Environmental Review for State-Funded Projects

1. Introduction

The environmental review process for state-funded projects is used to:

- Evaluate environmental impacts from the proposed action; and

- Identify permits and clearances necessary for construction,

The anticipated environmental effects and the permits and clearance necessary for its construction are identified by the environmental analyst. The regional environmental manager (REM) reviews this information and makes a determination on whether preparation of a state-funded project environmental checklist (see 3) is necessary.

Public and agency coordination may be necessary to assist in determining what permits and clearance may be required (i.e. State Historic Preservation Office [SHPO], Alaska Department of Fish and Game [ADF&G], Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation [ADEC], and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [Corps]).

2. Public and Agency Coordination

The engineering manager and regional environmental manager (REM) determine the level of public and resource agency coordination as soon as possible after initiating the project. The REM and engineering manager must work closely to disseminate adequate project information in order to solicit informed comments.

2.1 Public Coordination

When public coordination is deemed appropriate, the environmental staff will usually place a public notice in a local or regional newspaper. The notice should state *what we're doing, why we're doing it, when we're doing it, and how we'll do it*.

A newspaper public notice is just one option for soliciting public comments. The engineering manager and environmental coordinator should determine the most cost-effective way to solicit comments based on the project location and potential for controversy.

The design manager and regional environmental coordinator should determine whether a public meeting should be held for the project. Generally, a meeting is held for urban projects or when controversy has been identified. A meeting should explain to the public the anticipated effects, such as right-of-way acquisition, detours, road closures, and short-term effects on access to businesses.

Use of a local planning commission approval process to obtain public comments can be a cost-effective and efficient method to involve the public.

2.2 Agency Coordination

The REM should determine the appropriate level of agency coordination. Coordinate projects with any agency that must approve the project prior to construction (e.g. SHPO, Corps, ADEC, ADF&G, etc…).

3 Environmental Checklist

The REM is responsible for determining when the environmental checklist must be filled out for a state funded project. The checklist documents the permits and clearances necessary for the project, as well as the anticipated environmental impacts. For projects that require a federal agency permit or authorization, the checklist provides documentation to assist the agency in preparation of their permit decision document.

3.1 Approval Process

The REM approves the checklist based on the recommendation of the environmental analyst who prepared it and a review by the project engineering manager. The environmental analyst and engineering manager both sign the checklist before submitting it to the REM for approval.

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