

# How can I learn more? Read these studies and their critiques

## Environmental Assessment (EA)

The Environmental Assessment (EA) presents studies and evaluates impacts. The reason the FAA has to do a more thorough Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is because the EA showed the airport expansion would have a major effect on the human environment.

The EA contains important comments from city, state, and federal agencies that can give you good ideas about what might be lost if 78 acres of wetlands are filled for airport development projects.

Incomplete documents are available on the CBJ web site at [www.juneau.org](http://www.juneau.org)



## Wildlife Hazards Assessment

Released in May, 2001, the Wildlife Hazards Assessment (WHA) recommends ways to reduce hazards, such as bird strikes, by eliminating habitat.

It suggests cutting all the trees between the popular airport dike trail and the floatpond. The report discourages restoration of fish habitat in Duck and Jordan Creeks, also.

This report has had no agency or public review and contains controversial recommendations.

**Available at the airport manager's office 789-7821 and at local libraries.**

## Airport Master Plan

The Airport Master Plan describes airport changes planned for the next 20 years. These extensive changes and additional losses will be evaluated in the EIS.

**Want a quick review of the airport plans? Borrow this video from local libraries!**

**League of Women Voters Panel Discussion VIDEO Airport Master Plan**

**"BIRDS, PLANES AND YOU"**

## EIS Discussion Mendenhall Watershed Partnership Meeting Tuesday, June 19 6:30-7:45pm Valley Library

This is a regular monthly meeting of the public group Mendenhall Watershed Partnership working to improve the Mendenhall watershed.

Representatives of SWCA, Inc., the contracted firm preparing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), will make a presentation on the airport EIS's process and status.

(This group is not affiliated with Audubon.)



*Jet flies over Juneau's wetlands*

## Environmental Impact Statement Public Scoping Meeting Wednesday, June 20 Centennial Hall 5-9pm

This is the public's opportunity to comment on what should be studied and included in the Environmental Impact Statement for the Juneau Airport and wetlands.

**You may send written comments to:**

Ken Wallace, Project Manager  
SWCA, Inc.

230 S 500 E., Suite 380  
Salt Lake City, UT 84102

**DEADLINE: August 1, 2001**

## Juneau Audubon Society

PO Box 021725

Juneau, AK 99802

Contact: Mary Lou King 789-7540

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## JUNEAU AIRPORT Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

**SCOPING MEETING  
Wednesday, June 20  
5-9PM Centennial Hall**



View from Airport Dike Trail across duck ponds to floatpond and Mendenhall Glacier

**E**nvironmental Impact Statements (EIS) must follow strict guidelines to ensure the public's concerns are addressed in the report.

In this case, the study will evaluate the environmental impacts of the CBJ's 20-year Master Plan, the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) national order to construct Runway Safety Areas (RSA), additional airport construction, such as a snow removal equipment building between Wings of Alaska's hangar and TEMSCO, increased helicopter operations, and a half mile long road into the wetlands to service new landing lights that would be built toward town (similar

## Help determine the future of wetlands near the Juneau Airport during public scoping for the Environmental Impact Statement

to the series of lights crossing the river beyond the west end of the runway).

FAA's order says the RSA "is intended to provide a measure of safety in the event of an aircraft's excursion from the runway by significantly reducing the extent of personal injury and aircraft damage during overruns, undershoots and veer-offs."

FAA wants 1,000 feet added to the end of each runway in the nation. Juneau's runway has 250 foot RSAs now.

The Environmental Assessment, published in June, 2000, recommended filling an area of the river bank about 250 feet by 500 feet wide at the west end -- to the edge of the Mendenhall River -- and extending the runway about 1400 feet by 500 feet wide at the east end. The runway threshold would be shifted 620 feet east, thus changing the point of landing and departure eastward into areas over wetlands used by greater numbers of Canada geese.

There is no absolute requirement

that such lengthy RSAs are needed at all airports. The RSA should conform "to the extent practicable." FAA Order 5200.8

Each EIS must analyze the airport's historical records of airport accidents or incidents, current and forecasted passenger volumes, aircraft design, weather and climatic conditions, visual and electronic aids for landing, and site constraints such the existence of waterbodies and wetlands.

**The first step is scoping. The purpose of scoping is to identify significant issues that need to be considered in the EIS.**

Significant issues that should be discussed are effects on wetlands, streams, salmon, recreation, birds and waterfowl, flooding, noise, land use, socioeconomic, air quality, water quality, light emissions, hazardous waste, and construction impacts.

The most important issue is the cumulative impacts from airport-related development in the past, present and future.

## Your comments are needed! Here are some ideas

\* The EIS must consider a full range of safety options, including not extending the runway into important fish and wildlife habitat.

\* The EIS must include and consider the recommendations contained in the May, 2001 Wildlife Hazards Assessment and provide opportunities for public and expert scrutiny and critique. Some of the current recommendations are inappropriate and may result in increased potential for bird collisions with aircraft.

The study fails to examine the relationship between waterfowl use of the Mendenhall Refuge wetlands, impacts of hunting, and the effects of bird hazing by the airport.

\* Alternatives in the EIS should consider limiting the types of aircraft that will use Juneau's runway. The Environmental Assessment (EA) assumes the critical aircraft is Boeing 737-900. Alaska Airlines, Juneau's only current jet service, is reportedly planning to use the new plane primarily on routes that do not include Juneau.

\* The EIS must present information on how other airports nationwide have utilized alternative Runway Safety Area

(RSA) designs that do not require filling wetlands or rerouting rivers. The use of soft paving material or Engineered Materials Arresting Systems (EMAS), must be fully examined.

\* FAA's order requires full 1,000 foot RSAs "to the extent practicable." Full RSAs at Juneau's airport are not practicable because of important wetlands and the Mendenhall River.

The FAA order permits the determination that "The existing RSA does not meet current standards, and it is not practicable to improve the RSA." This prospective determination must receive the highest consideration.

\* Irreplaceable intertidal wetlands would be lost.

\* Adequate time must be allowed for studies to be conducted that will assess the value of resources that might be destroyed by filling many acres of wetlands.

\* The EIS must thoroughly analyze the safety hazard of adding more helicopter operations at the airport, as is proposed for the east end.

\* Noise analysis in the EA is inadequate. A more thorough study is needed.

\* No disruption -- even temporarily -

- should limit access to the Airport Dike Trail, Juneau's most popular trail, if any construction occurs.

\* Trees that border the trail should not be cut. The trees provide a natural barrier that prevents birds on the wetlands from crossing the runway. Duck ponds should not be dredged or filled.

\* There should be no disturbance or destruction of the eagle's nest, which is protected by federal law.

\* Jordan Creek, a very productive stream for salmon, should be protected from airport activities, such as the current practice of dumping deicing chemicals into the creek.

\* All potential pollution prevention measures should be used to protect fish and wildlife habitat and water quality.

\* Thorough natural resource inventories should be conducted to document the value of wetlands plant communities and their relationship to fish food sources.

\* Impacts of hunting on the refuge should be researched to determine if different timing/practices could reduce bird strikes, 50% of which occur in the fall. Interview hunters and seek their advice.