



U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers
Alaska District

ALASKA BASELINE EROSION ASSESSMENT

Erosion Information Paper - Portage, Alaska

Current as of September 24, 2007

Community Profile Summary

Portage is approximately 50 miles south of downtown Anchorage. The Seward Highway and the Portage-Whittier Road cross through the area, as does the Alaska Railroad. Population for all of Turnagain Arm where Portage is located is approximately 297. The Wildlife Conservation Center owner indicated a population of less than 35 in the combined Portage drainage and 20-Mile River areas. In addition, a small number of seasonal use cabins are on Blueberry Hill and up the 20-Mile River.

Description of Erosion Problem

Post-1964 earthquake adjustments and gradual siltation of Turnagain Arm are likely to continue to decrease the erosion potential along the end of Turnagain Arm, according to the Wildlife Center owner. The Begich, Boggs Visitor Center, built on the terminal moraine left behind by Portage Glacier, has the lower level flooded occasionally from high water and wind-driven waves from Portage Lake.

Potential Damages

Portage Creek drains the Portage Glacier and Portage Lake. Anchorage floodplain managers reported that Portage Creek has eroded close to the Portage-Whittier Highway. A utility line and a small section of the road were threatened. The erosion area was estimated to be about 250 feet in length and occurred during a flood event of Portage Creek. No other erosion problems were reported in the Portage area. No erosion problems were reported along Turnagain Arm. The owner of the 140-acre Wildlife Conservation Center reported no erosion along the coastline.

No information was available regarding the cost to repair or to maintain the area along the state-maintained Portage-Whittier road that had eroded during the flood event.

Photos and Diagrams

A photo is attached of the Portage valley, provided from the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center, Chugach National Forest website: http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/chugach_pages/bbvc.html
Also, attached is a diagram showing the linear extent of erosion in the community.

References

USACE. 2007. *Alaska Community Erosion Survey*, OMB approved number 07100001, expires September 30, 2009 completed by Jeffery Urbanus and Jack Puff, floodplain managers, watershed management division, Municipality of Anchorage, on August 23, 2007; and Mike Miller, owner Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center on September 24, 2007.

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



Photo 1: Portage valley, Portage Lake in the background, undated.



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--- Linear Extent of Erosion



Alaska Baseline Erosion
Portage, Alaska