Introduction

Spanning 800 miles of Alaska, from Prudhoe Bay on the North Slope to the Valdez Marine Terminal on Prince William Sound, the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) is an engineering marvel that crosses the Brooks Range at Atigun Pass (elevation 4,739 feet), the Yukon River, and five major tributaries to the Copper River (among other waterbodies). Residents of this region fear a spill from a pipeline breach could quickly end up in the main stem of the Copper River and damage spawning and migratory habitat of the world-famous Copper River salmon. "We eat fish, we don't eat money" said Ray Neely, Alaska Native, Council Member, Gulkana Village Council.[1] The TAPS was designed for a 30 year lifespan. It is now 33 years old, operates under a recently renewed right-of-way lease for another 20 years, and operates with fewer staff because several pump stations were automated as a cost-saving measure.

The Copper River Watershed Project, an incorporated non-profit organization, and its partners are requesting a grant of $48,380 to facilitate citizens' monitoring of TAPS in communities in the TAPS corridor whose livelihoods and traditional subsistence hunting and gathering practices are directly affected by TAPS maintenance and operations. We propose to develop a strong communication network of concerned citizens, develop education materials, and identify areas of TAPS operations and spill response to help citizens monitor pipeline operations and protect our environmentally-sensitive public resources. The Copper River Watershed Project is a community-based non-profit working to foster the long-term sustainability of our wild salmon economies and cultural heritage. We have made collaboration our signature approach, and have facilitated several community roundtable efforts, most recently a March 2009 stakeholders workshop in Valdez, Alaska on citizens oversight of TAPS.

TAPS threatens several critical waterways, including the Copper, Yukon, Tanana, Delta and Gulkana Rivers. TAPS criss-crosses 180 miles of the Copper River drainage, the most seismically active region along the pipeline route. Spills into the region's fast flowing, glacial rivers would likely pas designated containment sies hours before clean-up crews could reach the site (CRWP, 2006). Reports by Richard Fineberg (http://www.fineberg-research.com/), an environmental and economic analyst who served as an oil and gas policy advisor to the Governor of Alaska (1986 – 1989), contain examples of how TAPS' budgeted maintenance funds are frequently diverted to deal with unanticipated problems, delaying work on planned maintenance items that are essential to safe pipeline operations.

Copper River Drainage: What's At Stake?

Salmon are the bedrock of the Copper River region's salmon economies, a critical resource for subsistence harvest in the Copper River region, for commercial harvest on the Copper River flats, and for a growing sportfish industry in the drainage. The Copper River's subsistence, sport, and commercial fisheries support Alaskans throughout the state. Residents travel from both rural communities nestled in the watershed and larger cities such as Fairbanks to make their living and supplement their diets with the renowned Copper River salmon. Commercial harvesting of Copper River sockeye, kings, cohos, pinks and chums generates $14.67 million annually in seafood sales. Subsistence and personal

[1] April 21, 2006 stakeholder meeting of Copper Basin residents, Gulkana Village Council, Gakona Village Council, and Ahtna Corporation representatives.

use fishermen harvest between 4,600 – 8,600 kings and 133,150 – 252,300 sockeyes annually. Using an average of 1999 – 2003 prices, that tallies up to another $1.53 – 2.89 million supplementing the area's household budgets.

Private lands and public resources are also at high risk of degradation in the event of a breach in the Trans Alaska Pipeline System at a pipeline river crossing in the Copper River drainage. Along the Copper River corridor, the Ahtna Corporation and the Chugach Alaska Corporation have extensive private holdings. Public resources include invaluable salmon populations in the Copper's tributaries, waterfowl and game resources, and recreational lands managed by state and federal agencies.

TAPS Citizens Monitoring Project Plan

Task 1. Create list serve of interested citizens and community leaders throughout pipeline corridor. Our strongest partnerships currently exist within the Copper River drainage, but our intent is to continue cultivating partners in all communities along TAPS. In as remote a place as interior Alaska, sharing information and cultivating partners is key to citizen engagement. **Deliverable**: comprehensive list serve of contacts in communities and tribes along TAPS corridor (September, 2009).

Task 2. Research TAPS maintenance and operations to identify the areas of greatest concern with regard to potential pipeline breach. With changes made through TAPS' Strategic Reconfiguration, we don't know what the current concerns are around engineering, maintenance, damage prevention and spill response for TAPS. We will accomplish this task through a combination of contract research and staff time. **Deliverable**: Priority list of TAPS maintenance and operations concerns of citizens and tribes (December 18, 2009).

Task 3. Identify monitoring techniques and measures of safety that residents can apply to areas of concern, and facilitate citizen participation in public oversight process. Using sources currently available, we will help create a citizens' monitoring network by using the list serve and other communications tools to track the PHSMA's enforcement actions issued to the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company (APSC), APSC's monthly reports, drill exercises, APSC integrity management reports, and Oil Spill Contingency Plan contents and amendments. **Deliverable**: monitoring strategies and measures of safety for monitoring identified (February 26, 2010).

Task 4. Initiate contact with APSC regarding areas of concern to determine whether there are ways to share data between citizen monitors and Alyeska. Using the Pipeline Safety Trust's work as a model, we will develop positive working relationships with APSC representatives and identify parameters for communication and data-sharing protocols. **Deliverable**: written parameters for industry and community communication and data-sharing (January 2010).

Task 5. Develop outreach materials for sharing with other communities along TAPS corridor to help residents monitor pipeline operations and maintenance in other communities. Public education materials created to help citizens track safe pipeline maintenance and operations will include a web site, press releases, community presentations, radio PSAs, GIS maps, and age-appropriate classroom activities. **Deliverable**: public education materials that can be used as examples to promote technology transfer in other communities and by other similar organizations (Nov. 2009 – March 2010).

Budget Narrative for

Trans-Alaska Pipeline Citizens Monitoring TAG Request

The Copper River Watershed Project is requesting funds for support of citizens monitoring of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) for use on the following expenses.

Personnel

CRWP staff, 1.5 months @ $20/hour, 260 hours x $20 = $5,190.
Cascadia Wildlands Project, a partner of the CRWP, will also provide staff time assistance; CWP staff, 1.5 months @ $20/hour, 260 hours x $20 = $5,190.
Community outreach coordinator, 2 months time, 346 hours x $20 = $6,920.
Fringes: payroll taxes and benefits @ 16% of salaries, $2,768.

Contractors

Contract research on TAPS maintenance and operations concerns, 173 hours @ $40/hour = $7,000.
GIS maps for inclusion in community education materials, $3,000.

Travel

Ferry, plane, car rental, gas, meals and lodging expenses for travel from Cordova and from Fairbanks to TAPS corridor communities, $7,000.

Printing

Printing public education materials for distribution in TAPS corridor communities, $2,500.

Telephone

Long-distance telephone expenses for conducting teleconference phone calls and communicating with residents in TAPS corridor communities, $1,500.

Other

Pro-rated share of CRWP administrative expenses and grant management expenses: insurance, rent, accounting, utilities, and annual audit, $6,310.