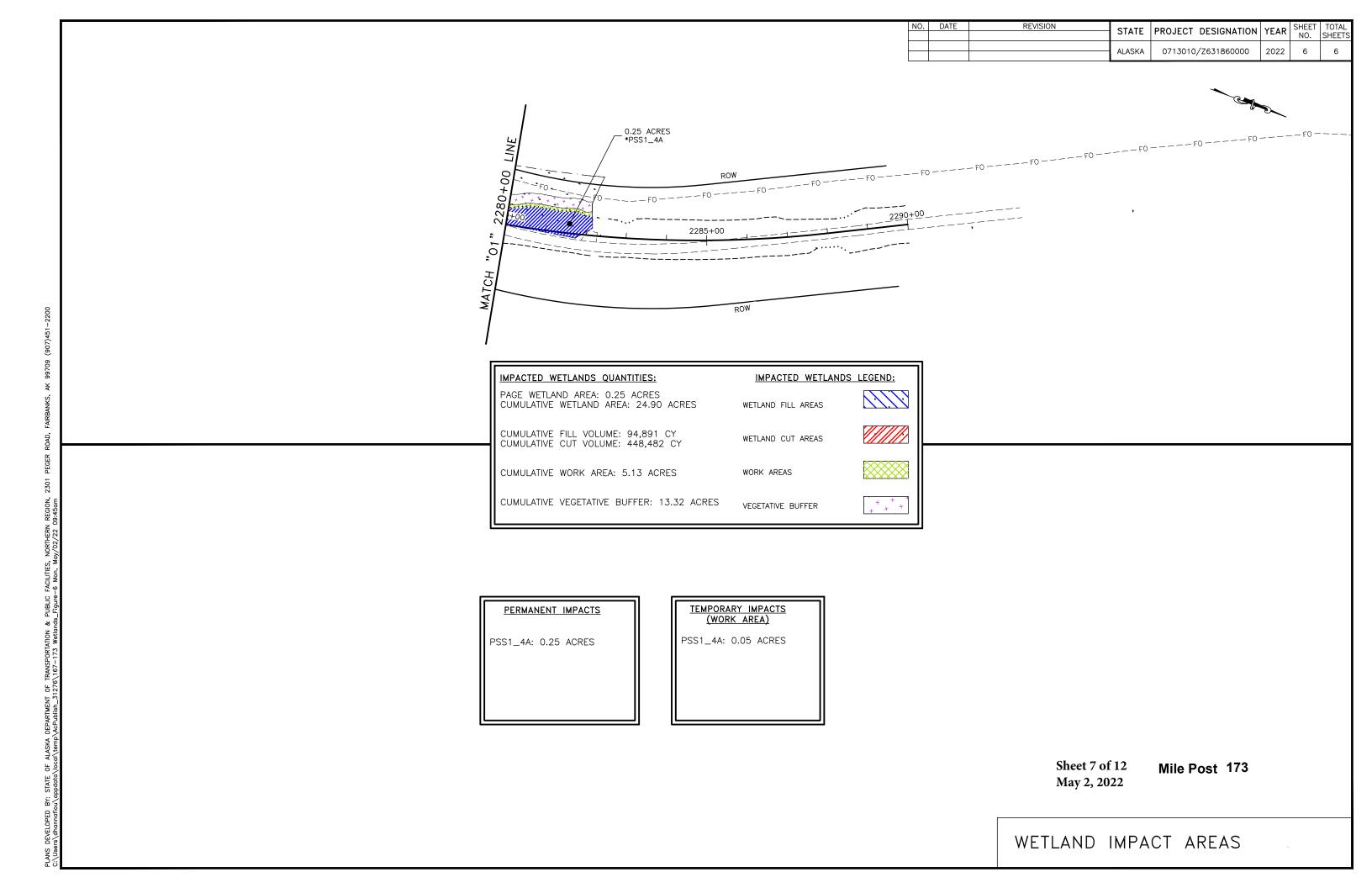




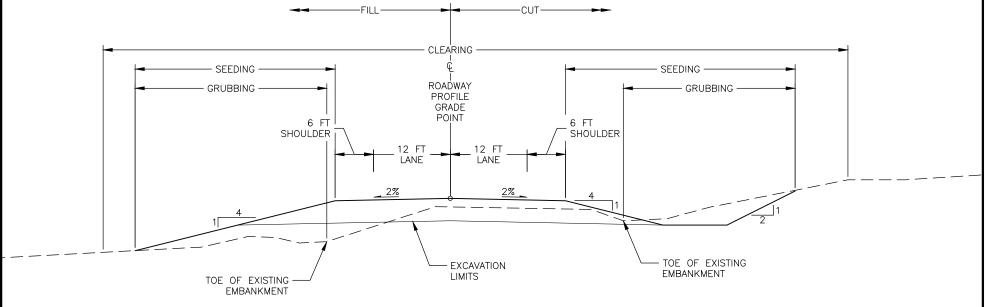








STATE	PROJECT DESIGNATION	YEAR	SHEET NO.	TOTAL SHEETS	
ALASKA	0713010/Z631860000	2022	1	1	



RICHARDSON HIGHWAY TYPICAL SECTION

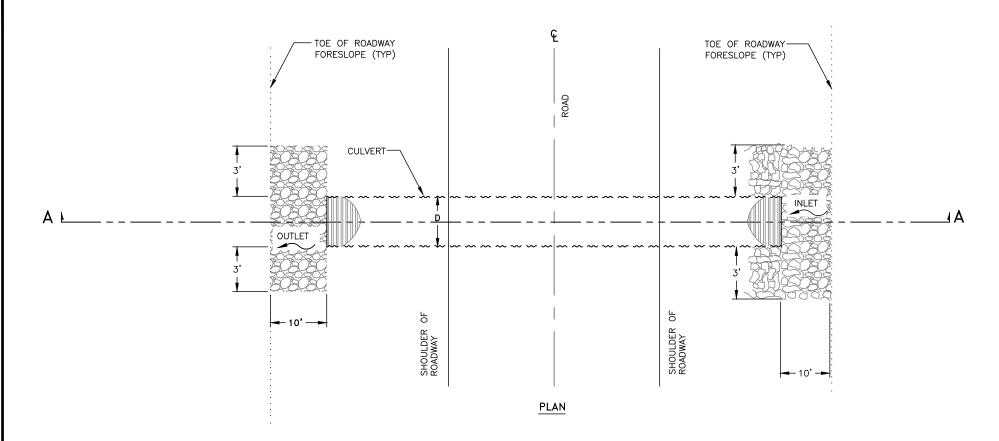
File No.: POA-2022-00034

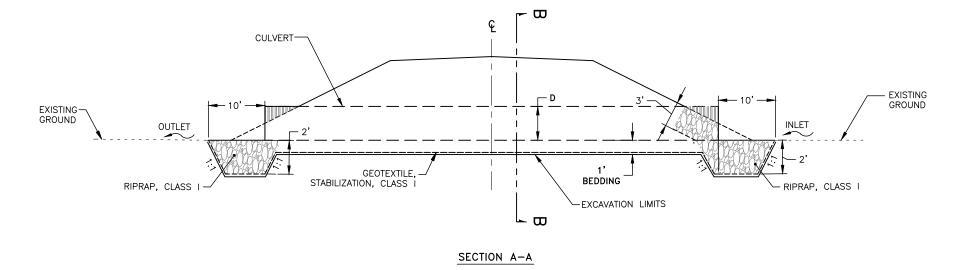
Waterway: Multiple Crossings

Proposed Activity: Richardson Highway MP

167-173 Reconstruction Sheet 8 of 12, May 2, 2022

NO.	DATE	REVISION	STATE	PROJECT DESIGNATION	YEAR	SHEET NO.	TOTAL SHEETS
			ALASKA	0713010/Z631860000	2022	E4	E8

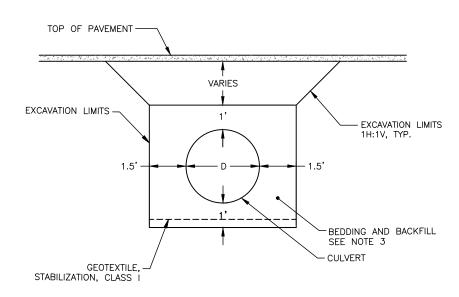




RIPRAP APRON DETAIL

## **CULVERT NOTES:**

- 1. CONSTRUCT RIPRAP APRONS AS NOTED IN THE CULVERT SUMMARY TABLE.
- 2. EXCAVATE BELOW ORIGINAL GROUND WHERE RIPRAP IS REQUIRED AND BACKFILL WITH RIPRAP, CLASS I. THIS WORK IS SUBSIDIARY TO THE PAY ITEM 611.0001.0001 SHOWN ON THE CULVERT SUMMARY TABLE.
- 3. CONSTRUCT BEDDING AND BACKFILL WITH SELECTED MATERIAL, TYPE F.
- 4. SEE SHEET E1 FOR CULVERT SIZE, LOCATION AND INSTALLATION DETAILS.



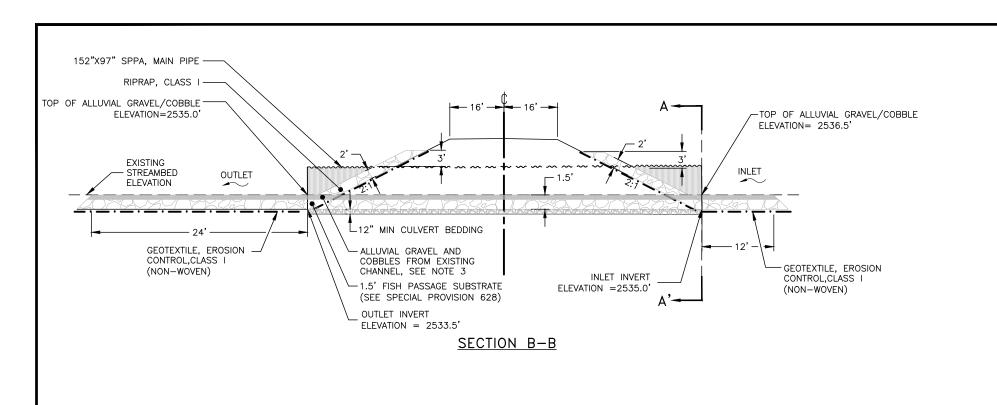
SECTION B-B
CULVERT BEDDING AND BACKFILL DETAIL

File No.: POA-2022-00034

Waterway: Multiple Crossings
Proposed Activity: Richardson Highway MP

167-173 Reconstruction Sheet 9 of 12, May 2, 2022





CULVERT APRON PLAN VIEW

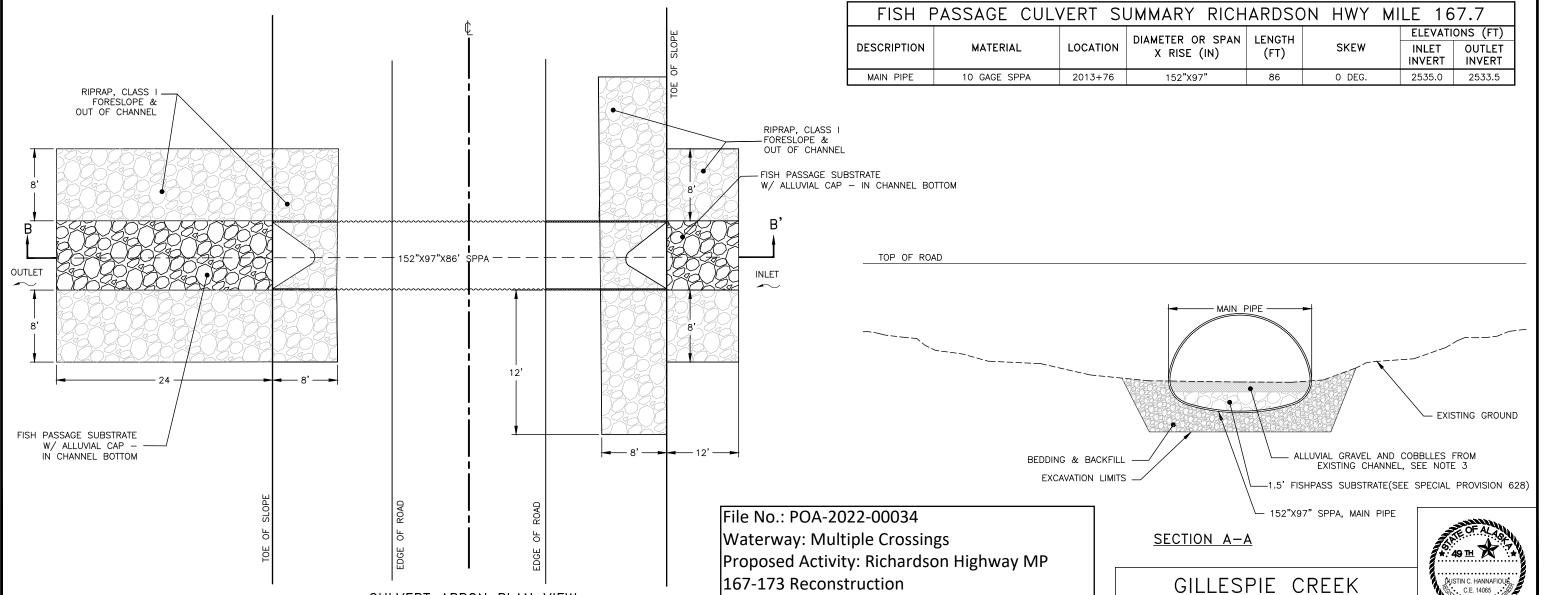
NO.	DATE	REVISION	STATE	PROJECT DESIGNATION	YEAR	SHEET NO.	TOTAL SHEETS
			ALASKA	0713010/Z631860000	2022	E6	E8

# **NOTES:**

- 1. THIS CULVERT WAS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE FISH PASSAGE.
- 2. SEE GENERAL AND FISH PASSAGE CULVERT NOTES ON SHEET E1.
- 3. INSTALL ALLUVIAL GRAVEL AND COBBLES FROM EXISTING CHANNEL TO FILL VOIDS WITHIN THE FISH PASS SUBSTRATE. SEE SPECIAL PROVISION 628.
- 4. INSTALL A 152"x97" STRUCTURAL PLATE PIPE ARCH (SPPA) DEPRESSED 1.5 FEET INTO THE CHANNEL BOTTOM.

HYDROLOGIC & HYDRAULIC SUMMARY							
RICHARDSON HWY MILE 167.7 - STATION 2013+76-GILLESPIE CREEK							
BASIN AREA	QFISH (CFS)	Q2 (CFS)	Q5 (CFS)	Q50 (CFS)	Q100 (CFS)		
(SQ. MI)	Q(13)1 (013)	Q2 (010)	40 (0.0)	400 (010)	4100 (010)		
8.9     23.3     116     203     443     524					524		
HEADWATER ELEVATION @Q50 IS 2542.1 FT, @Q100 IS 2543.0 FT							
HW/D @ 1= 450 CFS, ROAD OVERTOPS AT APPROXIMATELY 704.9 CFS							
CULVERT PURPOSE: CROSS DRAINAGE/ FISH PASSAGE							

FISH PASSAGE CULVERT



Sheet 10 of 12, May 2, 2022

