



# On Board!

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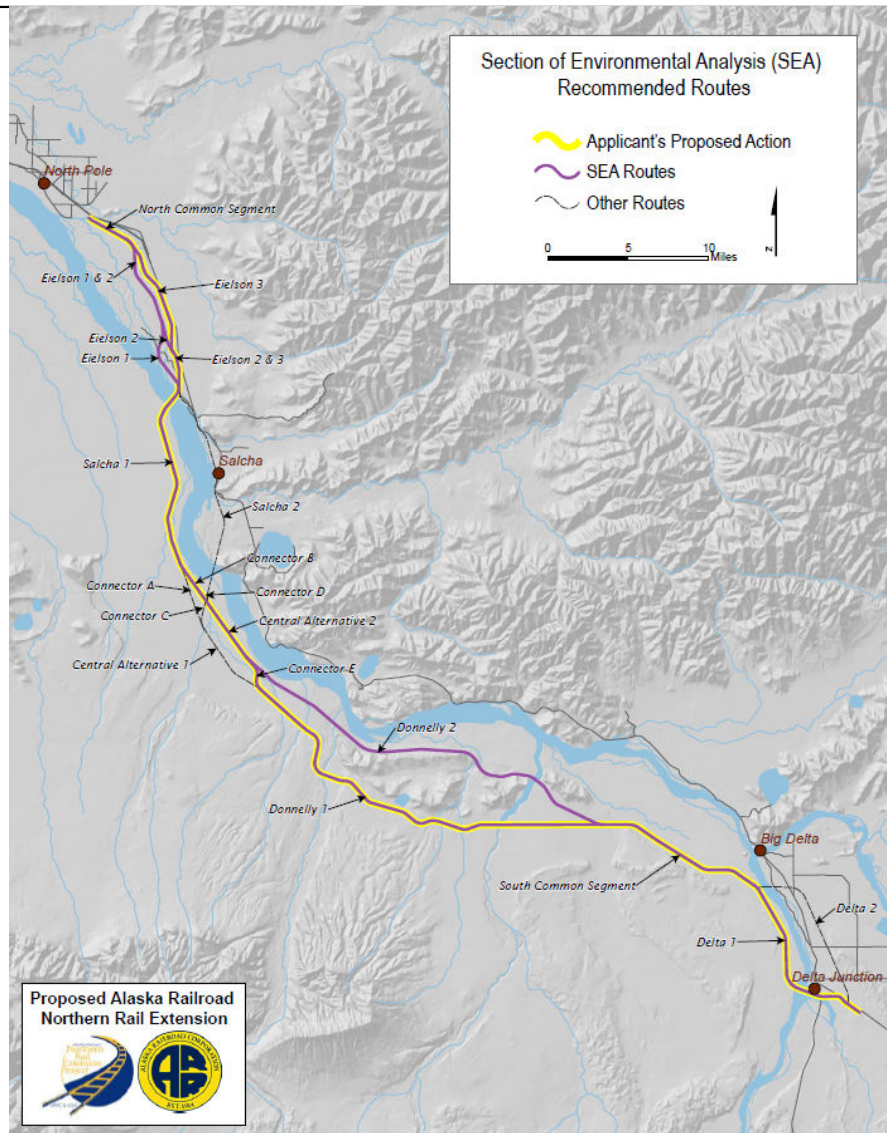
## STB Publishes Final Environmental Impact Statement

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) published the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) for the Northern Rail Extension project on September 18, 2009. A Record of Decision is expected by the end of October, completing an environmental review process that began in 2005.

The STB is the federal agency with approval authority over new U.S. rail lines. The EIS process solicited input from the public and cooperating agencies including the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), U.S. Air Force (Eielson AFB), Federal Transit Administration, Bureau of Land Management, Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, and Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

The FEIS recommends a final route and measures to mitigate impacts from rail line construction. Maps of the initial and refined route options are available on the project Web site: [www.northernrailextension.com/routes.htm](http://www.northernrailextension.com/routes.htm).

Mitigation includes habitat restoration, bridge/culvert design to preserve water flow



and patterns, construction timed to minimize wildlife impacts, and hiring a community liaison. FEIS Chapter 2 lists mitigation details.

(Story continued on Page 2)

## Right-of-Way: What Landowners Should Know

Even before the Surface Transportation Board (STB) held scoping meetings in preparation for initiating the environmental review process, the Alaska Railroad met with stakeholders and landowners in the North Pole, Eielson Farm, Salcha and Delta Junction communities to listen to property owner concerns, ideas and issues. Meetings with landowner groups and individuals have continued throughout the EIS process with a goal to minimize property impacts. Even so, some property acquisition will be necessary to accommodate the new right-of-way (ROW).

Through the final design, the Alaska Railroad is committed to working with each affected property owner on a case-by-case basis. Landowners should understand that ROW acquisition involves a series of steps:

ROW acquisition begins with good faith negotiations and a fair appraisal. An independent, impartial and qualified appraiser will be hired to determine fair market value (FMV).

Property owners are entitled to receive just compensation, which cannot be less than the FMV. Eligible displaced property owners and tenants may also be entitled to displacement or relocation benefits.

The ROW acquisition process will be conducted in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Act, a federal law that requires equitable treatment of people displaced from homes, businesses or farms due to federal or federally-funded projects or programs. The act's language is available online at [www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title42/chapter61.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title42/chapter61.html).

## Final EIS (continued from Page 1)

The STB will post its final decision on the STB Web site's Alaska environmental project page: [http://www.stb.dot.gov/stb/environment/key\\_cases\\_alaska.html](http://www.stb.dot.gov/stb/environment/key_cases_alaska.html)

Once the decision is made, the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) can begin final design, state and federal agency permitting, and construction. The project will likely be accomplished in phases, with construction of Phase One expected to begin in 2010.

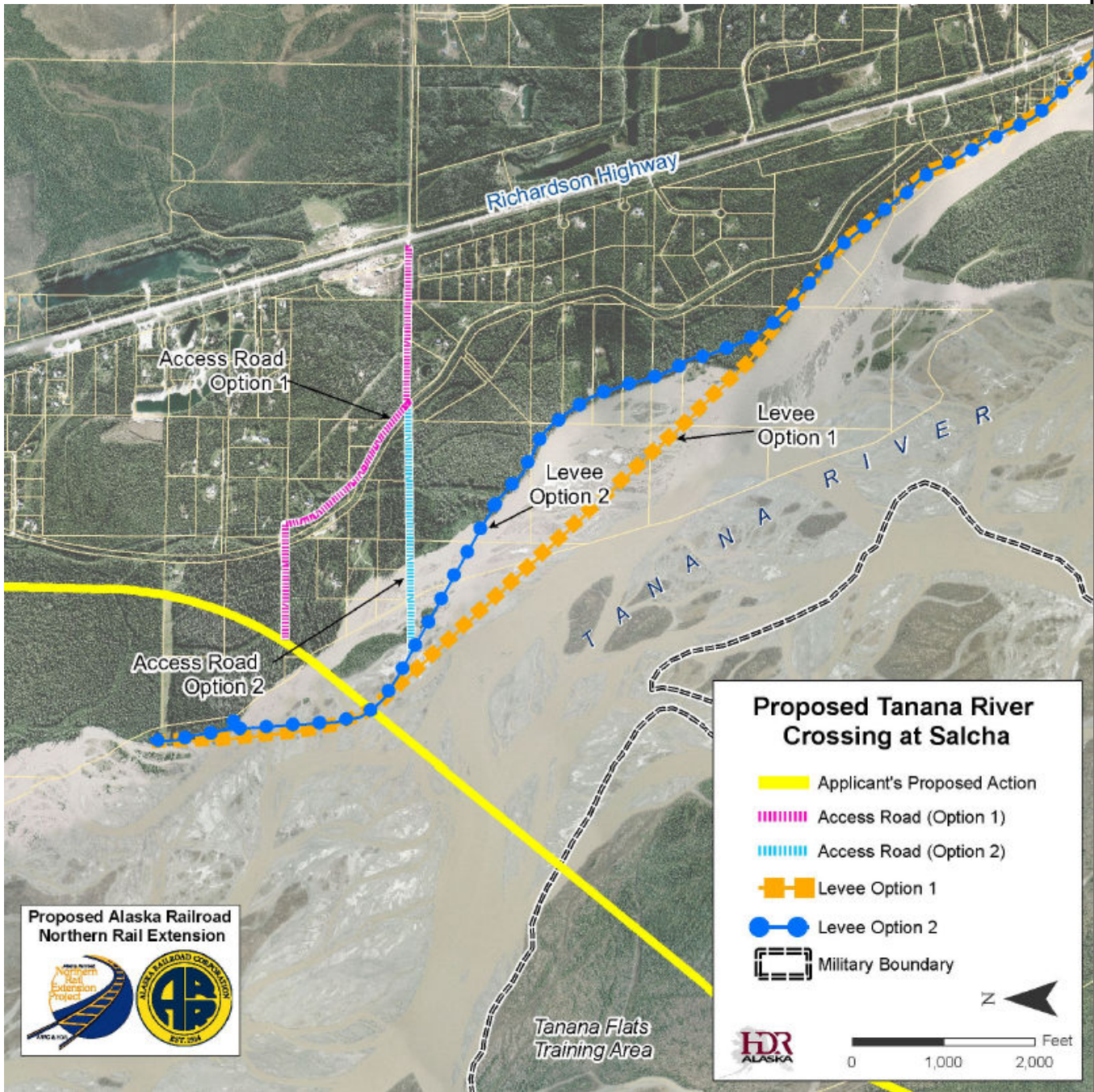
Phase One: Tanana River crossing at Salcha

Phase Two: Extend rail from North Pole to Salcha

Phase Three: Extend rail from Salcha to Donnelly Military Training Area

Phase Four: Extend rail from Donnelly to Delta Junction

Approximately \$105 million in DOD appropriations (2007 and 2008) is available to complete design and begin permitting and construction of Phase One. Later phases will follow, pending funding, which may include additional DOD appropriations, other federal grants, or revenue bonds.



Detail: Salcha Crossing



Alaska Railroad Corporation  
PO Box 107500  
Anchorage, AK 99510

Phone: 907-265-2538  
Fax: 907-265-2365  
[public\\_comment@akrr.com](mailto:public_comment@akrr.com)

*ARRC—Building a  
Great Railroad  
Across the Great  
Land*



### **The Newsletter of the Northern Rail Extension Project**

*On Board!* is a publication of the  
ARRC and HDR Alaska.

For information about the  
Northern Rail Extension Project,  
visit the project Web site at  
[www.northernrailextension.com](http://www.northernrailextension.com)

## **Railroad Schedules Open House Events**

The Alaska Railroad will host open house events to keep community residents apprised of the project's progress. Both events are scheduled for 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at:

### **SALCHA**

Tuesday, December 1, 2009  
Salcha Elementary School  
8530 Richardson Highway

### **NORTH POLE**

Wednesday, December 2, 2009  
North Pole Hotel  
449 N. Santa Claus Lane

## **For More Information**

Send general comments via e-mail to [wheelers@akrr.com](mailto:wheelers@akrr.com), by fax to (907) 265-2365, or by regular mail to:

ARRC  
Attn: Stephenie Wheeler  
P.O. Box 107500  
Anchorage, AK 99510-7500