Chilkoot River Corridor – Master Site Development Plan Issue Response Summary

Comment number and Subject	***Issue Statement / Public Comment***	***Agency Response: Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR), Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), Alaska Department of Fish & Game / Division of Commercial Fish (ADF&G/DCF), Division of Wildlife Conservation (ADF&G/DWC)***
1. Viewing Platform on both sides of the Lutak Bridge	The viewing platform should be constructed on both sides of the existing Lutak bridge. Coordinate with any D.O.T. plans for development of the area around the Lutak bridge.	*DOT&PF: The existing Lutak bridge over the Chilkoot River does not meet current standards; it is scheduled for a review and possible replacement. At that time the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) will coordinate with the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) regarding the future development of a new bridge and the possibility of a viewing area.*
2. Fish weir	Move the existing fish weir down under the Lutak bridge. The fish weir is already causing enough harm and injury to our cultural and traditional way of uses of salmon and wildlife	*Alaska Department of Fish & Game / Division of Commercial Fish (ADF&G/DCF): Too deep an area and influenced by tide. The current location is right above any tidal influence and is shallow enough to count fish. Also the Lutak bridge area is a traditional sport fishing zone and would displace current users of that area. The weir has been there since 1976 and works very well to assess all species of salmonids from early June through mid-September, annually. Historically and traditionally the Chilkoot River has had weirs, traps and gaffing platforms used to harvest fish at least since the turn of the 20th century (Report on the Chilkoot River Corridor Strategic Planning Project, Preliminary draft, August 2003, page 13). It also serves as a traditional eulachon dipping platform (page 18).*

		Division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC): Placing the weir in this location may exasperate bear/human conflicts as bears use this are to move up and down the river. Because of the continual use of this area by bears and the additional attraction from the weir could create an increased safety risk to weir personnel and the public. *DOT&PF: Opposes location of structures within the roadway rights of way, including under bridges, if there is a reasonable alternative. Such structures, as a weir, could interfere and obstruct structural refurbishment and replacement. It could also adversely impact bridge abutments hydraulically.*
3. Staffing	How can you manage visitors to Chilkoot without sufficient staffing? Isn't that the real problem?	*Staffing currently is a problem within the Chilkoot Corridor during the busy summer months, however current funding does not allow for additional positions.*
4. Staffing	I would like to have a staffed kiosk near the road entry, with educational handouts and information aimed at protecting visitors and bears.	*A staffed kiosk at the entrance to the Corridor is an option under consideration. This would allow the opportunity to inform and educate the public about the Corridor. DPOR has created a rack card "Chilkoot River Corridor – Corridor Courtesy" to outline some of ways visitors can be safe and responsible for themselves.*
5. Bear Monitor	I would like more bear monitors who either have the authority to write citations, or who have video and cameras to document flagrant human misconduct. The presence of a good bear monitor to help interface with the public and help manage behavior is actually the single most helpful	*DPOR recognizes the need for more and consistent oversight within the corridor however, current funding does not allow for additional oversight.*

	expenditure you can make.	
6. Parking	A few more pullouts on the away side of the river would be helpful to visitors and also disperse traffic. Provide parking that will be accessible to hooligan fishers.	*Current concepts do show improvement to the existing pullouts both on the river side and the away side of the river.* *Parking improvements are an element of this project and will be looked at.*
7. Loop Road	A by-pass road would allow for a one way loop along the corridor, the extra lane along the road would make an easy pull out for vehicles who wish to stop for viewing. Extra areas for parking at the beginning of the loop might provide extra opportunities for pedestrian traffic.	*DPOR recognizes this could be a future option*
8. Funding Allocation	Send the money that was allocated for a viewing platform back to the State. The money would be far better spent on more staffing and bear monitors.	*In 2011 DPOR received capital improvement funds to establish a bear viewing facility along the Chilkoot River. It is the responsibility of the receiving agency to use the funds for the purpose in which they were allocated.*
9. Deer Rock	Improvements for standing only around Deer Rock also known as peace rock, no car parking should be near the historical rock. Deer Rock culture site should not be a place for infrastructure. Request the State do no modification at or near Deer Rock, i.e., eliminate the proposed walkway and keep the surrounding area as close to its	*DPOR recognized this area as a culturally sensitive site and intends to uphold the historical integrity as much as possible. In response DPOR will provide a 50' infrastructure setback from Deer Rock.*

	historical integrity as possible. Covering the earth surrounding Deer Rock would be a desecration and an abomination to us.	
10. Fishing Access	Fishing should be allowed with a written permit and only a limited number of people per timeframe.	*ADF&G/DSF: Restricting public access to the Chilkoot River is not being considered by the land managers (DNR, DOT&PF) at this time.* *The requirement of a permit and the limiting of fishing opportunity would need to be addressed through the Alaska Board of Fisheries process.*
11. Sport Fishing	Fishing within the corridor should be regulated to include; no fishing on the east side of the river and no fishing in the early morning or evening.	*ADF&G/DSF: Restricting access to public land in the Chilkoot River corridor not being considered by the land managers (DNR, DOT&PF) at this time.* *This issue would need to be addressed through the Alaska Board of Fisheries process.*
12. River Corridor	Restrain DOT intrusion into the river area.	*DOT&PF has no plan for road improvements within the corridor.*
13. Bus Parking	Avoid bus parking along river side as it will disrupt views along the river and enforce a time limit on all bus parking.	*DPOR intends to take advantage of the existing pullouts where necessary along the mountain and river sides of the Corridor. However, it is recognized the preservation of views to and from the river are essential and DPOR will try to reduce parking along the river side of the road. However, some existing river side pullouts may need to be upgraded to alleviate vehicle congestion.* *DOT&PF would permit no parking and parking time limit signs, if enforcement was assured.*

14. Bus Parking	Eliminate or minimize the bus parking space below Deer Rock in Concept D so as to not substantially reduce the current fishing positions located close by and to not encroach on the sacred site of our people at Deer Rock.	*The placement and location of additional parking is still being considered, however there is an existing pull out at this location and it could be improved to allow for safer parking.*
15. Structures	No covered structures; observation, walkway or shelters.	*DPOR's preferred option would not include a covered structure for the viewing platform.*
16. Structures	Any structure shall allow sufficient room for bears and anglers to comfortably migrate along the riverbank.	*DPOR does not intend to restrict the movement of bears within the Corridor, any structure proposed will be sensitive to the movement of people and bears.* *ADF&G/DSF: Concur with DPOR comment.* *DWC: It will be necessary to develop protocols addressing situations where bears are in close proximity, or on, to the stairs when people are on the platforms or wish to access the river.*
17. Orientation Kiosk	Orientation Kiosk would be better located near the parking area away from the river.	*DPOR is currently looking at the best way to provide visitors to the Corridor with appropriate information.*
18. Law Enforcement	How and who will enforce of the rules within the Corridor?	*Currently DPOR has one Park Ranger assigned to the Haines Area parks. Alaska State Troopers also respond if necessary.*
19. Restrooms	Restrooms should not be provided as it would create congestion in an already congested area.	*No toilet within the corridor will be proposed at this time. Per Department of Environmental Conservation regulations the only location with proper setback from the river would be near the "Deer Rock" location. Because this area is already a high traffic area DPOR does not feel the need to further congest the area with a vaulted latrine. If a toilet is deemed necessary in the future an*

		alternate location could be identified.
20. User Fees	Charge a user fee for the Corridor, an annual pass could be offered for locals.	*DPOR does not currently charge a user fee for the Chilkoot Corridor and until the road is no longer managed by DOT&PF that will not be an option.*
21. User Fees	Commercial tours should be charges a special fee and use that money to support facilities within the Corridor.	*DPOR currently requires guides to have a commercial use permit to operate within the corridor. Fees do go towards the Parks operation budget.*
22. Parking Limits	Allow no parking within corridor; instead provide a parking area at mile 9.3 or soon after bridge.	*DOT&PF does not have enforcement authority. DOT&PF would permit no parking and parking time limit signs, if enforcement was assured. Access to parking lots will require driveway permits and construction of improvements within the road right of way will require encroachment permits.*
23. Alternative Transportation	If a by-pass road is planned for access to Chilkoot Lake the use of a trolley, light rail or shuttle for the river side	*DPOR recognizes the need for long term planning as congestion will only increase, however, this would require additional funding for studies.*
24. Viewing Platforms- large	The idea of having one large bear viewing platform instead of three smaller ones is better for the bears because it would concentrate the bear viewers as they create a safety and parking concern.	*Having one large platform would concentrate people at one point within the corridor causing a bottle neck, DPOR would rather see dispersal of vehicles and people in safe parking and viewing areas that are outside of known bear corridors to and from the river and the hillside.*
25. Viewing Platforms- small	Smaller viewing platforms are better because they would be less intrusive and it would be easier for the viewer to see in smaller groups than one large group.	*Current planning agrees there should be smaller viewing areas dispersed throughout the corridor as it is a long linear corridor and viewing could happen at any time. Small parking areas or pullouts should be associated with each small viewing platform.*

26. Subsistence	Resources should be made strictly for subsistence residents of the area.	*ADF&G/DSF: The Chilkoot River is a eulachon subsistence fishing site. Subsistence fishing is open to Alaska residents only. A subsistence fishery for salmon in the Chilkoot River corridor could not happen without a new Customary and Traditional Use finding by the Alaska Board of Fisheries.* *DWC: At present, most terrestrial wildlife resources in the Chilkoot River drainage occur at levels that can support both resident and nonresident hunting and trapping seasons. Moose hunting in the drainage is allowed for residents only under a Tier II management strategy.*
27. Culture Camp	Resources should be condensed at the Culture Camp already in existence and opened for cultural use at no charge.	*This activity is not a recreational activity managed by Parks and will be addressed by the Division of Forestry in future management decisions.*
28. Alterative Parking Options outside of Corridor	Purchase the RV parking area at mile 9 of Lutak Road and use it as a staging area for small tour vehicles.	*This option is currently out of the scope of our project, however could be an option in the future.*
29. Access Restriction	Restrict access to all vehicles expect buses.	*DOT&PF currently provides seasonal road maintenance and limiting vehicle access on a public transportation road is not allowed. Jurisdiction of the road could be transferred to DNR for management.*
30. Pedestrian Access on Lutak Bridge	Restrict access to pedestrians on the Lutak bridge; it is too narrow and dangerous conflict between cars and people.	*Pedestrians do not currently have legal access onto the bridge and this is an enforcement issue that may be address through design in the future.*

31. Road Improvements	Improvements to the road are highly needed, there are many pot holes.	*Road improvements are a part of this projects scope, however, DOT&PF does provide occasional road improvements.*
32. Access over Native Lands	How does native land ownership of a riverbed affect angle access?	*There is no private ownership of the Chilkoot riverbed.*
33. Rivers Edge	What are the laws for walking on rivers edge, shore for public users? Does native land extend into center of river?	*ADF&G/DSF- There may be restrictions on public access to shoreline on private land, including native allotments. Private ownership extends down to Mean High Water in intertidal areas and down to Ordinary High Water upstream of tidal influence. The land below these boundaries, including the Chilkoot River bed, is public, owned by the State of Alaska.*
34. Road Widening	Other than the permits needed to put fill in a riparian, possible wetland area, widening the road in a few places might be the least impact.	*DPOR is currently looking into the option of widening the roadway to allow for improvements to the existing pullouts on the mountain side of the road.*
35. Visitor Capacity	How can you design infrastructure options when you do not know the people carrying capacity of Chilkoot?	*Assigning a carrying capacity to an area is an arbitrary action that DNR is not ready to make and instead DPOR is building a facility for resource protection and a specific visitor experience that may or may not need to change in the future.*
36. Staffed Kiosk	A staffed kiosk near the road entry with educational handouts and information aimed at protecting visitors and bears would greatly improve the safety of the corridor.	*Currently DOT&PF has jurisdiction and maintains the road within the Chilkoot Corridor as a public transportation road. A staffed kiosk to provide information would have to be located sufficient distance from the travel lane to allow vehicles to pull out to avoid obstructing the road travel lane. All improvements within the road right of way would need to be permitted by DOT&PF.*
37. Fish cache	Installation of metal bear- proof caches for fish coolers would enable people to safely store their	*ADF&G/DWC-While a fish cache may be possible additional research should be conducted to determine if such caches are used*

	catch. It makes sense to have 2-3 of these along the corridor.	*for fish. Bears will likely learn where the caches are and take advantage of the availability of the fish. Caches may need to be enclosed behind fencing, possibly electric fences.* *For now, people should use their vehicles to secure their catch.*
38. Donation Collection	Several donation boxes within the corridor could provide an opportunity for people to contribute money for fish cache boxes, staffing, etc.	*Donation boxes could be installed but are usually not cost effective due to maintenance and oversight costs unless they are in a fully staffed sight.*
39. No Structures in the Corridor	No manmade structures on the river side of the road.	*It is the goal of DPOR to keep the river side of the road as natural as possible, however with the increase in visitors and traffic the area will need to be protected and in some areas developed for appropriate use.*
40. Special Permitting	Special permitting for tour companies should be required; on ship days there are too many big buses visiting the area at one time and this creates a congestion problem not only on the road to the lake but at the lake as well.	*DPOR currently requires guides to have a commercial use permit to operate within the corridor. DPOR can put reasonable stipulations on the permits to control congestion once there is a consensus on what would help the situation.*
41. Access Stairs	Access stairs to the river should be eliminated because when you have a large group of people in one tour stairs encourage people to walk down to the river. It would create problems with bears, fisherman and trampling the vegetation along the river bank causing erosion.	*DPOR recognizes this could be a conflict, however proper access for fishing is needed. Alternatives will be looked into.* *ADF&G/DSF: There are already some access points where banks are eroded from foot traffic. Stairs or bank protection structures using natural materials would alleviate this problem.* *As part of the permitting process, commercial tour leaders should be instructed to manage their groups to avoid crowding bears.* *DWC: The concerns listed are valid. However, access to the river for fishers is important. It will be necessary to develop protocols*

		addressing situations when bears are in close proximity, or on, the access points/stairs.
42. Pedestrian Only Corridor	Build Glory Hole Road and restrict vehicles along the river corridor, make it a pedestrian only walking area.	*This could be a long term vision for the Corridor; however, more studies will need to be conducted.*
43. Corridor Management	Chilkoot's problems need to first be approached from a management perspective, and then possibly some infrastructure could be added into the mix as a carefully thought out addition.	*Funding has not been appropriated for determining an overall management solution at this time.*
44. Road Design Vehicle	Management of the Chilkoot Corridor should not have to accommodate 40 passenger buses.	*DOT&PF: Currently the road is maintained by DOT&PF and limiting vehicles is not allowed. Jurisdiction of the road could be transferred to DNR for management.*
45. Minimize Vehicles	Try to minimize the number of vehicles entering the area to reduce the amount of bear / vehicle conflict.	*DOT&PF: Currently the road is maintained by DOT&PF and limiting vehicles is not allowed. Jurisdiction of the road could be transferred to DNR for management.*