

## APPROVAL FORM

For deliverables submitted in compliance with the NHPA, Section 106 Process for the:

*Programmatic Agreement by and Among the Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer, and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding the Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Road, Alaska, executed April 27, 2020*

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**Document:** 2021 PA Report and 2021 Historic Themes Report (revised versions)

**Review Period:** June 18 - July 2, 2021

**PA Stipulation:** XV.B and VII.C.ii.a

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**Approving Agency:** BLM

**Approval Stipulation:** XIV.B.iv

**Approved:**  **Denied:**

**Explanation of Denial:** *If approval of a report is denied for any reason, the party must notify the BLM of this in writing during the review period and provide information regarding the necessary corrections to allow for approval of that report. The BLM will then direct the Permittee to make the necessary changes and then resubmit the revised report to that party for approval [PA Stipulation XIV.B.iv]*

**Signature:** WILLIAM HEDMAN  Digitally signed by WILLIAM HEDMAN  
Date: 2021.08.20 15:41:47 -08'00'

**Date:**

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**Signature:**



**Date:**

9/28/2021

# AMBLER ACCESS PROJECT

Final Approved 2020 Annual PA Report

Prepared by:



813 West Northern Lights Boulevard  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

FINAL APPROVED

October 2021

The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority is submitting this final approved report in compliance with Stipulation XV.B, *Annual Report*, of the of the Programmatic Agreement executed by the Bureau of Land Management, the Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regarding the Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Road, Alaska.

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FINAL APPROVED

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAP	.....	Ambler Access Project
ACHP	.....	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
AIDEA	.....	Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority
APE	.....	Area of Potential Effects
BLM	.....	Bureau of Land Management
CRMP	.....	Cultural Resource Management Plan
DNR	.....	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
GIS	.....	geographical information system
Model	.....	Ambler Access Project GIS Model Version 1.0
NLURA	.....	Northern Land Use Research Alaska, LLC
NPS	.....	National Park Service
NSCR	.....	North Star Cultural Resources, LLC
PA	.....	Programmatic Agreement
Project	.....	Ambler Access Project
SHPO	.....	Alaska State Historic Preservation Office
USACE	.....	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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1 **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2 In conformity with Stipulation XV.B, *Annual PA Report*, of the Programmatic Agreement (PA) for  
3 the Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Road, the Alaska Industrial Development and  
4 Export Authority (AIDEA) is submitting this revised Annual PA Report for 2020 to be reviewed  
5 by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office  
6 (SHPO), the National Park Service (NPS), Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, U.S. Army  
7 Corps of Engineers (USACE), Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Consulting  
8 Parties to the PA for the Ambler Access Project (AAP). The purpose of this revised Annual PA  
9 Report is to provide Signatories, Invited Signatories, and Consulting Parties of the PA executed  
10 for the AAP with a high-level summaries of activities, undertaken by or on the behalf of AIDEA,  
11 to meet the reporting requirements outlined in the Project PA and Attachment E: *Cultural*  
12 *Resources Management Plan* (CRMP).

13 The revised Annual PA Report includes three major revisions based on the comments received  
14 on the draft Annual PA Report submitted by AIDEA on March 12, 2021:

- 15 1. Revisions and clarifications to text requested by Signatories, as applicable to the Annual  
16 PA Report.
- 17 2. Clarified AIDEA's intent to submit the place names report to Signatories and Consulting  
18 Parties for review and comment consistent with PA Stipulation VII.B.vi to consider the  
19 document a "Technical Report."
- 20 3. Added contact information for BLM and directs the public to contact BLM if they have  
21 relevant Section 106 information or wish to become involved in the Section 106 process.  
22

23 Upon approval of the Annual PA Report by BLM and SHPO, BLM and AIDEA will post the  
24 approved Annual PA Report on their respective websites to provide public access to the report.

## 25 **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE**

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### 26 **1.1 Introduction**

27 In April 2020, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Alaska State Historic Preservation  
28 Officer (SHPO), National Park Service (NPS), Advisory Council on Historic Preservation  
29 (ACHP), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Alaska Department of Natural Resources  
30 (DNR), and Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) executed a  
31 Programmatic Agreement (PA) for AIDEA's Ambler Access Project (AAP or Project). This PA  
32 provides an alternate process by which BLM (as the lead federal agency) may comply with  
33 Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 USC 306108) and requires AIDEA to  
34 provide annual reporting on Project activities.

### 35 **1.2 Purpose**

36 AIDEA has prepared this Annual PA Report of AIDEA's 2020 activities to meet the PA reporting  
37 requirements instituted for the Project. This report contains high-level summaries of activities,  
38 undertaken by or on the behalf of AIDEA, to meet the reporting requirements outlined in the  
39 Project PA and Attachment E: *Cultural Resources Management Plan* (CRMP) and is intended  
40 for distribution to PA signatories and consulting parties. This report also contains a bibliography  
41 of reports and submittals, prepared by or on behalf of AIDEA, to comply with PA stipulations.  
42 Upon approval of the Annual PA Report by BLM and SHPO, BLM and AIDEA will post the  
43 approved Annual PA Report on their respective websites to provide public access to the report.

## 44 **2.0 2020 PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT ACTIVITIES**

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45 The mid-2020 PA execution resulted in an abbreviated and bisected reporting cycle for  
46 compliance with the PA stipulations, and as such, only a limited amount of fieldwork and  
47 associated reporting was completed in 2020. Furthermore, the uncertainty associated with the  
48 ongoing COVID-19 pandemic made planning and executing fieldwork and meetings or  
49 consultation difficult. These combined factors resulted in a limited level of PA-related work  
50 during the 2020 field season. However, the work that was conducted was critical in meeting PA  
51 milestones and providing consulting parties with the necessary information to draft work plans  
52 for the 2021 field season. 2021 will be the first full calendar year of Project work under the PA  
53 and CRMP fieldwork and reporting cycles, and as such, AIDEA anticipates that more extensive  
54 and detailed field studies and associated reporting efforts will be conducted this year; however,  
55 the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will factor heavily into AIDEA's assessment as to whether  
56 fieldwork can be conducted in a safe manner for both field crews and communities near the  
57 Project.

### 58 **2.1 2020 Fieldwork**

59 On behalf of AIDEA and under contract to DOWL, Northern Land Use Research Alaska, LLC  
60 (NLURA) conducted aerial reconnaissance surveys of the direct area of potential effects (APE)  
61 in September 2020. The surveys were conducted to field verify the output of the geographic  
62 information system (GIS) model prepared for the Project under PA Stipulation VII.C.i,  
63 *Archaeological Resources*. The purpose of NLURA's aerial surveys was to confirm that the GIS  
64 model's terrain and landscape characterization of the direct APE was an accurate reflection of  
65 the archaeological potential, as observed by NLURA archaeologists. NLURA's aerial surveys



66 occurred over several days in September, and successfully covered the Project's entire direct  
67 APE. During their overflight, NLURA archaeologists used printed maps displaying the model  
68 values output to verify that the archaeological sensitivity classification (e.g., high, medium, low)  
69 assigned by the model aligned with NLURA's observations. Discrepancies between the model  
70 output and NLURA's observations were recorded on the maps and NLURA then incorporated  
71 these changes and the reasons behind them into the revised GIS model. On January 26, 2021,  
72 BLM provided the GIS model (Ambler Access Project GIS Model Version 1.0, dated December  
73 22, 2020) and supporting documentation to signatories for review and comment in accordance  
74 with the PA.

## 75 **2.2 GIS Model, Reports, and Plans**

76 On behalf of AIDEA, the following reports and plans have been developed or submitted as  
77 required by PA stipulations:

- 78 1. GIS Model and Model Summary Report: In accordance with PA Stipulation VII.C.i,  
79 *Archaeological Resources*, and CRMP Section 4.1.5, *Archaeological Sensitivity Model*,  
80 NLURA, developed a GIS model (Ambler Access Project GIS Model Version 1.0  
81 [Model]) of archaeological resource sensitivity for the AAP to classify the Project's APE  
82 into categories of high, medium, and low potentials for containing archaeological  
83 resources. In addition, DOWL with assistance from NLURA, prepared a GIS Model  
84 Summary Report which presents an overview of the steps taken by AIDEA and AIDEA's  
85 consultants to create the Model. The GIS Model Summary Report references previously  
86 prepared reports and summaries of modeling methods, references meetings during  
87 which the Model was discussed, and presents the first operationalized iteration of the  
88 Model resulting from AIDEA's efforts to meet the PA and CRMP requirements. AIDEA  
89 submitted the model and report to BLM and Signatories on January 22, 2021.
- 90 2. Historic Themes: In accordance with PA Stipulation VII.C.ii, *Historic Resources*, and as  
91 part of the development of the Annual Work Plan for 2021, DOWL is preparing a Historic  
92 Theme Report which contains thematic summaries, potential property types associated  
93 with the themes, and compiled data sources regarding traditional subsistence practices,  
94 travel routes and trade, Euro-American exploration, and mineral prospecting within and  
95 adjacent to the Project area. This is the first iteration of the Historic Themes and it is  
96 anticipated that future fieldwork and research will supplement and potentially expand  
97 these themes. AIDEA will submit this report in June 2021.
- 98 3. Place Names Research: North Star Cultural Resources, LLC (NSCR) conducted a  
99 literature review of previously published Dene (Athabaskan) and Iñupiaq place names  
100 within and adjacent to the Project APE. NSCR's research included discussions of the  
101 identified names in the direct and indirect APE, as well as a preliminary assessment of  
102 the potential an identified place name may be associated with discoverable material  
103 remains. AIDEA intends to submit this report to BLM for distribution to Signatories and  
104 Consulting Parties for review and comment consistent with PA Stipulation VII.B.vi to  
105 consider the NSCR document a "Technical Report." AIDEA will submit the report in June  
106 2021.

## 107 **3.0 PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT SUBMITTALS FOR 2020**

108 The list below contains all PA-related submittals prepared under the direction of AIDEA and  
109 submitted to the BLM for the 2020 year of the PA.

- 110 DOWL. 2021. *Summary Report of GIS Model Version 1.0*. Prepared for the Alaska Industrial  
111 Development and Export Authority.
- 112 \_\_\_\_\_. 2020. *Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Project: 2020 Work Plan*. Prepared for the  
113 Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority.
- 114 Smith, Gerad M. 2021. *2020 Cultural Resources Review of Traditional Place Names and*  
115 *Evaluation of the Ambler Access Project*. Report prepared for DOWL and the Alaska  
116 Industrial Development and Export Authority by North Star Cultural Resources, LLC,  
117 Fairbanks, Alaska.
- 118 Sweeney, Mary Ann. 2020. *Cultural Resources Helicopter Overflight for the Ambler Access*  
119 *Project*. Report prepared for DOWL and Alaska Industrial Development and Export  
120 Authority by Northern Land Use Research Alaska, LLC, Fairbanks, Alaska.
- 121 Sweeney, Mary Ann and Morgan R. Blanchard. 2020a. *Ambler Mining District Industrial Access*  
122 *Project Cultural Resource Project Sensitivity Analysis Direct APE* (Geodatabase) (dated  
123 February 21, 2020). Prepared for DOWL and the Alaska Industrial Development and  
124 Export Authority by Northern Land Use Research Alaska, LLC, Anchorage, Alaska.
- 125 \_\_\_\_\_. 2020b. *Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Project Cultural Resource Project*  
126 *Sensitivity Analysis Indirect APE* (Geodatabase) (dated February 21, 2020). Prepared  
127 for DOWL and the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority by Northern Land  
128 Use Research Alaska, LLC, Anchorage, Alaska.
- 129 \_\_\_\_\_. 2020c. *AAP Cultural Resource Project Sensitivity Analysis Direct APE* (Geodatabase)  
130 (dated December 22, 2020). Prepared for DOWL and the Alaska Industrial Development  
131 and Export Authority by Northern Land Use Research Alaska, LLC, Anchorage, Alaska.
- 132 \_\_\_\_\_. 2020d. *AAP Cultural Resource Project Sensitivity Analysis Indirect APE* (Geodatabase)  
133 (dated December 22, 2020). Prepared for DOWL and the Alaska Industrial Development  
134 and Export Authority by Northern Land Use Research Alaska, LLC, Anchorage, Alaska.
- 135 Sweeney, Mary Ann and Lindsay J. Simmons. 2019a. *Cultural Resources Sensitivity Model for*  
136 *the Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Project*. Prepared for DOWL and the Alaska  
137 Industrial Development and Export Authority by Northern Land Use Research Alaska,  
138 LLC, Anchorage, Alaska.
- 139 \_\_\_\_\_. 2019b. *Preliminary Geographic Information Systems Model* (Geodatabase) for the  
140 Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Project (dated May 24, 2019). Prepared for  
141 DOWL and the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority by Northern Land  
142 Use Research Alaska, LLC, Anchorage, Alaska.

#### 143 **4.0 BLM POINT OF CONTACT FOR SECTION 106**

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144 If any member of the public wishes to notify BLM that they have relevant information to share as  
145 part of the Section 106 process, or wish to become involved in Section 106 consultation, they  
146 are directed to notify:

147 Crystal Glassburn, BLM Archaeologist, Central Yukon Field Office:  
148 (907) 474-2240 or [cglassburn@blm.gov](mailto:cglassburn@blm.gov)