



Sent: Monday, November 12, 2012 4:51 PM

To: vernhalter@mtaonline.net ; Inc. Community Council Talkeetna

Subject: Talkeetna flood damage

Dear Assemblyman Vern Halter,

As you are aware the Sept. 21, 2012 floodwaters of the Talkeetna River damaged the dike below the railroad bridge. This dike has kept the Talkeetna River from spreading out into the townsite of Talkeetna below the railroad bridge. Floodwaters eroded the base of the dike causing portions of it to collapse and be washed away. The dike needs to be repaired.

There is another problem occurring that makes repairing the dike a priority. The Susitna River is changing its course. Not far below the railroad bridge the Talkeetna River runs into the Susitna River. The Susitna River is a braided glacial river and as is typical with such rivers the channels are constantly changing. During the summer of 2012 the entire flow of the Susitna River below the confluence of the Chulitna River moved to the extreme east bank. (See the satellite image attachment. The blue line shows the approximate location of the east bank of the Susitna River in October 2012. The slough down river of the dike between the blue line and downtown Talkeetna is filled with water during periods of high water.) There was considerable erosion of the east bank between Billion Slough and the Talkeetna River throughout the summer. By the time of the flood the Susitna River had moved east washing away large cottonwood trees and joined the Talkeetna River closer to the railroad bridge. The flood cut the east bank away even further bringing the river closer to the railroad. The Susitna River is now only several hundred feet from the railroad tracks north of the railroad bridge and is

entering the Talkeetna River directly across from the western end of the dike. This is a new situation as the Susitna River has always merged with the Talkeetna River well below the dike in the past. This new confluence could exert very different forces on the dike. If the dike fails downtown Talkeetna will be very susceptible to catastrophic flooding. Also of concern is how this new confluence will allow ice to flow during spring breakup. Should ice jam up at the present confluence of the Susitna and Talkeetna Rivers water would quickly overflow the dike and flood downtown Talkeetna.

It is very important that the dike be repaired and that the rivers be studied by engineers to examine what is taking place and what mitigating procedures can be done to protect Talkeetna. I request that the Mat-Su Borough, the Talkeetna Community Council, the Alaska Railroad, the Corp of Engineers and all other appropriate agencies meet to come up with a plan. The dike needs to be repaired before spring breakup.

Sincerely,

Brian Okonek