U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Alaska District

Erosion Information Paper - Alatna, Alaska

Current as of January 5, 2008

Community Information

Alatna (uh-LAT-na), population 33, is on the north bank of the Koyukuk River, southwest of its junction with the Alatna River, approximately 190 miles northwest of Fairbanks and 57 miles upriver from Hughes. Alatna lies just west of the municipal boundaries of the City of Allakaket. The community is unincorporated and in the unorganized borough.

Description of Erosion Problem

Alatna was on the banks next to the Koyukuk River in the incorporated city boundary of Allakaket which is across the river, up until the mid 1990's. Historical floods associated with the Koyukuk River caused considerable flood and erosion damage in past years. Ice jammed the river in spring 1964, causing a major flood inundating 85% of the community. In August 1994, another major rain caused flooding, and erosion destroyed nearly all of the community's buildings, homes, and winter food caches. Floodwaters rose quickly and covered Alatna and Allakaket with 6 to 10 feet of water. All but 4 of the log structures in Alatna were lifted off their foundations. Several houses and the community center came to rest fairly intact 4 miles downstream on a river bend that residents call "South Allakaket."

Potential Damages

Following the 1994 flood the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the State of Alaska declared Alatna a disaster area. FEMA and the state have worked with Alatna residents to rebuild the community on higher ground near the old community site. The area is outside the incorporated city boundaries of Allakaket, and above the flood elevations that damaged the community's old location. No structures have been moved since the relocation.

The previous Alatna community site is suspected to be contaminated and still susceptible to flooding and erosion along the Koyukuk River. The Alatna tribal environmental coordinator reported that the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council (YRITWC) was assisting with a hazards and hazardous materials assessment. According to the YRITWC website, the Brownfields Tribal Response Program has been funded by the Environmental Protection Agency, based on the *Small Business Liability Protection and Brownfields Revitalization Act* passed by Congress in 2002, which authorized funding for states and tribes to develop response programs to address the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of suspected contamination sites.

The community survey reports the deterioration of the community boat landing site at the edge of the Koyukuk River from annual flooding and erosion is a current problem. The area typically has to be re-graded each year. Presently, the site needs to filled, re-compacted and graded.

Photos and Diagrams

No photos of erosion were provided by the community or other sources. A diagram depicting the linear extent of erosion in the community is attached.

References

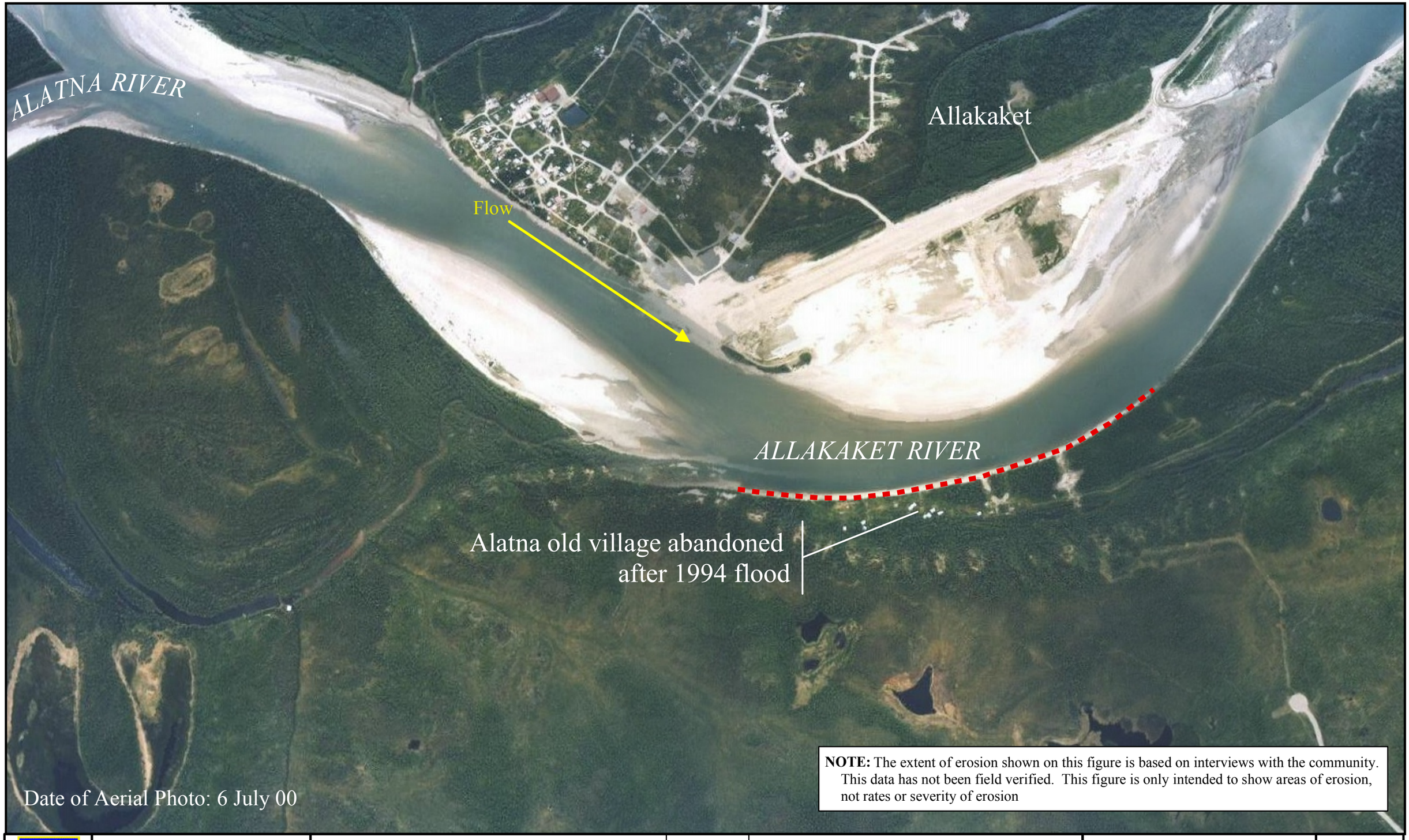
Denali Commission. 2006. *History of Village Relocations (Draft)*. Prepared by Denali Commission intern, Mara Machulsky.

USACE. 2007. *Alaska Community Erosion Survey, OMB approved number 07100001*, expires September 30, 2009 administered to Janelle Dayton, Alatna tribal council environmental coordinator, on January 4, 2008.

Yukon River Inter Tribal Watershed Council. 2008. *website*: www.**yritwc**.com/

Additional Information

This information paper, as well as those for other communities, can be accessed on the internet at www.alaskaerosion.com. For more information please contact the Corps of Engineers, project manager at (907) 753-5694 or email Alaska.Erosion.POA@usace.army.mil



Alaska District
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Civil Works Branch

Linear Extent of Erosion
Part 1

Alaska Baseline Erosion

Alatna, Alaska

Flow

New Alatna

Date of Aerial Photo: 6 July 00

NOTE: The extent of erosion shown on this figure is based on interviews with the community. This data has not been field verified. This figure is only intended to show areas of erosion, not rates or severity of erosion

Alaska District
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Linear Extent of Erosion
Part 2

Alaska Baseline Erosion

Alatna, Alaska