

Project Management for Forest Access Roads Construction and Replacement/Repair of Bridges in the Tanana Valley State Forest **FY2014 Request: \$800,000**
Reference No: 51045

AP/AL: Appropriation **Project Type:** Construction
Category: Natural Resources **House District:** Statewide (HD 1-40)
Location: Statewide **Contact:** Jean Davis
Impact House District: Statewide (HD 1-40) **Contact Phone:** (907)465-2422
Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2013 - 06/30/2018

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

The Division of Forestry will identify forest resource development projects that need access roads, and plan, locate, design, and construct needed roads. It will accelerate expansion of woody biomass use in rural Alaska, helping to lower energy costs, reduce wildfire risks, and replace expensive oil. Road construction and associated biomass projects will create employment opportunities for Alaskans, facilitate private investment in resource development industries in Alaska, and open up additional revenue sources to the State.

Funding:	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	Total
Gen Fund	\$800,000	\$800,000		\$400,000			\$2,000,000
Total:	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$0	\$400,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,000,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
Totals:	0	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:

Sec1 Ch5 SLA2011 P93 L31 SB 46 \$600,000

Project Description/Justification:

WHAT IS THE ISSUE OR PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED?

Division of Forestry is facing an unprecedented public and private sector demand to increase offerings of woody biomass as a renewable source of fuel for heat and power generation in Interior Alaska by 3,000 acres a year. The biggest constraint to meeting demand is the minimal and deteriorating transportation infrastructure accessing the forested land of the Tanana Valley.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF WORK TO BE PERFORMED?

These funds will be used to build new mainline forest roads for both the Alaska Power and Telephone Power Plant at Tok and the Fort Greely Biomass Plant, provide for surveys of certain segments of these new forest roads where risk of private property trespass is an issue, replace two unsafe bridges, and supplement existing funding for a statewide resource roads project manager. The project manager will manage the new capital improvement project (CIP) funds targeted at Interior Alaska and existing CIP funds for timber and resources roads in Southeast. The project manager will work with the Department of Natural Resource (DNR) engineers and procurement officers to

construct new access and rehabilitate existing access that is out of compliance with federal and/or state safety and/or natural resource requirements.

To support the two large biomass projects 9 miles of new road will be constructed near Tok and 26 miles near Delta. An additional 2.5 miles will be constructed to support smaller biomass projects in rural villages scattered throughout Alaska.

Professional surveyors will be contracted to retrace subdivision property lines to eliminate the risk of road trespass onto private property.

Specific targets for access upgrades include two bridges in the Tanana Valley State Forest. The Cache Creek bridge is listed as erosion critical by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTPF). The abutment on the southwest bank is unstable due to the highly erodible nature of the soil and poses a risk of bridge failure. A longer span bridge needs to be professionally engineered, purchased, delivered and installed. The existing bridge can be relocated to a site where the bridge length would be adequate. The railroad car bridge over Fortune Creek has been rated by DOTPF for a maximum load of three tons which is inadequate for industrial vehicles. DOTPF has requested that the Division of Forestry close or replace the bridge. A new bridge needs to be professionally engineered, purchased, delivered and installed.

WHAT RESULTS WILL BE ACHIEVED AND/OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED?

The end results will be new and improved access for the long term harvest of woody biomass and firewood to supply commercial and individual users. Products will be new roads and bridges that are professionally engineered, designed and built to last. Subdivision lines immediately adjacent to new or redesigned roads will be clearly designated on the ground.

WHY IS THIS PROJECT NEEDED NOW – WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF REMAINING STATUS QUO?

A lack of access has limited the division response to increased demand for personal use firewood over the last several years. Demand for 3,000 new biomass sale acres annually makes the situation more urgent. Without funding to improve and expand access it is doubtful the biomass will be available.

WHAT ALTERNATIVES WERE CONSIDERED TO SOLVE THE ISSUE OR PROBLEM, AND WHY WERE THEY NOT SELECTED?

One alternative is to include the cost of infrastructure construction, maintenance and refurbishment in the price of personal use firewood and biomass sales. Firewood and biomass are low value forest products. The public would object strongly to paying a high price for personal use firewood and biomass energy production facilities may not be economically viable given higher supply costs. This alternative would achieve none of the identified goals. A second option would be to close the bridges to public access by closing the roads. In the past, Forestry has closed the road by placing barriers on it; however the public has continued to remove these barriers causing road damage and risking injury (i.e. Cache Creek). Some of these roads are used by the public to access their subdivision properties. Closing access to people's homes and recreation cabins is not a viable alternative.

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED WITH PRIOR YEAR FUNDING?

New access to facilitate public firewood cutting has been built near the communities of Tok and Glennallen. Access development contracts for Kenai, Mat-Su, Delta and Fairbanks are pending.

SPECIFIC SPENDING DETAIL:

<u>LINE ITEM</u>	<u>DOLLAR AMOUNT</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
Personal Services	\$ 210,000	Fund an unfunded existing position for life of project
Travel	\$ 25,000	Division employees travel for project design and construction
Services	\$ 565,000	Contracts for survey, design, purchase, delivery and construction
Commodities	\$ 0	
Capital Outlay	\$ 0	
Grants	\$ 0	
PROJECT TOTAL	\$800,000	

Project Support:

Project support is expected from Fairbanks North Star Borough, City of Delta Junction, Tok community, Fairbanks Economic Development Council, Chambers of Commerce, Tok Umbrella Corporation, Alaska Miners Association, Alaska Forest Association, Resource Development Council, Native Corporations, local fire departments, and general public.