



Dalton Highway State Scenic Byway Corridor Partnership Plan (CPP)

Wednesday, September 30, 2009, 6:00-8:00pm
Alaska Public Lands Information Center, 101 Dunkel Street, Fairbanks AK 99709

Attendees:	
Jeff Adams	Bill Kiger—AKDNR
Alan Armbruster	Wayne Larson
Jay Armstrong	Jim Lounsbury
Meadow Bailey—AKDOT&PF	Lorna Lounsbury
Roger Delaney—Bureau of Land Management	Don Lowell—Alaska Transportation Consultants
Gil Dobbs	Marcheta Moulton—State Scenic Byways Coordinator
Greg Dudgeon—National Park Service	Pam Rice—National Park Service
Kelly Egger—Bureau of Land Management	Katharine Richardson
Charity Gadapee—Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau	Dorothy Shockley—Legislative Aid for Senator Kookesh
Deb Hickok—Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau	Murray Shoemaker—Bureau of Land Management
Lisa Jodwalis—Bureau of Land Management	Jeff Stepp—Office of Senator J. Paskvan
	Jeff Walters
Facilitator: Kathlene Rowell—AKDNR	

TRANSCRIPT

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

[Kathlene Rowell gave a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation that provided background information on the project and presented an overview of the plan's components. She then opened the meeting for questions. This transcript covers that question and answer period]

So does anyone have any questions about the background of the planning process itself? Let's just start there.

Yes. Would you mind saying your name?

Alan Armbruster

My name is Alan Armbruster. I am just curious—how did this all come about? How did this all start? Driving up the Dalton you notice these little pretty signs and I was like “uh oh, I don't like the looks of that.” What triggered this whole thing?

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

Sure. The Dalton Highway was designated a State Scenic Byway in 1998. That is a designation through the Department of Transportation. The corridor partnership planning process began last June. That's the really short version. But it is a scenic byways document that is funded through the Federal Highways Administration through our local State Scenic Byways Program.

Alan Armbruster

It wasn't like the tour groups behind that or anything was it?

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator:

No. The designation was DOT and the benefit of the corridor partnership plan is to get diverse groups of people coming together to talk about their interests and concerns and kindof layout a vision for what they would like to see. We have some tour operators who have commented during the process but we have a diverse group too.

Alan Armbruster

I have been going up and down that road since the mid-70s. It was a real shocker to see those signs.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator:

We have received that comment. Actually there are a couple recommendations in the plan—that are not in the recommendations section—but are in the “Corridor Issues and Concerns” portion and one of them under the “signage” is to remove the scenic byways signs from the roadway except at the beginning and end points. So if the byway organization wanted to go forward with that goal—and it's one of the goals as well—they would need to get together and talk with DOT to try to get that accomplished. So yes, that has come up too.

One thing that is kindof funny is that, with the Dalton Highway, there is only one place to get on and off. So once you see one sign, maybe you don't need to be reminded of it, I don't know. That was one of the comments we had.

Katharine Richardson

Was the designation in 1998 done by DOT without public meetings and public input?

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator:

You know...

Don Lowell—Alaska Transportation Consultants

Can you repeat the question so we can hear it back?

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator:

Yes, Katherine asked if the DOT designation in 1998 was done with public comment or not.

Marcheta might be able to best answer this question, so I will turn it over to her.

Marcheta Moulton—State Scenic Byways Coordinator:

Back in 1998 the rules weren't quite developed for how we get a state scenic byway. And going through the materials, since I haven't been with the program much more than a year—I have worked with DOT for 10 years in program development—I have just been associated with the byways plan. I spent a lot of time going through the documents trying to find if there were public comments. And I am not seeing any back

when this was conceived. What I did see was that the Dalton Highway was designated as a state scenic byway to be able to protect and preserve what already exists. Other than that, like I said the plan was fairly new, the byways program was fairly new then and the rules were a little bit looser and I believe it was just designated by the state.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

So we're not sure. There doesn't seem to have been much public process at that point. Now today the process is much different.

Katharine Richardson

Because I could add something to that because I was involved with that at that time—1997-98—and they did get a team together and there were two meetings, I think, and we made comments and then nothing more. I have always wondered what happened.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

There was a process—some of you might remember that—during the 1995 to 1998 time period, Governor Knowles established a, I think he called it the...

Wayne Larson

It was called the Dalton Highway Advisory Commission. I was on it.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

Ok great. They actually produced a nice document called the Dalton Highway Master Plan. I have a copy here if anyone is interested in looking at it. Its contents are quite similar to what is in the corridor partnership plan. Not much has changed—I would say that infrastructure along the roadway has changed as far as some of the rest areas that the Bureau of Land Management has put in—but the concerns among those who are commenting are pretty much the same as they were then. And that process was started right after the road was opened to the public. But that group—and you [*speaking to Wayne Larson*] might be able to fill more of that in for us—that group somewhat fizzled, it seems like after...

Wayne Larson

We produced the document and then that was as far as we wanted to go with it.

Katharine Richardson

I can still add to that because after that was over, then they started another process. They hired a consultant—I have forgotten his name now—it was a different set of people and different meetings.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

They did try the corridor partnership planning process at that time, and I believe that is what you are referencing, Katherine, and it didn't go forward.

[talking in background]

1999. Ok.

Marcheta Moulton—State Scenic Byways Coordinator:

And that's about what I have. I have a stack of papers—pieces and parts in my file. Thank you for sharing your information.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator:

So what about some questions that you have regarding the corridor partnership plan, what it is and is not?

Jeff Adams

My name is Jeff Adams. I have a couple questions going back to the previous topic. So is the byways act designated by the legislature then to put it in that status or is that just a DOT action?

Marcheta Moulton—State Scenic Byways Coordinator:

It is DOT at the commissioner level for the State Scenic Byways nomination.

Jeff Adams

Since it's a byway versus a standard highway does that open up opportunities for other federal funding?

Marcheta Moulton—State Scenic Byways Coordinator:

Yes it does.

Jeff Adams

And that is kind of the reasoning behind calling it a byway versus a highway?

Marcheta Moulton—State Scenic Byways Coordinator:

Correct.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator:

Other questions about what the corridor partnership plan is and is not?

[Pause]

There must be some questions.

Don Lowell—Alaska Transportation Consultants

I think you limited it. The Dalton Highway is the second most northerly road in the world—that's not listed. It's also the only road on the North American continent where you can actually drive to the Arctic Ocean. Yet you're restricted from getting to the ocean just 7 miles shy because of the opposition of the oil industry and the North Slope Borough. And that needs to be addressed.

There were two resolutions passed by the legislature that talked about getting the road opened to the public. The Alaska Constitution says that the public will have unrestricted access to major bodies of water and certainly the Arctic Ocean is a major body of water. And you need to address that.

I read your plan and I thought it was pretty good. I think you did a lot of good work on it. I think that some people on the Advisory Commission wanted to restrict some things along there. They talk about restricting access or public facilities to the existing nodes. It's an awful long way between Coldfoot and Prudhoe Bay without any public services along there. I think you need to look at additional facilities to service the public. It is a long road. It's a great road.

I previously served as the Director of Maintenance and Operations for the Department of Transportation and the Dalton Highway was one of my areas and it's a great highway. It's a scenic highway and I think you're doing a good job. I think you need more public input. It's good that you're asking for the public input and I intend to write some issues.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

And what is your name again?

Don Lowell—Alaska Transportation Consultants

Don Lowell. I am also president of Alaska Transportation Consultants. It's a group that are working to improve the urban and rural transportation facilities. And this is a major one. It's a great road.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

I am glad that you brought up the access to the Arctic Ocean. Surprisingly that hasn't come up—it's come up maybe one or two other times from someone that had the same request. But no, you are correct in that we did not address that in the plan. I think some of its attributes of being a northern road is maybe addressed—mentioned, I won't say addressed—I would like to see more of your detailed comments.

What other questions do we have?

Wayne Larson

One of the concerns I thought was at least a bit of a conflict—when our committee was together in 95'-96', we were concerned about public safety and Alyeska had representation there and that was a concern. One of the things that is talked about here is that there is lack of emergency services and we should be making things as safe as possible and that is done usually through signage. Yet one of the other bullets you have in there is to limit signage and that seems to be a direct conflict against the actual safe travel along the highway.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

I would have to reference the section. The woman's name who I spoke with is evading me. It might have been Colleen Ackiss with DOT. But it may have been someone else [yes, it was Colleen Ackiss, the Traffic Safety Chief for AKDOT&PF- confirmed 10/5/09]. We talked about that, how roadway signage has to meet highway safety standards. So within those guidelines is where signs will be placed. There are probably areas where there needs to be signage for curves and things like that. DOT is going to act within their means to make it safe for the traveling public.

Where it does come in is if, maybe the distances to communities signs—some of the things that are not imperative to traveler safety –if those can maybe be grouped in one location. The scenic byways signs that I mentioned. Some folks thought that those were a bit clutter-some. That's kind of what that bullet is talking about and if you could maybe submit a comment to me about the page, I can go back and look at it to see if there is a way how I can better phrase it.

Wayne Larson

And then the other thing is that this road was designed as an industrial road and so, we're putting private citizens on there—it's absolutely, as Don said, a fantastic road to drive on for a view for the public. Certainly my concern is making sure there is adequate pull-offs for the site-seers to get out of the way of the people who make a living driving that road.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

I believe if you look at the goals and objectives section there is an objective that talks about traveler safety and pull-offs. That has been one of the main issues—I won't say a problem—but it is a beautiful road, there are recreational travelers, but some people feel that before they can put in additional visitor services there needs to be an improvement to the public safety and emergency response structure. It's kind of like "one needs to come before the other, but do we really want one" and it just hasn't all been worked out yet.

What I am hoping to accomplish with the plan is to at least get those concerns clear to set a foundation for a group that really comes together and comes up with ideas on how those things can be accomplished.

Can you say your name please?

Jim Lounsbury

My name is Jim Lounsbury. I am retired DOT. Seven years foreman at Coldfoot. My main concern with the safety and health issue is we don't have enough outhouses on the road and I believe there was supposed to be a turnout in Wiseman—at the edge of Wiseman—and put an outhouse in and it never did happen. I don't know why. The outhouse in Wiseman at the Community Center has been plenty full for the last five years.

I have a museum there, no charge, and their charging my outhouse up. It's almost full now so I can't send them over to the community center because it's completely full and has been for five years. So I don't know. That's my health issue.

I do have a personal mine. It is in the one-mile pipeline corridor area—outside of it. So I am concerned about regulations coming against me and so I was hoping that someone would be on the board that was involved in the association or...

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

We have a gentleman, his name is Brandon McCutcheon, he is with the Division of Mining, Lands, and Water, and I can give you his contact information. He is also really easy to look up on the state website. But Brandon has been appointed by the division to kind of be the scenic byways person, if you will. He might be a good person to talk with. I can tell you that the corridor partnership plan and the scenic byways program don't bring any sort of regulations toward what you can do on your property. It can't even restrict something that you want to put up within the visual corridor. So it would be within whoever's lands, whether it's yours or managed by someone else.

I have that bathroom note on my recorder and you can email me too about it. I think the average distance between the restrooms is about 23 miles and the longest distance—I can't remember between which points, Galbraith Lake and mile 355 maybe—I think it's about 80 miles.

But it's interesting from the people who travel the road most often, you know maybe they're finding that they need to stop regularly at a certain place that they didn't need to stop at 10 miles before. So if there is a place close to Wiseman that was talked about before as a need...

Jim Lounsbury

That was right at the edge of town and there was supposed to be a turnout there and I believe there was supposed to be an outhouse there. That's never happened. That would be a nice thing for something to be done.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

Did I see a hand pop up over this way?

Gil Dobbs

My name is Gil Dobbs and I noticed in point six there, and I haven't read the thing, but it restricts development to what's existing now. In other words there is no future development on the road. That's a long way between Livengood and the North Slope to not have ability to develop more businesses or more home sites, whatever. I think that's something that really shouldn't be in there.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

One thing when Katherine was talking we mentioned this 1998 Master Plan and what came out of that was these "development nodes." I won't try to name them all, I believe there were five, and what that group kind of decided was that they wanted to restrict development within those nodes. Some of those nodes haven't been developed—Happy Valley, Coldfoot, Chandalar Shelf [*voices in background naming others*]. There are some of those nodes that have not yet been developed and the point in the document that you are referencing says the recommendation to restrict development to those nodes would include those ones that have already been identified. They are kind of already impacted areas that had been a construction camp or airstrip at one point and...

Participant (voice unidentified) – Possibly Wayne Larson

There is no private land. You have to have private ground in order to really develop unless you can convince the state to lease the grounds and so...

Gil Dobbs

But there are guys up along the corridor that have mining claims staked for years and years and all of a sudden they decide they want to mine that particular ground then they can't.

Participant (voice unidentified) – Possibly Wayne Larson

Well as long as it's not in the highway right-of-way. If it's in the highway right-of-way there are actually people, I have driven up there when the miners have actually taken a cut through the road and they had to divert things because they didn't have a valid claim through there.

Gil Dobbs

If you restrict that to where there is absolutely no chance for those guys to develop their mining claim or any other property that might be up there...

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

And this plan won't do that. It can't restrict a miner's rights that they have either through the state or a lease that they have through BLM in the corridor. I am not really familiar with that process, but it doesn't restrict that type of access and ability...

Gil Dobbs

It's a little ambiguous as to how that statement is written up there...

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

Ok I will look at that.

Gil Dobbs

It restricts development to stuff that is already in place is what it said.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

Maybe I need to be more specific to visitor services or something like that.

Gil Dobbs

Yeah that could be. Anyhow that turned me a little bit. I don't have any claims up there but if I did have I would be up in arms.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

Ok, thanks Gil.

Dorothy Shockley—Legislative Aid for Senator Kookesh

Dorothy Shockley, I work for Senator Kookesh and his district covers a lot of that area up to Wiseman. On behalf of communities along that corridor or close to that corridor, you know when the road was first put in they were told—they had concerns of course—and were told it would never open to the public. So now of course it is open to the public. As we go along people want more and more access and there is a lot of concern to the residents who live along that area and who don't want that. At the same time they are concerned because residents do use that road to take in supplies and those kinds of things.

I lived in Stevens Village for seven years and I drove that road quite often in the summer and the winter. That was the only access we really had to use it. For somebody who has to use it, you know it's important, but for people, [pause] and I have voiced my concern about opening it up even more and questioning this whole byways corridor plan. But it's there and we have to live with it. But I just wanted to say that people who live along there, their lives are being impacted through their hunting and fishing and other means of their lifestyle. They don't want to see any [inaudible] more than necessary.

Then another thing that I wanted to mention here is there is talk of resurrecting the bill to open the five-mile corridor along that road, and how would that impact the scenic byways or would it?

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

Well on your first point, the corridor partnership plan is the opportunity for the communities to express all those concern. I am not sure if you have had an opportunity to read the second draft yet [pause]. I am

hoping that you would agree with me that since the first draft it really took a turn and tonally it's more in line with the communities and those concerns than anything else. If you think there are improvements we can make I am interested in hearing those.

On your second point about the corridor—are you talking about the hunting? Ok I am unsure about that legislation or proposal. I know in Barrow last spring that point came up when there was an individual that was trying to get it reversed. In an earlier draft we had a statement that said the corridor partnership plan supported restricting the five-mile corridor. I don't believe that is still there, not because the group felt differently but because I think it got taken out. That is something that we need to talk about more. That is easily a statement that can be made if the majority of respondents felt that way, we could put it in the goals section. As far as scenic byways are involved, the corridor partnership plan—the scenic byways document—wouldn't influence a decision at the legislative level whether or not that could be done.

[inaudible question]

They [the legislature] would use the document to gage how the community felt about the issue and that's about the extent of it.

Bill Kiger—AKDNR

The corridor partnership plan is your unified voice so it would have an impact on decisions that were made about that five-mile corridor. Otherwise you don't have a unified voice—that I know of—pertaining to this corridor. So by participating in this process, getting your voice in that document, then that's the unification that all of you bring and that would have a great impact on the legislators as far as the decisions they would make. They listen to constituents—at least locally.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

So Dorothy it would depend on the formation of that byway organization, this Advisory Team and trying to keep some of those individuals working together. If a statement like that was put in the plan, and then using that to your advantage to say 'this is how the people who participated in this planning process felt about the issue and we think it's a strong statement.'

Dorothy Shockley—Legislative Aid for Senator Kookesh

It was just recently brought to my attention again that somebody else was trying to revive that.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

Ok, so it's something we need to talk about.

Jay Armstrong

Hi I am Jay Armstrong, I live in Wiseman. My main concern is that the Haul Road is basically a main artery—it cuts through the Brooks Range, most of the Brooks Range is locked up as far as mineral development, exploration—Gates of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, ANWR and Yukon Charley National Wildlife Refuge. I did look through the draft a little bit and noticed in there it talked about the land status and the majority of the land is state and federal land and the majority of that land is open for mineral entry. There is also a lot of Native corporation land that they provide mineral leases and the Haul Road is basically surrounded by federal land. There is still a lot of lands that have not been conveyed to the state that they have selected up there, like the Ray Mountains which are very rich in minerals.

There is a huge potential wealth for employment, jobs, and security in Alaska locked up in minerals up there. I am concerned that this scenic byways plan may influence the BLM because in a few years they

are coming up with a new land use plan and this is going to be part of the information they use when they tailor that plan and there's going to be a lot of people with interests outside of the immediate corridor both to the east and west of the haul road that are going to want to go in and do some exploration and mining and they're gonna want to build roads. The Haul Road is gonna be the main artery and what kind of impact is there going to be if the scenic byways goes through and the BLM says 'well we know you have, for instance, we know you have mineral interests but you're going to have to access them in another way besides the inner corridor because of this park and the scenic byway and a road for mining area isn't really scenic.' Or even a road to a mine that they can see from the road.

I also want to say something else.

I was involved in the, I am involved in the mining on Marion Creek, and we built the road up there nine miles and one of the main objections from BLM at that time was the travelers on the Haul Road would be able to see it. It took eight or nine years for them to finally agree to let us build the road and as it turns out you can hardly see it from the Haul Road, but you know, that was before the scenic byways was even being in place. So you can't tell me that once this gets in place that they won't have a jaded mindset towards roads and development.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

I can't speak for the Bureau of Land Management, but what I can tell you—and we've spoken before—is that the scenic byways program has nothing regulatory with it. It can't restrict something that you want to put in the viewshed. What it does is present a community, I'll say stakeholder, vision or opinion on what they'd like to see. One of things that the plan does talk about is preserving the cultural resources in the area, which I would—and I think the plan does as well and maybe it can be done better—would go to include not only subsistence uses but mining and those things that people are doing for their livelihood in the area. So preserving those things that are allowing people to live the life that they do.

So my easy answer for you is to say that the scenic byways program does not regulate those things, just like with Dorothy's question about the hunting corridor—BLM would most likely use the document to gage the communities' opinion. I think if you look at the document there isn't anything really in there that says—and maybe you can help point me to a page if you have something that's specific—that says it wouldn't recommend new roads and putting things up in the viewshed.

You actually brought up a good point about the road at Marion Creek. The process took a while because the management agency was concerned that the road was in the visual corridor, but through working together you were able to put in the road that you are barely able to see now. And some byway organizations, I would say a lot, work with groups to do just that. They'll say 'we understand that you want to build a road or put up a pit mine, is there anything in your plan where you would still be able to do it that wouldn't impact the visual corridor so much? But it is just a recommendation. Just like the issues in the plan are just recommendations. Ultimately the agencies are going to go forward with what their plans are and I would just encourage you to participate in that public process, just like this one.

What other questions do we have?

Jeff Walters

My name is Jeff Walters. My first question—the outhouse question made me think of this—and I have not read the plan—but does it address trash on the highway? And having picked up quite a few of the pee bottles that are throw out along the highway and seeing the toilet paper and the crashed cars that are there for a long time, is that addressed at all?

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

It addresses that as an issue, as far as visitor services. It talks about how those sites are currently maintained—I believe it is with a seasonal employee with BLM and so that kind of explains the funding. It doesn't go into great detail about trash, but where you would want to look would be the "Corridor Issues and Concerns" section, the "Goals and Objectives" section, and I can talk with you more about that to kind of try to point you in the right direction. And then you might have some recommendations for different wording if you felt it needed to be stronger.

That's one of the issues with increasing travelers and having more people on the road is where do people put the trash or where are people stopping most often? If they feel that there is a milepost they are just likely to stop at because it's pretty or because they really feel like they have to go to the bathroom all the time at that particular milepost, but there's not a restroom there. Well they are going to do it anyway and most likely probably leave some litter behind. I believe, and I would have to look, that there is a goal that talks about putting additional visitor facilities in areas that are already being impacted. And that goal kind of stemmed from your comment and so the byway organization would have to look at that and get back together and try to pick out where those areas are and try to suggest some solutions for taking care of those problems.

But I would be happy to talk with you more about that.

Greg Dudgeon—National Park Service

Greg Dudgeon. How much, if any, discussion has there been on the road being a gateway for invasive plant species? I know that, and what might be done to either mitigate or prevent that? I know that, for example, Kanuti managers are very concerned about what's coming downstream, what's happening to plants on gravel bars and natives that are being replaced with non-native plant species and what that is going to mean in the long run. Has there been much discussion on that?

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

There hasn't been any discussion on that. That's the first time that I can remember invasive species coming up. I know that it is kind of a hot topic generally, but where that could fit under, and we could be more specific with the language—I am not sure we would need to be—but there is some goals and objectives under the umbrella of education where it talks about programs and publications that could be maybe implemented at the Alaska Public Lands Information Center or the visitor center in Coldfoot and distributed that way. So there is room in the scenic byways program to get those types of education things funded, but...

Greg Dudgeon—National Park Service

I guess what I am getting at is more aggressively than that. What's happening is there are some plants in large areas that are not native to the area that are now encroaching and taking over native species in the area, particularly as they go down river to the refuge. Kanuti, Gates of the Arctic is another issue, and so I am thinking this might perhaps provide an opportunity to build some kind of either mitigation or some other type of recognition and even removal effort—we could be a first in not only promulgating and celebrating the fact that we have this really terrific way to the north but how we deal with the impacts that that brings with. We could be breaking new ground here.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

You and I can talk about that a little bit more and kind of talk about the funding opportunities that are...

Greg Dudgeon—*National Park Service*

Mike Spindler who is the refuge manager at Kanuti would be the lead on this very issue.

Kathlene Rowell – *Facilitator*.

He's on the list [*contact/stakeholder list*].

Yea, that hasn't really come up before. There is probably potential within the scenic byways program through education, and we can talk more about that.

Lisa Jodwalis—*Bureau of Land Management*

Could it also be included in things like re-seeding along the sides of the roads when they do upgrades to ensure there aren't more introduced?

Kathlene Rowell – *Facilitator*.

I am not sure. It could be a recommendation to the Department of Transportation that when they reseed they use a specific seed bag. That type of information can be in there. As far as funding to do that as like a private group, I am unsure of that. The program doesn't...

Lisa Jodwalis—*Bureau of Land Management*

It's more of being preventative as well as dealing with what's already there.

Kathlene Rowell – *Facilitator*.

I think it could be a recommendation.

Dorothy Shockley—*Legislative Aid for Senator Kookesh*

That's a good point. Just traveling on the Elliot this year I noticed there was a lot of new growth and I was really shocked [*audio was low and hard to hear*]

Kathlene Rowell – *Facilitator*.

[*repeats Dorothy's comment to the audience at a participant's request*]

Dorothy was saying on the Elliot Highway there is a lot of invasive species growth, something that she noticed.

Female participant – voice unidentified

Foxtails is a good example. They never used to be up the Dalton Highway and I believe they fall off of cars and trucks in big globs of mud and they're just taking over

Kathlene Rowell – *Facilitator*.

Education programs like that—talking with folks about invasive species and other issues that are important to stakeholders is kind of a key component of the scenic byways program. It's a no-physical impact type of project and something that can bring communities together, so I think there is space for [*pause*], that would fit under a number of different goals that are already in the plan. Whether or not we want to be that specific, I am not sure. We haven't gone to that detail in the rest of the document. But

that's something the byway organization can do after the plan's completion—is set more specific objectives for the broad objectives.

Marcheta Moulton—State Scenic Byways Coordinator:

We were just down in August for the National Scenic Byways Conference. I took one of the field trips which was over Guanella Pass and we reached elevation of 12,000 feet and they had a lot of [problems with invasives]. They did put something in the plan in relation to recommending that the local communities come up and take care of that. I'll share the dvd with you [*speaking to Kathlene Rowell*], but I think they do talk about school kids who are on field trips, that's part of the field trip. But that's done at the local level in cooperation with the advisory teams. It was a big part of Guanella Pass.

Katharine Richardson

Is there any provision for revisions of the plan? Some of these say every five years or every ten years.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator:

That's a great question. Corridor partnership plans are meant to be kind of a living document. I would recommend the plan be updated in five years if not less. Especially with such a dynamic roadway there are potential projects out there—things are always changing so it's a great idea. Another really important point for this local byway organization to form to be able to keep up with some of those issues, assess conditions as they change, and then figure out 'how do we update our plan from here?'

Actually Roger Delaney, sitting in the back, brought up an interesting question in some of his comments to me on the draft. One of the funding opportunities available through the Federal Highways Administration is "corridor management planning" once the corridor management plan is complete. So it's a bit confusing, but I believe, and I can double-check on this Roger, that you can—and actually Marcheta might know too—you can apply for funding to update your partnership plan, I believe. So the program has some ways for that and maybe we just need some different wording in the plan—it is a little bit confusing.

Jeff Walters

Jeff Walters again. I have a process question. Does the plan address anything like, Marion Creek was mentioned earlier and I know there is a gravel pit that is supposed to be going in on the north side of Marion Creek for paving the road—that is the next stretch that is going to be paved. Does this document or anything provide a process—a concern that I would have is that is less than half a mile from the public campground that's there, and that's the only public campground north of the Yukon River and the proximity to there with the truck traffic and the visual and the auditory impacts that they may have on that only campground, like I said, that's in that area, around that whole stretch of highway. Does this play into that at all or does the gravel pit have any impact on that or say on that in the future?

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator:

It hasn't addressed specific projects like that. It makes a general statement about ongoing road improvements and I know that DOT is involved right now in several different road improvement projects on the Dalton, which is...

Meadow Bailey—AKDOT&PF

Once the plan is in place it doesn't set policy. As an organization it could come together and make recommendations but it doesn't set policy.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

If it were to, [pause] the byway organization could surely form an opinion on that, but kindof related to Jay's comments too, it doesn't have much meat as far as those things, unless the byway organization as a whole really came together with a strong voice for it.

And Meadow Bailey is the Information Officer for northern DOT. Meadow would probably have some good input about Dalton projects and those things if you wanted to talk with her afterwards.

Alan Armbruster

On the subject of safety again, do you think it is possible that the state could make a formal request to AT&T to get cellular phone service on the Dalton Highway?

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

That's one of the goals—well I am not if we, did we go there or not? Increased cell service, I know that's one of the issues that was brought up, that cell communication is very poor and actually...

Alan Armbruster

I don't think there is any cell service.

[mixed voices]

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

But the group could come together and make that recommendation.

Alan Armbruster

If they address it on safety you usually get more production that way.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

Alan I would have to look at the document to see where we mention that. I feel like it's in there but I couldn't be sure. I know it came up. I know it's in there as an issue, as being poor cell coverage.

Alan Armbruster

Like no cell service.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

There was also a recommendation for call boxes. Emergency call boxes.

Kelly Egger—Bureau of Land Management

The cell towers that are up there now were, my understanding, strictly for Alyeska.

Alan Armbruster

I worked for AT&T...

Kelly Egger—*Bureau of Land Management*

I know that it slowly, through the permitting process...

Alan Armbruster

It's possible. The right people just haven't been contacted.

Kelly Egger—*Bureau of Land Management*

They are permitted for a specific reason. For a specific purpose. I understand the technology is there for them to be used, but the permitting process is separate.

Alan Armbruster

Well they have already opened the door because they have services like to Wiseman and different communities like Bettles and stuff. It's not just for oil, it's also for communities too.

Kathlene Rowell – *Facilitator.*

So the group would need to look into the permitting and see if there was any way to get better cell reception up there. I know that that comment came from some community members who live in Wiseman about poor coverage.

Dorothy Shockley—*Legislative Aid for Senator Kookesh*

I think GCI is providing more services. They started in Fort Yukon, I think.

[mixed voices]

Alan Armbruster

But it's AT&T that has all the mountain tops access.

Kathlene Rowell – *Facilitator.*

It's also recommending using, trying to get everyone to use a CB radio who travels. It may not be realistic for 100% of travelers to be using a CB radio, but it could be a great education program to try and get folks to do that. Just another way to reach out.

Any other questions that I can answer for you?

Jeff Adams

My name is Jeff Adams and are there other highways in Alaska that are already designated byways and what's been the upshot of those as far as results of the plan that they came up with?

Kathlene Rowell – *Facilitator.*

Sure. That's a great question. There are numerous byways in Alaska. Quite a few State Scenic Byways—Parks Highway, Glenn Highway, portions of the Richardson, the Alaska Marine Highway is a scenic byway. There are three byways that are designated at the national level—the Glenn Highway, the Seward Highway is actually an All-American Road which is a higher status, and the Alaska Marine Highway is an All-American Road.

As far as groups that have done corridor partnership plans, personally I would say that maybe the Glenn Highway, their byway organization is quite active. They have a corridor partnership plan, they are a national scenic byway, and they have an active byway organization and a president. They go through and try to accomplish projects. At the same time, the Glenn Highway organization has a completely different goal and set of issues than the Dalton Highway does. They are heavily focused on tourism and recreational travel, although they are a main thoroughfare as well. I wouldn't necessarily recommend comparing their corridor partnership plan to the Dalton Highway's because they are quite different. But they are successful in their efforts as an organization to accomplish their specific goals.

The Parks Highway has recently completed a corridor partnership plan—they have applied for a national status. But on the same stage as the Glenn Highway they're also focused on recreational travel and tourism. But I know, you know it could be a benefit in calling some of the byway organizations and their presidents and members to talk about some of the issues that were raised during their planning processes, because they all have some of the similar concerns come up, as far as the private property issues and access to things, and what are the restrictions. It's nothing necessarily new that we're hearing.

But I do like to emphasize that every corridor partnership plan is different. One thing that was said after our first draft came out was that you know you can't use a template for every road. They all don't fit into the same box. We can start off with a template, and that's what we did, and then changed it to meet the needs of the stakeholders.

If you go on the State Scenic Byways website, there is a list of all the byways that are designated at the state level and at the national level. They can tell you a little bit more about their programs. I believe there is some contact information for those byways that are organized and there actually aren't that many that have a strong organization.

Deb Hickok—Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau

Deb Hickok with the Fairbanks CVB. We've been involved in the north Parks and north Richardson [byways] and I just want to complement you because I think the set of issues and concerns that have come up with the Dalton Highway were very different from those two and I think that you did a great job in being sensitive to the concerns that have been expressed through the process. And it is a very different document with a very different emphasis than the other two we're involved in. I know it's been at times a challenging process and will continue to be probably but I think you did a good of capturing the concerns.

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

Thanks Deb.

I will mention again—we don't have to end now—but the plan is available for download on the project website and I can get that information for you. I have a couple flyers up front that you can grab that give you the address so you can type it in and go right to it. It is a pdf version—I think it's about 6 megabytes. If you are unable to download a file that large, just give me a call or send me an email and I can send you Microsoft Word version that doesn't have the graphs and images in it and is much smaller. Or I can also send you a hard copy if that is more convenient for you.

It seemed like we were somewhat winding down on questions but I would like to, [pause] are there any other things that I can help answer for you today that you feel would be good to talk with me in person about? Otherwise I am super easy to get a hold of, via phone or email.

[question about Kathlene's name]

Yes, Kathlene Rowell – R-O-W-E-L-L—and if you look me up on the state website, my first name is spelled K-A-T-H-L-E-N-E. It’s a little different, so you might get some mistakes if you try to find me the other way.

Lisa Jodwalis—Bureau of Land Management

I am Lisa Jodwalis with the Bureau of Land Management. You might also mention that there are several of us here tonight that are on the Advisory Team. Charity and myself, and Roger, [Kathlene says “and Dorothy”], and Pam. We’re on the list of people that you had up there [referencing PowerPoint presentation].

Kathlene Rowell – Facilitator.

That’s a great point, Lisa. The Advisory Team members some of them, actually the majority of them represent something other than themselves—whether it’s the Bureau of Land Management or North Slope Borough, Alaska State Troopers, there are some private citizens, we have a woman in Wiseman who is the Advisory Team member—Heidi Schoppenhorst—for that community. So these folks have kind of been tasked with being the working group and getting that information out to those people who would be considered their constituents or their just another person for people to go to for information about the planning process. There are a few people in the room today and hopefully they would be—if they don’t have time to talk with you this evening—those are other people who you can call to learn about the process, in addition to Marcheta and myself.

So Lisa, and Roger—sort of, not really anymore—Dorothy Shockley, Pam Rice in the back there, Charity Gadappe from the Fairbanks CVB. And Meadow Bailey sitting in the back there, she is a great person to talk with too for anything and everything about DOT. She’s the go-to person.

[mixed voices]

Well thank you so much for coming out today and please do take an opportunity to look at the plan. It’s 75 pages. I feel like it’s a pretty good read. Maybe don’t read it right before you go to sleep at night, but there’s some good stuff in there and I’d really appreciate your comments. I am just trying to get a good feel for what a variety of people’s impressions are about the plan. I will be accepting comments through October 31st.

Thank you.