

**Willow Trail Committee**

**P. O. Box 845  
Willow, AK 99688  
ph. 495-6368**



**RECEIVED**

**MAY 31 2011**

**STATE PIPELINE  
COORDINATORS**

May 27, 2011

Graham Smith  
Public Information Officer  
Alaska Department of Natural Resources  
State Pipeline Coordinator's Office  
411 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 2C  
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Mr. Smith,

The Willow Trail Committee (WTC) wishes to respond regarding the Alaska Stand Alone Pipeline (ASAP). Our committee is a standing committee of the Willow Area Community Organization (WACO) and will be introducing this letter to WACO for the June 6th general meeting. WACO is considered a community council by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and as such provides a forum for discussion and comment in matters of concern to the community. One such concern is the proposed route for the Alaska Stand Alone Pipeline Project. WTC opposes the proposed location for the pipeline as it passes through Willow from pipeline mile 709 to the south. We believe that there are other viable alternative routes that should be analyzed that will be less disruptive to our community.

Willow is a community in which its residents, weekend cabin owners and tourists place a high value on recreation and our extensive trail system. Within our borders, areas impacted by the ASAP are the Willow Creek and Nancy Lake State Recreation Areas and the West Gateway Trail System. This Trail System consists of 100 miles of documented and managed trails for both winter and summer use. These trails are managed by WACO with the assistance of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the State.

As currently proposed, the ASAP will transect the Willow Creek SRA for over two miles before heading south and further transect numerous popular and heavily used recreational trails, including the Willow portion of the Iditarod Trail. These trails are documented in the Willow Trails Plan, the recently completed Willow Summer Trails Plan and the Matanuska-Susitna Area Trails Plan (the two Willow Trails Plans can be seen at: [www.waco-ak.org](http://www.waco-ak.org)). The 100' construction ROW will cross the 12' to 15' recreational trails eight times thus overwhelming the trails and severely compromising trail user experiences. The 100' pipeline swath will also create unplanned trails, compromising the large cost and community effort in the planning of trails. Just as importantly, the construction swath would give inappropriate motorized and non motorized access to wetlands, anadromous streams and other sensitive areas.

From 2007 to 2011, Willow addressed the Pt. MacKenzie Rail Corridor that was proposed by the Alaska Railroad and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The corridor location for this project was similar to the ASAP in transecting managed public lands. The Environmental Impact Statement for the Rail Project noted Section 4(f) of the U. S. Transportation Act of 1966 regarding the Willow Creek SRA and the West Gateway Trail System including the historic Lucky Shot Trail. The purpose of this section is to:

“Preserve publicly owned public parklands, waterfowl and wildlife refuges, and significant historic sites.” (USDOT, summary of environmental legislation, 1998).

We feel strongly the purpose of Section 4(f) should also apply to the ASAP, especially when there are viable alternative routes for the pipeline.

We ask for the State and ASAP to further look at alternative routes. Suggested alternatives include continuing along the Parks Highway, following the Anchorage to Fairbanks Intertie from the Douglas Substation south and the selected Pt. MacKenzie Rail Corridor at Houston south. The Houston South Rail corridor was selected by the Surface Transportation Board as the best route based on social, environmental, cultural and historical impacts. Further, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, through their own EIS Matrix, found that of the many Rail Corridor options, the Willow route was the most expensive while the Houston South route was the least. We recognize there are important differences in the projects but these previous studies should suggest other feasible alternative routes for ASAP.

The intent of WTC action to oppose the designed location does not mean the community opposes the pipeline itself. To the contrary, we support the States interest in the pipeline for our energy security. The trail community feels the State has not adequately analyzed the impacts to Willow and have not considered alternative locations for the pipeline. We hope this will be addressed in ASAP Plan revisions and in its Environmental Impact Statement.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve Charles".

Steve Charles, chair  
Willow Trail Committee

cc: Leslye Langla, Alaska Gaseline Development Corporation  
cc: Serena Sweet, Project Manager, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers