

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT TRAILS AND TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS

This section includes a listing of trails reviewed and accepted by the Trails Committee to be included in the Borough Trails Plan. The regionally significant trails identified within this plan have been selected because they are trails that are commonly known, commonly used and most ideally adhere to the policies and criteria set forth for selecting trails. The trails included herein are to be considered a starting point for the development of a more integrated trail system. It is anticipated, and the borough is encouraging, communities to assist in nominating connecting trails.

In the bush regions of the borough, mostly located in the lowlands of the Susitna Valley, it is a goal of this plan to promote the development of a regionally integrated network of trails, connecting communities as hubs of the trails system. Community hubs should be designed so that food, gas and lodging is available to recreationists allowing community businesses to economically benefit from the trail system and ensuring a greater level of safety and convenience for recreationists.

Community hubs should be designed with extensive community input because of the likelihood that more private land will be impacted. Proposed designs for community hubs should be reviewed by the respective community councils. Community hubs that are designed with the input of local residents, businesses and landowners are more likely to better serve the community's needs and address local concerns.

Although, the vast remoteness and topography of much of the borough has led to the inclusion of numerous trails oriented towards snowmachining, the desire of the borough is to provide and preserve sufficient trails to meet the needs of all user groups. In order to do so, additional input is still needed from all user groups.

Locally significant trails have not been identified within this plan since it is intended that local groups and community councils would be responsible for nominating locally significant trails. Until nominations have been received and approved, the Borough will not designate locally significant trails.

Separated paths are included in the Borough's Transportation Improvement Program as enhancement projects and funded with federal highway dollars and state transportation funds. Separated paths have these two sources of funding which are unavailable to most primitive non-urban trails. The nomination process for separated paths is a part of the Borough's annual Capital Improvement Process. Separated paths are included in this document for reference only.

Please note that the following trail maps and trail information is for general planning and policy purposes, and the information provided are intended to provide decision-makers with sufficient information to estimate recreational benefits, impacts and the potential to acquire public access along a route. The following information is an approximation of conditions and alignments. Further research detailing public access, property ownership and route alignments will occur as a part of implementing this plan.

Denali Highway Area

McLaren River Trail (see map 8)

Length

Approximately 31 miles

Uses accommodated

Winter and summer users including: ATV, equestrian, hiker, snowmachiner, musher and back country skier. However many summer users may have to turn back at mile 4 where the trail crosses the west fork of the McLaren River depending on river conditions. The section of trail leading to the west to the junction of the Valdez Creek/Windy Creek Trail (see map 8) is primarily a winter trail yet receives minimal use because of inaccessibility of the Denali Highway during winter.

Land ownership

Currently the property is under management by the Bureau of Land Management but has been selected by the state.

Description

This trail departs the Denali Highway approximately one mile west of the McLaren River Bridge. The first four miles of the trail are well established trail capable of accommodating even four-wheel drive vehicles. At mile 4 the trail crosses the west fork of the McLaren River. Depending upon river conditions the trail may be impassable. The trail continues almost all the way to the McLaren Glacier. At mile 9 the trail also branches off to the south west and continues 22 miles past the Clearwater Trail and onto the Valdez Creek/Windy Creek trails (see map 8).

Recommended actions

- Encourage Bureau of Land Management and State of Alaska to retain trail and trail head in public ownership;
- Provide information, maps and signage to assist recreationists.

Valdez Creek Trail (see map 8)

Length

Approximately 18 miles to the trails junction with the Windy Creek Trail (see map 8).

Uses accommodated

Mountain bike, four-wheel drive, ATV, equestrian, snowmachine, and mushing.

Land ownership

Currently the property is under management by the Bureau of Land Management but has been selected by the state. The area along this trail has many active mining claims. Although the public has the right to use the trail to access lands beyond the mining claims the public is not allowed to camp on any active mining claims. Furthermore the public should be encouraged to stay clear of all mining activities.

Miscellaneous

Prior to its closure, the Valdez Creek Mine had been the largest gold mining operation in Alaska. This mine and the affected landscape is currently undergoing an intensive reclamation process.

Description

This trail is actually a road maintained by miners active in the area. Since the closure of Valdez Creek Mine there is certain to be less mining traffic along this road. The first twelve miles is easily negotiable by a four-wheel drive vehicle until the crossing of Valdez Creek. Beyond Valdez Creek the trail becomes swampy and the trail ill-suited for four-wheel drive vehicles.

Recommended actions

- Encourage Bureau of Land Management and State of Alaska to retain trail and trail head in public ownership.
- Work with local miners to install signage along the trail restricting recreationists to safe areas with no active mining.

Windy Creek Trail (see map 8)

Length

Approximately 15 miles to the junction with Valdez Creek Trail (see map 8).

Uses accommodated

Mountain bike, four-wheel drive, ATV, equestrian, snowmachine, and mushing.

Land ownership

Currently the property is under management by the Bureau of Land Management but has been selected by the state.

Miscellaneous

This trail was established as a mining road accessing the upper portion of Windy Creek Valley.

Description

As noted on map.

Recommended actions

- Encourage Bureau of Land Management and State of Alaska to retain trail and trail head in public ownership.
- Work with local miners to install signage along the trail restricting recreationists to safe areas with no active mining.

Butte Creek Trail (see map 8)

Length

Approximately 15 miles.

Uses accommodated

Primarily summer ATV use, hunting access is one of the most common uses.

Land ownership

Currently the property is under management by the Bureau of Land Management but has been selected by the state.

Description

As noted on map. The trail is well defined for the first twelve miles and gradually becomes less distinct. However increasing use in the area has been pushing the established trail farther back.

Recommended actions

- Encourage Bureau of Land Management and State of Alaska to retain trail and trail head in public ownership;
- Provide information and signage to assist recreationists.

Clearwater Trail (see map 8)

Length

Approximately 8 miles.

Uses accommodated

Primarily a winter trail.

Land ownership

Currently the property is under management by the Bureau of Land Management but has been selected by the state.

Description

As noted on map.

Recommended actions

- Encourage Bureau of Land Management and State of Alaska to retain trail and trail head in public ownership;
- Provide information and signage to assist recreationists.

Eastern Glenn Highway Area

Kings River Trail (see map 3)

Length

Approximately 6 miles to the intersection of Permanente Road (must cross Kings River which is difficult if not impossible except in winter) and 12 miles beyond for a total of approximately 18 miles.

Uses accommodated

Both winter and summer uses accommodated. The users consist of ATV's, hikers, snowmachines, skiers, mountain bikers and equestrians. Additionally, much of this trail can also accommodate 4 wheel drive vehicles.

Land ownership

State, and private. At least 1.5 miles of the trail travels through private lands on public access easements and section line easements.

Miscellaneous

Supported in the Chickaloon Comprehensive Plan. State research supports an RS 2477 designation of at least the first 6 miles of the trail. This trail is a section of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system. The Susitna Area Plan, Recreation Recommendations for Management of Recreation Lands in the Susitna Area states that the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system should be added to the State Recreational Trail System. Trails that are a part of the State Recreational Trail System are built or improved and maintained by the State Division of Parks.

Description

Informal trailhead is located immediately west of the Kings River bridge on the Glenn Highway. The trail connects forks in several places offering trail users the opportunity to travel several different directions after passing through private lands on an easement.

Specific Issues

The area near the trailhead and along the first three miles of the trail is interspersed with and crosses through private lands. Due to the numerous spur trails and cleared areas on state lands, recreationists have a tendency to camp or park throughout the region.

Recommended actions

- Install trailhead signage including map depicting trail in relation to private lands crossed in order to avoid unintentional trespass.
- Work with the State to define acceptable areas for camping/parking and discourage camping/parking near private lands.
- Develop adequate and well defined trailhead location adjacent to Glenn Highway. Facilities should include restrooms and information kiosk.

Young Creek Trail (see map 3)

Length

The first three miles of this trail is the same as the Kings River Trail (see map 3), after 3 miles the trail branches off to the left/north of the Kings River Trail (see map 3) and continues for approximately 4 miles.

Uses accommodated

Hiking, ATV, equestrian, mountain bikes and snowmachines when not endangered by heavy snowfall and avalanche risk.

Land ownership

Mostly state lands but includes 1.5 miles of private land which is crossed following a public access easement.

Miscellaneous

This popular trail is in several trail guidebooks.

Description

As noted on map. This is one of several forks of the Kings River Trail (see map 3). After the first several miles of the Kings River Trail (see map 3) this spur trail heads north and then north east as it climbs the foothills of the Talkeetna Mountains. After approximately a mile of climbing the trail passes through private lands near Ruby Lake which is a popular fishing destination. Soon after passing the Ruby Lake turnoff the trail becomes difficult or challenging for ATV's to negotiate and is impassible by four-wheel drive vehicles. The last several miles of the terrain cross alpine meadows located at just above treeline. The trail is proposed as non-motorized during summer and times of inadequate snowfall past Ruby Lake since ATV access is limited and the wide open meadows are prone to retaining all tracks formed by ATV use.

Recommended actions

- Installation of signage as needed to delineate route.
- Development of adequate trailhead facilities.

Permanente Road/Castle Mountain Trail (see map 3)

Length

Approximately three miles to the intersection with the Kings River Trail (see map 3) and the Knik-Chickaloon-Nelchina Trail system. Continuing up the Kings River Trail (see map 3) is possible for a total of approximately 15 miles.

Uses accommodated

Primarily ATVs, mountain bikers, equestrians and 4 wheel drive vehicles (4wd for the first 8 miles only) can also accommodate hikers and winter trail enthusiasts, snowmachiners, skiers and mushers.

Land ownership

This trail passes through private land. Initially, this trail follows an existing right-of-way for the first 1 ½ miles but it is not clear whether the latter portions of the trail have public access.

Miscellaneous

Supported in the Chickaloon Comprehensive Plan. State research supports an RS 2477 designation.

Description

As noted on map. The initial portion of the route is extremely steep and relies on switch-backs cut into the hillside. This initial segment is part of the access road relied upon for access to private property as well as trail use. From there the terrain is interspersed with steep sections, rolling hills

and, towards the end of the route, relatively flat terrain. The route, which was constructed as a mining access road, is very well defined until a section just past the halfway point which was the site of an avalanche/rock slide. The slide area is not passable by four wheel drive vehicles and hence the portion of the trail beyond is not as wide but is well defined and well used by ATV enthusiasts, snowmachiners, equestrians and other recreationists.

Recommended actions

- Research public access status to determine if access needs to be obtained.
- If necessary, acquire public access across private and native lands.
- Development of adequate trailhead facilities.

Chickaloon River Trail (see map 3)

Length

40 miles.

Uses accommodated

Both winter and summer uses accommodated. Primarily ATV, equestrian, snowmachiners, and hikers.

Land ownership

Mostly state owned but initial 3 miles beyond the end of Chickaloon River Road is in private ownership. Whether or how much of the private land has dedicated public access has not been adequately researched.

Miscellaneous

Supported in Chickaloon Comprehensive Plan. State research supports an RS 2477 designation.

Description

As noted on map. This trail winds through subdivided and developed private lands. There is currently no trailhead or parking area in the vicinity where Chickaloon River Road ends. The trail is one of the few within this plan that does not have an existing pattern of heavy use and leaves the road system in an area of extremely low traffic volumes and hence limited public surveillance. Because of the anticipated low level of informal public surveillance this trail should not be advertised or promoted by the borough until there is a track record of adequate management of the proposed trail and trailhead.

Recommended actions

- Acquisition of right of way across private lands.
- Acquire or identify an adequately sized location for trailhead facilities.
- Install roadside signage at trailhead and provide description of route only after adequate management of the trailhead has been established .

Ninety-Eight Trail (see map 3)

Length

Six miles between the Chickaloon River Trail and the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail.

Uses accommodated

Winter and summer uses.

Land ownership

The trail is entirely within state ownership.

Miscellaneous

Supported in Chickaloon Comprehensive Plan. The state has researched the history of this trail and believes there is sufficient historical documentation to assert that an RS 2477 easement was granted.

This trail is a section of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system. The Susitna Area Plan, Recreation Recommendations for Management of Recreation Lands in the Susitna Area states that the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system should be added to the State Recreational Trail System.

Description

As noted on map.

Recommended actions

- Encourage state to retain trail and trail head in public ownership;
- Provide information, maps and signage to assist recreationists.

Purinton Creek Trail (see map 3)

Length

Seven miles to the intersection of the main Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system.

Uses accommodated

Primarily ATV, snowmachine and mountain bike but also can accommodate hikers, skiers, mushers, equestrians and 4 wheel drive high ground clearance vehicles for the first several miles.

Land Ownership

The first 1/4 mile of the original trail is in private ownership. A rerouted trail avoids most private lands but may still cut across a corner of private land.

Miscellaneous

Supported in Chickaloon Comprehensive Plan. State research supports an RS 2477 designation. This trail is a section of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system. The Susitna Area Plan, Recreation Recommendations for Management of Recreation Lands in the Susitna Area states that the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system should be added to the State Recreational Trail System.

In 1996 the Mat-Su Trails Council, a private non-profit trail advocacy and development group, cleared an alternate initial portion of the trail bypassing private land. The alternate bypass is approximately two miles in length. State road maintenance crews have since cleared an area near the start of the rerouted trail for parking.

Description

The topography along the alternate route is steep and the trail lacks switchbacks. A portion of this alternate route traverses a swampy, muddy area for 200 feet. The alternate route rejoins the original route after approximately 2 miles and continues along the established route to connect with the Boulder Creek Trail (see map 3) and other parts of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail system.

Recommended actions

- Improve the rerouted portion of the trail by creating switchbacks in steep areas and log surface through the swampy area and construct other improvement necessary to provide a suitable trail surface and minimize erosion.
- A public use hut-to-hut system on the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system is very feasible for the Chickaloon to Nelchina area. This area is predominantly public land with an extensive year round multiple use trail system. One cabin should be strategically placed near the intersection of the Puritan Creek Trail, Boulder Creek Trail, Chickaloon River Trail and Ninety-Eight Trail (see map 3).

Hicks Creek/Pinochle Creek Trail (see map 3)

Length

Fifteen miles to Caribou Creek/Boulder Creek Trail (see map 3).

Uses accommodated

ATV's, mountain bikes, equestrians, hikers, snowmachiners, mushers and skiers.

Land ownership

The first 1.5 miles of this trail cross private and native lands. The remainder of this trail is on state land. However all the remaining portion of township 20 north range 9 east that is currently state land has been selected by a native corporation and hence the first 4.5 miles will be in private or native ownership if the land is patented to the Cook Inlet Region Inc. (CIRI) with no reservation of an easement.

Miscellaneous

The state has researched the history of this trail and believes there is sufficient historical documentation to assert that an RS 2477 easement was granted. This trail is a section of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system. The Susitna Area Plan, Recreation Recommendations for Management of Recreation Lands in the Susitna Area states that the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system should be added to the State Recreational Trail System.

Description

As noted on map.

Recommended actions

- Encourage the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to reserve an adequate trail easement across township 20 north range 5 east when it is conveyed.
- Acquire public access across the already existing private and native lands.
- Develop adequate trailhead facilities.
- A public use hut-to-hut system on the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system is very feasible for the Chickaloon to Nelchina area. This area is predominantly public land with an extensive year round multiple use trail system. One cabin should be placed near the intersection of the Boulder/Caribou Creek Trail and the Hicks Creek/Pinochle Creek Trail (see map 3).

Boulder Creek Trail (see map 3)

Length

This offshoot of the Knik-Chickaloon-Nelchina trail system which runs between the Simpson Cabin over Chitna Pass and becomes the Caribou Creek Trail (see map 3) is approximately 22 miles.

Uses accommodated

Little is known about this trail. It is listed in the 1987 Comprehensive Development Plan as a summertime horse trail.

Land ownership

Approximately four miles of this trail crosses private property. The research necessary to determine the possible existence of public access has not yet been done.

Miscellaneous

State research supports the assertion of an RS 2477 easement. This trail is a section of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system. The Susitna Area Plan, Recreation Recommendations for Management of Recreation Lands in the Susitna Area states that the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system should be added to the State Recreational Trail System.

Description

As noted on map.

Recommended actions

- Install trail markers and perform minor trail maintenance if necessary.
- Provide detailed recreation information on trail.
- A public use hut-to-hut system on the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system is very feasible for the Chickaloon to Nelchina area. This area is predominantly public land with an extensive year round multiple use trail system. One or two cabins should be placed along this section of trail.

Caribou Creek Trail (see map 3)

Length

Nine miles to the intersection of the Squaw Creek Trail then another 7 miles to the intersection of the Alfred Creek Trail (see map 3).

Uses accommodated

Primarily foot traffic due to steep terrain starting right at the trailhead.

Land ownership

This trail is unique in that it is currently all in state ownership, although much of this land has been selected by CIRI corporation.

Miscellaneous

The state has researched the history of this trail and believes there is sufficient historical documentation to assert that an RS 2477 easement was granted. This trail is a section of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system. The Susitna Area Plan, Recreation Recommendations for Management of Recreation Lands in the Susitna Area states that the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system should be added to the State Recreational Trail System.

Description

From the parking pullout immediately east of Caribou Creek Bridge the trail climbs steeply following the east side of Caribou Creek Canyon. The trail progresses for eight miles until it intersects with the Squaw Creek Trail (see map 3) and continues another 4 miles north to the Alfred Creek Trail (see map 3) and approximately ten more miles before Chitna Pass/Boulder Creek Trail (see map 3).

Recommended actions

- Encourage BLM to reserve an adequate trail easement along native selected lands.
- Clearly marking the route and doing minor trail improvements.
- Install signage at the trailhead location.
- Develop expanded parking area and further trailhead facilities at a later time when level of use justifies expenditure.
- A public use hut-to-hut system on the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system is very feasible for the Chickaloon to Nelchina area. This area is predominantly public land with an extensive year round multiple use trail system. One cabin should be placed near the intersection of the Caribou Creek and Squaw Creek Trail (see map 3).

Squaw Creek Trail (see map 3)

Length

Twelve miles to the intersection of the Caribou Creek Trail (see map 3)

Uses accommodated

Mountain bike, equestrian, hiker, ATV, 4 wheel drive, snow machine, dog mushing and ski.

Land ownership

The trail is located entirely on state land, however townships 21 north range 11 and 12 east are native selections which BLM is in the process of conveying to AHTNA Corporation.

Miscellaneous

This trail is part of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system. The state has researched the history of this trail and believes there is sufficient historical documentation to assert that an RS 2477 easement was granted. This trail is a section of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system. The Susitna Area Plan, Recreation Recommendations for Management of Recreation Lands in the Susitna Area states that the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system should be added to the State Recreational Trail System.

Description

A portion of the Syncline Mountain Loop and the Knik-Chickaloon-Nelchina trail system. The trail starts approximately one mile east of Tahnetta Pass immediately across, north of, the Glenn Highway from Tahnetta Lake. Belanger Pass Trail (see map 3) and Crooked Creek Trail (see map 3) also start at this location before the trail branches into three. 1.5 miles north of the trailhead the Squaw Creek Trail (see map 3) separates from the main trail and heads west before joining the Caribou Creek Trail (see map 3) approximately 11 miles from the trailhead.

Recommended actions

- Encourage BLM to reserve an adequate trail easement along native selected lands.
- A public use hut-to-hut system on the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system is very feasible for the Chickaloon to Nelchina area. This area is predominantly public land with an extensive year round multiple use trail system. A public use cabin should be established at the intersection of Squaw Creek Trail (see map 3) and Caribou Creek Trail (see map 3).

Alfred Creek Trail (see map 3)

Length

Fifteen miles.

Uses accommodated

Equestrian, hiker, mountain biker, ATV's, snowmachine, musher and ski/snowshoe.

Land ownership

Currently the trail is entirely on state owned lands, however 9 miles of the trail lie on land that is native selected lands. Eventually four entire townships will be conveyed to AHTNA native corporation in this area.

Miscellaneous

The state has researched the history of this trail and believes there is sufficient historical documentation to assert that an RS 2477 easement was granted. This trail is a section of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system. The Susitna Area Plan, Recreation Recommendations for Management of Recreation Lands in the Susitna Area states that the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system should be added to the State Recreational Trail System.

Description

Alfred Creek Trail (see map 3) runs between Crooked Creek and Caribou Creek approximately 12 miles. Close to its midpoint the trail also intersects the terminus of the Belanger Pass Trail (see map 3).

Recommended actions

- Encourage BLM to reserve an adequate trail easement along native selected lands.
- Install signage at intersections with other trails.
- A public use hut-to-hut system on the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system is very feasible for the Chickaloon to Nelchina area. This area is predominantly public land with an extensive year round multiple use trail system. A public use cabin should be placed near the intersection of the Alfred Creek Trail (see map 3) and Belanger Pass Trail (see map 3).

Belanger Pass Trail (see map 3)

Length

Eight miles to the intersection of the Alfred Creek Trail (see map 3).

Uses accommodated

Mountain bike, equestrian, hiker, ATV, 4 wheel drive, snow machine, dog mushing and ski.

Land ownership

The trail is currently in state ownership. However the trail is in the midst of a 144 square mile native selection to be conveyed to AHTNA Corporation.

Miscellaneous

The state has researched the history of this trail and believes there is sufficient historical documentation to assert that an RS 2477 easement was granted. This trail is a section of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system. The Susitna Area Plan, Recreation Recommendations for

Management of Recreation Lands in the Susitna Area states that the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system should be added to the State Recreational Trail System.

Description

A portion of the Syncline Mountain Loop and the Knik-Chickaloon-Nelchina trail system. This seven mile trail starts approximately one mile east of Tahnetta Pass immediately across, north of, the Glenn Highway from Tahnetta Lake. The trail heads north; at 1.5 miles the Squaw Creek Trail (see map 3) branches off to the west; at approximately 2 miles the Crooked Creek Trail (see map 3) branches off to the east. The Belanger Pass Trail (see map 3) continues northwest for another five miles until intersecting the Alfred Creek Trail (see map 3).

Recommended actions

- Encourage BLM to reserve an adequate trail easement along CIRI selected lands.
- Clearly mark the route and do minor trail improvements.
- Identify and develop appropriate trailhead location.
- A public use hut-to-hut system on the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system is very feasible for the Chickaloon to Nelchina area. This area is predominantly public land with an extensive year round multiple use trail system. A public use cabin could be placed near the intersection of the Alfred Creek Trail (see map 3) and Belanger Pass Trail (see map 3) for convenient use by trail users heading in either direction.

Crooked Creek Trail (see map 3)

Length

Seventeen miles total from Glenn Highway/Belanger Pass trailhead to Nelchina Townsite. First two miles is part of the Belanger Pass Trail (see map 3).

Uses accommodated

ATV, equestrian, Mountain Bike, hiker, snowmachiner, musher and back-country skier.

Land ownership

The trail is located on what is currently state owned lands, however the first 5 miles of this trail is on land scheduled to be conveyed to an AHTNA corporation.

Miscellaneous

The state has researched the history of this trail and believes there is sufficient historical documentation to assert that an RS 2477 easement was granted. This trail is a section of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system. The Susitna Area Plan, Recreation Recommendations for

Management of Recreation Lands in the Susitna Area states that the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system should be added to the State Recreational Trail System.

Description

The trail starts approximately one mile east of Tahnetta Pass immediately across, north of, the Glenn Highway from Tahnetta Lake. The trail heads north; at 1.5 miles the Squaw Creek Trail (see map 3) branches off to the west; at approximately 2 miles the Crooked Creek Trail (see map 3) branches off to the east and continues in a northeasterly direction for 14 miles until reaching the former townsite of Nelchina. At approximately mile 8 the trail intersects the terminus of the Alfred Creek Trail (see map 3) coming from the west and at mile 11 the trail intersects the terminus of the Old Man Creek Trail (see map 3) coming from the South.

Recommended actions

- Encourage BLM to reserve an adequate trail easement along native selected lands.
- Clearly mark route.
- A public use hut-to-hut system on the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system is very feasible for the Chickaloon to Nelchina area. This area is predominantly public land with an extensive year round multiple use trail system. A public use cabin should be placed near the intersection of the Crooked Creek Trail (see map 3) and the Old Man Creek Trail (see map 3).

Old Man Creek Trail (see map 3)

Length

Fourteen miles to Nelchina townsite.

Uses accommodated

Mountain bike, ATV, equestrian, hiker, snowmachine, mushing and cross country skiing.

Land ownership

The trail is located on what is currently state lands, however approximately 6 miles of this trail lies on land scheduled to be conveyed to an AHTNA corporation.

Miscellaneous

The state has researched the history of this trail and believes there is sufficient historical documentation to assert that an RS 2477 easement was granted. This trail is a section of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system. The Susitna Area Plan, Recreation Recommendations for Management of Recreation Lands in the Susitna Area states that the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system should be added to the State Recreational Trail System.

Description

This is one of the easternmost sections of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail connecting with the Glenn Highway. The trail starts approximately 2.5 miles east of the Eureka Roadhouse on the Glenn Highway and leads north approximately eight miles before intersecting with the Crooked Creek Trail (see map 3). This area has a number of trails that roughly parallel each other and eventually lead to the old Nelchina townsite. The above referenced trail is one that is referred to as the Old Man Creek Trail (see map 3). Because of this the first action should be to determine which of the trails will be the primary trail for the purpose of reserving an easement.

Recommended actions

- Research the various trails to determine which of the several paralleling trails should be reserved with a public access easement.
- Encourage BLM to reserve an adequate trail easement along native selected lands.
- Adequate signage and trailhead facilities should be installed.
- A public use hut-to-hut system on the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina trail system is very feasible for the Chickaloon to Nelchina area. This area is predominantly public land with an extensive year round multiple use trail system. A public use cabin should be placed near the intersection of the Crooked Creek Trail (see map 3) and the Old Man Creek Trail (see map 3).

Upper Susitna Valley Area

McWilliams Gold Creek Trail (see map 6)

Length

Approximately 16 miles.

Uses accommodated

Primarily ATV's, equestrian, hikers, snowmachines, mushers, skiers.

Land Ownership

The initial portion of this trail crosses less than one mile of private land approximately half of which has a public access easement. The following portions of the trail are on federal lands in the process of being transferred to native ownership. The federal Bureau of Land Management is reserving this trail in public ownership.

Miscellaneous

The state has researched the history of this trail and believes there is sufficient historical documentation to assert that an RS 2477 easement was granted.

Description

This trail departs from the rail line at mile 263 of the Alaska Railroad near the mouth of Gold Creek. The trail heads eastward along the base of the hills, thence southward within T31N, R1E, Seward Meridian, thence climbing southward onto the plateau south of the Susitna River. Topography severely constrains this trail to its existing route in the pass near the community of Gold Creek which includes lands that are selected by native corporations and lands immediately adjacent to the railroad that are in private ownership.

Recommended actions

- Encourage BLM to reserve an adequate trail easement.
- Acquire public access across the already existing private lands.
- Install signage and trail markings.

Collinsville Trail/Chelatna Lake Trail (see maps 4 and 5)

Length

50 miles from departure of Petersville Road.

Uses accommodated

Winter only trail. Snowmachine, track vehicle, mushing. The Kahiltna River is rapid and generally slow to freeze limiting the trail to late winter use.

Land ownership

Primarily state lands, but numerous mining claims en route and no mapped display of property ownership is available. Hence the amount of trespass is indeterminable at this time but is probably very minimal or nonexistent along the route.

Miscellaneous

The state has researched the history of this trail and believes there is sufficient historical documentation to assert that an RS 2477 easement was granted. The trail crosses Lake Creek State Recreation River. Upper Lake Creek is a state designated non-motorized route in summer as well as adjacent lands.

Description

From milepost 19 on the Petersville Road near the Forks Roadhouse this trail heads west following Black Creek to Pickle Creek across the Kahiltna River and Lake Creek to Collinsville. Crossing the Kahiltna River can be dangerous as the river flows swiftly and is late to freeze. Collinsville is an old mining camp between the Kahiltna and Yentna Rivers. The Trail is still used to supply a few active mining claims at Collinsville. From Collinsville the trail continues north to Camp Creek and continues up Camp Creek several miles then turns north east continuing to Chelatna Lake. From this point the trail that is currently most commonly used cuts south along the western side of Lake Creek rejoining the Collinsville Trail (see maps 4 and 5) and forming a loop.

Recommended actions

- Land ownership along the trail must be researched to verify there is no private property along the route.
- Depending on results of (1) it may be necessary to:
 - Acquire adequate public access
 - Reroute trail to avoid private lands
- Once adequate public access is certain the trail should be marked for winter travel. Signage should include strong language warning individuals of the potential dangers of crossing the Kahiltna River and discourage inexperienced and ill-prepared recreationists.

Dutch Creek/Peters Creek Trail (see map 5)

Length

16 miles to proposed end of trail, 7 miles to the Dutch Hills "pass" at the trail's highest elevation.

Uses accommodated

ATV's, 4 wheel-drive high ground clearance vehicles, equestrians, mountain bike, hiker, snowmachine, musher and skier. Because of the fragility of the alpine tundra higher impact uses should be encouraged to stay on the trail.

Land ownership

Primarily state land ownership in this region with the exception of numerous scattered federal mining claims for which the surface rights are generally in federal ownership.

Miscellaneous

The state has researched the history of this trail and believes there is sufficient historical documentation to assert that an RS 2477 easement was granted. This area of the Peters Hills and

Dutch Hills has been extensively studied by the National Park Service for the possible construction of a visitor facility because of the exceptional views of the Alaska Range and Mount McKinley.

Description

This trail provides access from the northernmost point of Petersville Road into the mountainous area northwest of Petersville. This is a tractor trail which once served placer miners in the area. The trail runs from milepost 35 of Petersville Road northwesterly along Peters Creek to Bird Creek which the trail follows to the top of a small pass in the Dutch Hills. The trail then continues downward and southwest along Dutch Creek ending on Granite Creek near the Kahiltna Glacier.

It is an important scenic trail providing views of Peters Hills area and Mount McKinley. This area has been under consideration by both state and federal park officials as, at different times, a major resort or national park service visitor center. Hikers use the trail from midsummer to late fall for overnight trips. Other common activities in this area include: photography, wildlife, berry picking and skiing. Off road vehicle and snow machine traffic is extremely heavy in the Peters Hills area.

Recommended actions

- Research land ownership along route.
- Install appropriate signage and trail markers assuming there is no trespass. Include information about spur routes in the signage information such as the distance and elevation gain to peak 4901 to the northeast of the "pass."
- Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a public use cabin system in this general area, however such cabins should be located outside of the grizzly bear denning sites identified on page 41 of the Denali State Park Master Plan (approximately a three mile radius around peak 4901).

Cache Creek Trail (see map 5)

Length

Approximately 13 miles from the "end" of Petersville Road to the Collinsville Trail (see maps 4 and 5).

Uses accommodated

The trail is a winter trail and rugged summer trail negotiable by equestrians, hikers, and adventurous ATV enthusiasts.

Land ownership

The trail is located entirely on state owned lands but passes through many active mining claims some of which consist of federally owned surface rights.

Description

From the end of Petersville Road the trail heads south around the southwestern section of Peters Hills before joining the Collinsville Trail (see maps 4 and 5).

Recommended actions

- Establish a trailhead and camp area near where Petersville Road crosses Peters Creek north of Peters Hills.
- Install signage and trail markers along the route.

Donkey Creek Lake Route (see maps 4 and 5)

Length

Approximately 28 miles from the Collinsville Trail (see maps 4 and 5) to the Yentna River.

Uses accommodated

Winter route used primarily by snowmachiners.

Land ownership

Entirely State owned.

Miscellaneous

The remoteness of this trail and current lack of adequate markings limit this trail to experienced snowmachine riders knowledgeable of the area.

Description

From where the Collinsville Trail (see maps 4 and 5) crosses Camp Creek this route branches off to the south and follows a swamp system for approximately 12 miles until skirting the west side of Yenlo Hills above timberline. The route cuts west for approximately two miles accessing the south side of Donkey Creek Lake. From Donkey Creek Lake the trail continues south through a swamp until reaching a small creek five miles south of the lake and continuing southeast on the creek until reaching the Yentna River. Once at the Yentna River, recreationists can either travel up the river and switchback to Skwentna on the Whiskey Lake Trail (see map 4) or Hewitt Lake Trail (see map 4) or go south along the Yentna and reach McDougal.

Recommended actions

- The trail should be well marked for winter travel. Signage should include strong language warning individuals of the potential dangers and discourage inexperienced and ill-prepared recreationists.

Peters Hills Trail (see map 5)

Length

Approximately 7 miles from Petersville Road to Home Lake.

Uses accommodated

The route is primarily used as a hiking route in summer, although the entire region receives snowmachine use in winter. The route itself is intended to be maintained as a non-motorized summer hiking route.

Land ownership

State lands.

Miscellaneous

The route up Peters Hills is identified in 55 Ways to the Wilderness. The top of Peters Hills is the site of Sydney Lawrence's famous painting of Denali.

Description

The trail is not well defined, nor is there a well defined parking or pullout area. The first portion of this route is a steep climb of the Peters Hills. The hilltop includes several lakes and many areas suitable for camping. Home Lake is accessible via a brushy 4 mile hike from the northeastern ridge top of the Peters Hills. The length of the route is well suited for hikers to obtain an excellent view of the Alaska Range. The trail is proposed as non-motorized to limit erosion along the route and the potential for environmental degradation of the hillside.

Recommended actions

- Establish a small trailhead for the route.
- Install trail signs and route map at trailhead, if necessary provide improved surface to mitigate erosion. Route should not include trail markers visible in winter.

Chulitna Bluff Trail (see map 5)

Length

Proposed length is approximately twenty miles.

Uses accommodated

Only winter uses are proposed.

Land ownership

The majority of land is borough owned, depending on exact alignment state lands may compromise approximately one-third of the length, additionally there is one half mile of section line easement that must be relied on just north of Petersville Road.

Description

Starting approximately one mile east of the intersection of the Parks Highway and Petersville Road, this proposed trail would travel north between the highway and the Chulitna River. The first one-third mile of the proposed route is on borough lands and the following three-quarters of a mile would follow a section line easement before returning to public lands, (a combination of borough and state lands). This trail could intersect with several existing gravel pits as well as the mile 121.5 rest area which could provide natural parking areas, restrooms and trailheads. The trail would cross the Parks highway north of mile 131 and enter the existing gravel pit/parking lot at the now abandoned north driveway. The trail would then leave the northwest corner of the gravel pit separate from the existing trail which leaves the southwest corner. This new trail would travel north and west, avoiding private property, and continue north into Denali State Park passing through the north end of Moosemire Lake.

Recommended actions

- Analyze and further define the location of the proposed trail.
- Construct and maintain trail.

Rabideux Trail (see map 5)

Length

Proposed length is approximately 10 miles.

Uses accommodated

Only winter uses are proposed.

Land ownership

The proposed route exists on state and borough lands.

Description

Starting approximately one-quarter mile east of the intersection of the Parks Highway and Petersville Road this new trail would travel south between the Parks Highway and the Susitna River. The trail would come back to the Parks Highway right-of-way keeping as far east as possible to avoid private property near mile 105 ½. The trail would cross the Parks Highway near mile 106 and become the 106 Seismic Trail.

Recommended actions

- Analyze and further define the location of the proposed trail.
- Construct and maintain trail.

East Petersville Road Trail (see map 5)

Length

Proposed length is approximately 4 miles.

Uses accommodated

Only winter uses are proposed.

Land ownership

This conceptual trail is proposed to be constructed within the Susitna River Road right-of-way (also known as East Petersville Road).

Description

Currently there is a winter travel between Trapper Creek and Talkeetna using the East Petersville Road and then crossing the Susitna River. A trail corridor along the road needs to be established and safety concerns about crossing the Susitna River need to be addressed. Funding and governmental assistance would be needed to address these concerns. There will also need to be an access trail developed that will allow travel to businesses and public facilities located at or near the intersection of the Parks Highway and Petersville Road.

Recommended actions

- Construct and maintain trail.
- Identify and install needed safety improvements at the proposed crossings of the Parks Highway and the Susitna River.

Kroto Trail (see maps 4 and 5)

Length

The proposed route from Petersville Road to the Tokositna River is approximately 17 miles.

Uses accommodated

Winter uses including snowmachining and dog mushing.

Land ownership

The proposed route will be aligned as necessary to avoid private property staying on state lands.

Description

This trail would consist of inter-linking existing trails that travel west from Kroto Creek parking lot. The trailhead known as the Kroto Creek parking lot is located in the Trapper Creek Community area. Winter use of the Petersville Road West of the Kroto Creek parking lot by miners and others has increased over the past few years and has resulted in a highly unsafe condition with recreationalists using the same road bed as heavy equipment and trucks. A separated trail paralleling the road is greatly needed in this area. The safest, most heavily used trail going north is located 1 -2 miles west of the parking lot along the Petersville Road after crossing Twenty Mile Creek near Jake Lake mile 16.2. Although this portion of the trail is located outside of the Trapper Creek community boundary its close location to the boundary impacting on Trapper Creek as well as Petersville. Consistent signage would be needed along this trail as multiple trails would cross and lead to or from private property and businesses as the recreation trail heads north between Kroto and Safari lakes. As the trail heads north there would be an intersection or merging with a trail coming from Peters Creek originating at the Forks Roadhouse. Heading north and slightly east the trail would intersect the Safari Lake Trails 1 - 2 miles south of Safari Lake. Also very near this area there would be an intersection with the East/West inner connect trail The trail would pass west of Safari Lake, turn northeast near Long Meadow and pass west of Bunco Lake and Back/Little Bunco one or more miles as far west as terrain will allow. Signage would be needed to inform people of private property issues at Safari and Bunco Lake and any access trails in this area. As the trail continues north of Bunco Lake it would intersect the Tokasitna River and Denali State Park boundary. The future Denali State Park trails plan should include trail planning in this area.

Recommended actions

- Work with property owners and community council to identify exact alignment.
- Re-align trail as described.
- Install signage and trail markers.
- Expand Kroto Creek trailhead and design parking areas for trailered vehicles for off loading snowmachines, dogsleds, etc.
- Work with the state to provide public restrooms and ongoing maintenance of trailhead.

Safari Trail (see maps 4 and 5)

Length

Approximately 9 miles from Petersville Road to the intersection of the Kroto Trail and the East-West Interconnect Trail.

Uses accommodated

Winter uses due to remote wet topography and creek crossings.

Land ownership

Portions of this trail may need to be rerouted onto state lands to avoid the scattered parcels of private property within its vicinity.

Description

Using and enlarging the existing trailhead at mile 11.2 of Petersville Road this trail would head north following an existing trail known as the Safari Trail. One to two miles south of Safari Lake this trail would intersect and merge with the previously described Kroto Trail and continue north. Also in this area there would be an intersection with the East-West Interconnect Trail. Signage at this intersection area would be very important to reduce confusion among trail users.

Recommended actions

- Analyze route and needed improvements or realignments needed to avoid private property or unsuitable topography.
- Provide signage and improvements of route as necessary based on condition of route.

East-West Interconnect Trail (see map 5)

Length

Proposed length is approximately 12 miles from the Parks Highway to the Kroto Trail.

Uses accommodated

Only winter uses are proposed for this trail.

Land ownership

The intent of this trail is to establish a route that accesses the area north of Petersville Road well separated from private land. The proposed route would exist on state and borough lands.

Miscellaneous

The route depicted is merely an approximate rendition of the proposed route based primarily on property ownership information and the desire to locate a trail farthest from private lands. The proposed route is to be well established through marking, signage and other improvements, once topography and environmental conditions are evaluated to identify the route more precisely. This

proposed trail is designed to relieve some of the pressure on other trails in the area north of Petersville Road as recreational use of the trails in this area increases.

Description

The depicted location on the trail map is only an approximation of the yet to be determined final location. This determination will be based on topography, environmental considerations and recommendations in the Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Plan which recommends separation distances from Moose Creek. This preliminary conceptual route is proposed to start at the rest area at mile 121.5 of the Parks highway and after crossing the Parks Highway travel west avoiding private property that is sparsely scattered along the first few miles of this route.

The trail would be routed through wooded areas so that swamps are avoided. The purpose is to encourage users to stay on the trail and not stray to the north where there is a high concentration of private property.

The trail would cross primarily state land and would merge with the Susitna West Trail, continue west intersecting the Kroto Trail and Safari Trail in the exact location where the Safari Trail intersects the Kroto Trail. This trail would continue on and intersect the Petersville Road between the Forks Roadhouse and Petersville Townsite. The East-West Interconnect Trail would provide several loop opportunities between Trapper Creek and Petersville.

Recommended actions

- Analyze and further define the location of the proposed trail.
- Construct and maintain trail.
- Identify and install needed safety improvements at the proposed Parks Highway trail crossing.

Susitna West Trail (see maps 1, 5 and 7)

Length

Approximately 40 miles from Susitna River crossing near mouth of the Deshka River to Petersville Road and approximately 12 miles from Petersville Road to the Tokositna Trail.

Uses accommodated

Winter uses.

Land ownership

State of Alaska, Matanuska-Susitna Borough and approximately two miles of University of Alaska land.

Miscellaneous

This route south of Petersville Road is not presently well established and is not as commonly traveled as the commonly used Susitna River, but is proposed as a safer alternative than the common practice of traveling on the river. The route north of Petersville road is completely conceptual and awaits further research and trail construction.

Description

This southern portion of this route parallels the Susitna River but avoids the river way by relying on an adjacent system of swamps. Little accurate information is available about the level of use. Connections need to be established to access Susitna Landing, Deshka Landing, the West Gateway Trail (see map 1) and Sheep Creek Lodge which provide parking/trailheads. The portion of the existing route south of Petersville Road terminates at the bus barn (mile 1 Petersville Road). It would be desirable to move this trail west so as to cross the Petersville Road in an area devoid of private property. After crossing Petersville Road, the trail would continue north and gradually swing to the west intersecting the East-West Interconnect Trail south of Safari Lake near the five way trail junction with Kroto Trail and the Safari Trail. The intersection of this trail with the East-West interconnect trail is to be in a wooded area and curved such that it is natural to head west. The merging of these trails in this fashion is intended to discourage travel north into a high concentration of scattered parcels of private property.

Recommended actions

- Work with owners of Sheep Creek Lodge, Susitna Landing and Deshka Landing to provide parking related services and trail maintenance as appropriate.
- Analyze and further define the location of the proposed trail.
- Construct and maintain trail.
- Provide signage and marking along the trail.

Funky Trail (see maps 4 and 5)

Length

Approximately 18 miles.

Uses accommodated

Winter uses due to wet topography and numerous creek crossings.

Land ownership

The route appear to be almost entirely on State lands. It is intended that the route will be aligned/realigned to avoid the few potential conflicts with private parcels adjacent to Oilwell Road and Amber Lake and adjacent lakes.

Miscellaneous

This trail is shown in the Susitna Basin Land Use/Recreation Atlas produced in 1980. More recently snowmachiners have used what they believe to be the same trail.

Description

Little is known of this previously used dog mushing trail other than its alignment as shown on the accompanying maps and depicted in the Susitna Basin Land Use/Recreation Atlas. The trail leaves the Petersville Road near mile 12 and travels south toward Amber Lake, crosses Oilwell Road and intersects the Mc Dougal Seismic Trail. The southern terminus of this trail near Amber Lake will likely need to be realigned to avoid private property and provide a clear connection with the 106 Seismic Trail (see maps 4, 5 and 7).

Recommended actions

- Research existing condition of route and evaluate potential to bypass private property.
- Reroute as necessary or obtain public access.
- Provide signage and improvements of route as necessary based on condition of route.

106 Seismic Trail (see maps 4, 5 and 7)

Length

Approximately 8 miles from the Parks Highway to its intersection with the Mc Dougal Seismic Trail (see maps 4 and 5).

Uses accommodated

Trail is limited to winter uses due to wet and swampy topography.

Land ownership

Trail is located on state land and approximately 1/4 mile of borough land.

Description

This trail would provide a loop opportunity between the Susitna West Trail and the Rabideux Trail. The trail starts at the trail head located on the Parks Highway near Rabideux Creek and heads west along a seismic line for approximately 8 miles. It is intended that the proposed McDougal Seismic Trail (see maps 4 and 5) will intersect the existing 106 Seismic Trail (see maps 4, 5 and 7) and that the terminus of the 106 Seismic Trail (see maps 4, 5 and 7) will be extended approximately 4 miles connect to the Funky Trail (see maps 4 and 5).

Recommended actions

- Provide signage and improvements of route as necessary based on condition of route.
- Improve/upgrade winter trailhead at Parks Highway as necessary.

McDougal Seismic Trail (see maps 4 and 5)

Length

Approximately 27 miles.

Uses accommodated

Winter uses due to remote wet topography and river crossings.

Land ownership

It appears there is little or no private property along the length of this route.

Miscellaneous

This route was identified through use of maps, aerial photos, and local knowledge. However, staff was unable to contact anyone having used these seismic lines as a winter travel route. The seismic line is reported to be fifty feet wide.

Description

As previously stated, the condition of the route is unknown, but the northern terminus of the Mc Dougal Seismic Trail is identified on aerial photos and intersects the western terminus of the 106 Seismic Trail (see map 5, #4). Starting from the 106 Seismic Trail (see map 5 #4), the seismic line extends southwest almost twenty miles crossing the Kahiltna River. South of the Kahiltna River, the trail makes a very slight 10 degree turn onto a nearly parallel seismic line which continues to the Yentna River approximately one mile west of McDougal.

Recommended actions

- Analyze route and needed improvements or realignments needed to avoid private property or unsuitable topography.
- Provide signage and improvements of route as necessary based on condition of route.

Schneider Trail (see maps 4 and 5)

Length

Approximately 23 miles from Petersville Road to the Mc Dougal Seismic Trail.

Uses accommodated

The conceptual route is intended to be a winter route due to wet topography and the need for stream crossings.

Land ownership

The proposed route is in state ownership.

Miscellaneous

Property owners along the first several miles of the Shulin Lake Road have been encouraging the development of a publicly maintained road and wish for an alternate to the Shulin Lake Road be established for winter recreational use.

Description

The proposed trail will depart south from Petersville Road between Kenny Creek and Twenty-Mile Creek. The route is projected to be located at least one mile east of the existing Peters Creek Subdivision and continue south in the Twenty-Mile Creek drainage until reaching Oilwell Road and the Mc Dougal Seismic Trail near the Chijuk Timber sale. Approximately halfway between Petersville Road and Oilwell Road (approximately one mile north of Schneider Lake) there will be a fork in the trail which would travel east and terminate at the Funky Trail north of Amber Lake. The last six miles of the trail follows a seismic line to Oilwell Road and the Mc Dougal Seismic Trail.

Recommended actions

- Develop a trailhead along Petersville Road to accommodate this and other trails.
- Research various locations for a trail to bypass the first three miles of trail (which is scheduled to be upgraded into a road) and establish a route on state lands specifically designated for trail access. The most feasible location for this appears to be east of Jake Lake.
- Provide necessary signage and marking including posting speed limits along the first four miles of trail near private property.
- Work with area landowners and mining interests to manage trail use in a manner compatible with the transportation function of this road.

Petersville Roadside Trails (see maps 4, 5 and 7)

Length

31 miles.

Uses accommodated

A paved separated path is proposed in the Petersville Corridor Management Plan along the south side and designed to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. A primitive trail is proposed in the

Petersville Corridor Management Plan on the north side for motorized trail vehicles, equestrians and dog teams.

Land ownership

State right-of-way.

Miscellaneous

These two trails are proposed as a part of forthcoming Petersville Road upgrades and have been proposed within the Petersville Corridor Management Plan.

Description

These two trails (a primitive motorized trail on the south-side of Petersville Road and a paved non-motorized trail on the north-side of the road) would start at the Parks Highway and follow Petersville Road to and possibly through Peters Canyon.

Recommended actions

- Encourage the construction of these two trails as part of the Petersville Road upgrade through the borough capital improvement process.

Talkeetna Multi-Use Trails (see maps 5 and 7)

Length

Approximately 25 miles of trails.

Uses accommodated

Hiking, mountain biking, skiing, equestrian, ATV and Snowmachine use accommodated along most of the length of the trail system although the portion of the trail system along swamp lands on northwest side of Twister Creek is limited to winter use only.

Land ownership

Much of the route is proposed alongside existing roads, existing right-of ways and borough and state lands. However, approximately four miles of the trail system along Twister Creek crosses undeveloped private lands.

Miscellaneous

Portions of this trails system are included in the Talkeetna Comprehensive Plan.

Description

The trails system includes the following trails (map 5 inset; trails not named on map):

- Paralleling the Spur road,
- From the boat launch along Talkeetna River Slough behind the septic lagoons, crossing Beaver Road and continuing on Old Lake Road to the end of Christiansen Lake Road,
- Paralleling Comsat Road on the north side from the Spur Road junction to Bartlett Earth Station,
- Trail connecting Old Lake Road to Bartlett Earth Station via north loop past bluffs overlooking Talkeetna River,
- Trail along north end of Christianson Lake from Comsat Road (Goldenrod Drive) to end of Christiansen Lake Road (overlook),
- Swamp Trail (winter only) from the Old Lake Road along Twister Creek around south end of Talkeetna State Airport,
- Twister Creek Bluff Trail from north end of Christiansen Lake Road (overlook) south along foot of bluff to Spur Road, with cut-off (winter only) to Swamp Trail.

Recommended actions

- Acquire necessary public access easements through private land and where necessary, seek easements along existing road right-of-ways to ensure sufficient space for trail and road.
- Provide signage as necessary to address safety concerns, identify allowed uses and post speed limits.
- Upgrade trailheads at Bartlett Earth Station, the scenic overlook on mile 13 of Talkeetna Spur Road. Trailhead improvements should include restroom facilities.
- Develop winter trailhead in gravel area on east side of Christianson Lake Road just north of Botner Road and develop winter trail from trailhead paralleling Christianson Lake Road on its west side through borough property north to intersect other trails near northwest corner of Christianson Lake.

Talkeetna Non-Motorized Trails (see map 5 inset)

Length

Approximately 20 miles total length.

Uses accommodated

The use of these proposed trails is limited to non-motorized recreation in accordance with the recommendation of the Talkeetna Community Council. Wet and swampy topography further limit the use of this trail system to winter uses although portions of this trail may be suitable for year-round recreation.

Land ownership

Property ownership along this route includes public rights-of-way, Alaska Railroad right-of-way, borough lands and several miles of undeveloped private land.

Miscellaneous

Portions of this trails system are included in the Talkeetna Comprehensive Plan.

Description

As noted on map of Talkeetna trails systems, the trail system includes several segments including:

- The existing trail heading west from Talkeetna Spur Road at 1/4 mile south of South Birch Creek Road to Birch Creek Slough and then the proposed trail would follow the Alaska Railroad right-of-way to the northern boundary of township 25 north and then the proposed trail traverses 1 mile northeast to return to Talkeetna Spur Road.
- This segment of the proposed trail system heads from Talkeetna Spur road east along the northern portion of the Birch Creek Road right-of-way and heads north near the southeast corner of section 21 (township 25 north, 4 west) to loop around X-Y-Z Lakes and continue north to Comsat Road.

Recommended actions

- Acquire necessary public access easements through private land and where necessary, seek easements along existing road right-of-ways to ensure sufficient space for trail and road.
- Provide signage as necessary to address safety concerns, identify allowed uses and post speed limits.

Sheep Creek Trail (see map 7)

Length

Approximately ten miles from where this trail branches off of the existing Talkeetna Mail Trail (see maps 1 and 7) and joins the Rabideux Trail (see map 5, #6 - close to Susitna West Trail).

Uses accommodated

Limited to winter uses only due to wet terrain and water crossings.

Land ownership

A combination of State and Borough lands, section line easements and road rights-of-way.

Miscellaneous

A trail following a similar route has recently been established by local trail advocates to provide access to and from Sheep Creek Lodge.

Description

As noted on the map. This trail is proposed as an alternate to the northern portion of the existing Talkeetna Mail Trail (see maps 1 and 7) which crosses numerous parcels of private land. Several miles south of the Kashwitna River where the Talkeetna Mail Trail (see maps 1 and 7) makes a sharp turn to the east and continues through private lands, this alternate route continues north across borough lands and across the Kashwitna River before joining a north/south section line easement for a half mile and then intersecting Hidden Hills Road. The trail follows Hidden Hills Road to the Parks Highway right-of-way and turns north traveling across Sheep Creek. Approximately one-half mile north of Sheep Creek, the trail crosses the highway to the west and then across the Susitna River to join the Susitna West Trail (see maps 1, 5 and 7).

Recommended actions

- Work with local advocates and private landowners in the area to establish an adequately large trailhead facility near the Parks Highway to include an information kiosk and other needed amenities.
- Reserve right-of-way across public lands.
- Provide adequate signage and trail markers
- Encourage the development of an alternate trail to be designated non-motorized on the west side of the Susitna River in forested areas adjacent to and eventually joining the existing Rabideux Trail (see map 5, #6 - close to Susitna West Trail) to alleviate user conflicts resulting from mixed motorized and non-motorized uses.

Tank Trail (see maps 1 and 7 - close to Talkeetna Mail Trail)

Length

The portion of this trail that is proposed to be included as a regionally significant trail is approximately 12 miles in length from Willow Hatcher Pass Road to where the route diverts several miles south of the Kashwitna River.

Uses accommodated

Both winter and summer uses are accommodated on the southern most seven miles of this trail beyond which the trail is best suited for winter travel.

Land ownership

Still under research but presumed to be mostly borough ownership.

Description

As noted on map. The trail is evidenced on U.S.G.S. maps of the region.

Recommended actions

- Reserve right-of-way on public lands.
- Work with local trail groups to establish a trailhead near the junction of Jim Carter Road and Kenny Boulevard.
- Provide signage and trail markers along the route.

Greys Creek Trail (see map 1)

Length

The length of this trail is approximately ½ mile.

Uses accommodated

Although different forms of trail transportation could be accommodated along this trail, the importance of this trail is its access to the excellent fishing at the mouth of Greys Creek. Hence, it is expected that most people will simply be walking the ½ mile from the Parks Highway.

Land ownership

The first 1/4 mile is owned privately. The second 1/4 mile is owned by the borough and has a surveyed public trail access easement.

Miscellaneous

In 1996 the trail crossing private property adjacent to the Parks highway was posted for no-trespassing. Officials from the State of Alaska Division of Fish and Game office in Palmer Alaska had stated that they received more calls from concerned citizens regarding this fishing access trail than any other trail in the Borough that has been blocked.

Description

As noted on map.

Recommended actions

- Acquire necessary public access through private property.
- Encourage Alaska Department of Fish and Game to install trailhead, signage and manage and maintain the trail.

Willow Creek Sled Trail (see map 1)

Length

15 miles from Parks Highway to Willow Fishhook Road.

Uses accommodated

Most common uses consist of snowmachining, dog mushing, ATV and equestrian use.

Land ownership

Mostly state owned properties. One mile is in private ownership but appears to have a valid public access easement crossing the private property along the length of the trail. Another half mile of the trail is in Borough ownership.

Miscellaneous

This is one of four trails prioritized for development within the City of Houston Comprehensive Plan. The state has researched the history of this trail and believes there is sufficient historical documentation to assert that an RS 2477 easement was granted.

Description

There are three ways to access the trail from the Parks Highway. The option traversing the least amount of private property is also the option that included the site on which the City is interested in developing a trailhead. This option follows the road to the sanitary landfill just north of the City center. The City has expressed an interest in developing a trailhead at or near the site of the former landfill. From the landfill site the trail traverses east just south of Zero Lake and then heads northeast to Willow Fishhook Road.

Recommended actions

- Develop a trailhead facility at the former landfill site.
- Install signage on the Parks Highway indicating the presence of the newly established trailhead.
- Work with the City of Houston to coordinate road maintenance and plowing of trailhead facility.

Rolly Creek Trail, Freightling Trail and Ramp Hill Trail (see map 1)

Length

Approximately 11 miles.

Uses accommodated

Winter trail uses, primarily snowmachining and dog mushing.

Land ownership

Mostly state land although the exact alignment of the existing Rolly Creek Trail (see map 1) and Ramp Hill Trail (see map 1) may cross relatively short stretches of private land which could be bypassed. Additionally, approximately one-quarter mile of crosses former agricultural land sales adjacent to Crystal Lake Road.

Miscellaneous

These trails provide alternate access onto the Susitna River. Because of changing winter trail conditions these trails could be impassable due to overflow, lack of freeze or other conditions. Therefore it is necessary to provide several alternate access trails onto the Susitna River to maintain connections with those trails accessible via the Susitna River.

Recommended actions

- Further research property ownership and relative to the alignment of these trails and reroute or obtain public access as necessary.
- Install signage and trail markers as necessary.

West Gateway Trail (see map 1)

Length

11 miles from Willow Community Center to Nancy Lakes Parkway/Nancy Lakes winter trails.

Uses accommodated

This trail traverses many lakes and hence can only accommodate winter trail users.

Land ownership

This route relies on many lakes which are public waterways and existing easements and public lands. Near Crystal lake there are several parcels of private property the trail currently crosses which lack legal public access. Additionally, a quarter mile section of Cook Inlet Region Incorporated land is in the process of reviewing an application for needed right-of-way between Willow Lake and Long Lake.

Miscellaneous

This trail has been proposed by the Willow Area Community Organization's Trail Committee after extensive research of property ownership and community input.

Description

From the Willow Community Center the trail crosses Willow to the west and exits the lake at Sunday Drive staying on the south side of the road within the existing section line easement until crossing over to the north side of the road where it becomes Wilford Lane. The trail continues for an eighth of a mile past the end of Wilford Lane until turning south at a small lake and continuing on southward through Long Lake and heading southeast across Crystal Lake. The trail exits Crystal Lake to the west and crosses Crystal Lake Road near an existing parking area maintained by the state Department of Transportation. West of Crystal Lake Road the trail continues northwest across Vera Lake until turning south and following a system of swamps to West Rolly Lake and then North Rolly Lake before joining the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area winter trails system.

Recommended actions

- Acquire needed public access.
- Provide trail markers and appropriate signage. Signage should strongly encourage appropriate trail etiquette and include speed limits since the trail is near developed private lands and populated areas.
- Develop a trailhead at the Willow Community Center with informational kiosk.

Red Shirt Lake/Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Trails (see map 1)

Length

Approximately 17 miles of trail including the unmaintained (in winter) portion of Nancy Lake Parkway.

Uses accommodated

Winter uses including snowmachining during times of adequate snowcover and winter non-motorized uses.

Land ownership

The trail lies on state and borough owned lands and within Nancy Lake State Recreation Area.

Miscellaneous

The trail depicted in this trails plan is a portion of the winter trails in the Nancy Lakes State Recreation Area and the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and

Outdoor Recreation. As such it is the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) that defines what uses are allowed in the park including on this trail. Currently, the allowed use of this trail consists of winter snowmachine uses during times of adequate snowcover and non-motorized winter and summer uses.

Description

As noted on map. At mile 2.2 on the Nancy Lake Parkway the DPOR maintains a large parking lot. Nancy Lake Parkway is unmaintained beyond this point and the road/winter trail leads to a winter trail leading north to connections with the West Gateway and Deshka Landing Trails (see map 1) or south to the Cow Lake (see map 1) and Iron Dog Trails (see maps 1 and 2).

Recommended action

Continue to coordinate with DPOR to retain important trail connections and trailheads within Nancy Lake State Recreation Area.

South Central Borough and Cities Subregion

Cow Lake Trail (see map 1)

Length

Approximately 11 miles before connecting with Red Shirt Lake and Nancy Lake State Recreation Area winter trails.

Uses accommodated

Winter use - primarily snowmachining.

Land ownership

The trail is mostly on state and borough lands although one entire section (one square mile) of land which includes Cow Lake is privately owned by a native corporation.

Description

This trail traverses southwest from the Houston Power Line Trail (see map 1), 9 miles where it intercepts the Iron Dog Trail (see maps 1 and 2). At this point the trail turns north and travels through Cow Lake and Red Shirt Lake before joining winter trails in the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area.

Recommended actions

- Research the feasibility of relocating the trail east of Cow Lake.

- Either relocate the trail or acquire necessary easements and public access through private property.
- Install signage about trail etiquette including speed limits in the area of Red Shirt Lake.

Houston Power Line Trail (see map 1)

Length

Approximately 5 miles.

Uses accommodated

Winter use - primarily snowmachining.

Land ownership

Mostly state and borough lands although the trail also crosses about two miles of private property.

Miscellaneous

This is one of four trails prioritized for development within the City of Houston Transportation Plan.

Description

The City of Houston Transportation Plan proposes that a trailhead facility be established at Hawk Lane. A trailhead facility has been on the City's capital improvement list for several years. This facility could also serve the high school's cross country ski trails as well as the power line trail. From the proposed trailhead the trail runs northwest 2 miles, west 1 mile, northwest 2 miles and crosses the Little Susitna River before joining the Cow Lake Trail (see map 1) which extends southwest.

Recommended actions

- Establish agreement with Matanuska Electric Association to use for utility easement for trail use (conditioned upon obtaining public access).
- Acquire necessary public access easement through private property on the existing utility easement.
- Develop a trailhead facility along Hawk Lane.
- Install signage on the Parks Highway indicating the presence of the newly established trailhead.
- Work with the City of Houston to coordinate road maintenance and plowing of trailhead facility.

Muleshoe Lake Trail (see map 1)

Length

7 miles from Houston Power Line Trail (see map 1) to the Iron Dog Trail (see maps 1 and 2).

Uses accommodated

Primarily winter uses because of the swampy conditions on route.

Land ownership

The trail is located entirely on state land, however all adjacent trails connecting it to either the road system or a trailhead cross at least a quarter mile of private property.

Miscellaneous

This trail is supported in the Big Lake Comprehensive Plan.

Description

The trail branches off of the Iron Dog Trail (see map 1 and 2) approximately two miles from where the Iron Dog Trail (see map 1 and 2) leaves Big Lake. The trail travels north by northwest and passes Colt Lake on the north west side and Muleshoe Lake on the southeast side before joining the Houston Power Line Trail (see map 1) four miles north of Muleshoe Lake.

Recommended actions

- Reserve right-of-way for trail use across state land.
- Install trail markers and signage.

Iron Dog Trail (see map 1 and 2)

Length

Approximately 26 miles from Big Lake to Susitna Station.

Uses accommodated

Winter uses, primarily snow machining and dog mushing.

Land ownership

Mostly state owned property, however there is approximately three miles of borough property and a half mile of private property adjacent to Big Lake that must be crossed.

Miscellaneous

This trail is supported in the Big Lake Comprehensive Plan and has been used as the start of the Iron Dog Snowmachine Race.

Description

The trail departs the western end of Big Lake to the north and soon turns west before intersecting the Cow Lake Trail (see map 1) just south of Cow Lake. At this point the trail turns west by southwest and continues approximately 18 miles to Susitna Station.

Recommended actions

- Acquire the necessary easements allowing public access.
- Install signage about trail etiquette including speed limits in the area of Big Lake.
- Establish a trailhead in the Big Lake area to accommodate parking of vehicles with snowmachine trailers.

Aurora Dog Mushing Trails (see map 1)

Length

The trails are meant to function as an integrated system of trails. (Please note that due to scale the map does not show all the trails in this system.) The trail system is estimated to consist of approximately fifteen miles of trails.

Uses accommodated

Winter uses only. The area is located on swamps and wetlands poorly suited for other trail uses. The trails are also used by some snow machiners although developed and designed for dog mushing.

Land ownership

The trail is mostly in borough ownership although it appears some of the trails may travel onto state lands.

Miscellaneous

The trails are used for competition events by Aurora Dog Musers which leases a small building/race facility at the trailhead off of Gonder Road. Trails are open for training as well as competition events.

Description

A looped system of trails in the area southeast of Big Lake.

Recommended actions

- Establish public access easements or classify the property for public recreation.
- Work with the Knik and Big Lake mushing community to establish management recommendations to deal with trail conflicts with other user groups and install signage about trail etiquette. One proposal would be to restrict the first six miles of the Iditarod Trail (see maps 1, 2 and 4) from Knik and Aurora dog mushing trails to non-motorized only except for maintenance purposes.

Iditarod Trail (see maps 1, 2 and 4)

Length

1,000 plus miles from Knik to Nome. Approximately 150 miles of this trail is located within the borough.

Uses accommodated

Winter uses only. The most notable use of this trail is the annual Iditarod Dog-mushing Race. The trail is also used by some snow machiners although snowmachine use in the more popular dog mushing area near Knik is discouraged by the local mushers.

Land ownership

The trail is mostly in public ownership, either located on public lands or on a public right-of-way or easement. Short sections of the trail cross private land near Knik. The Bureau of Land Management reserved a right-of-way along the Iditarod National Historic Trail (see maps 1, 2 and 4) when it conveyed land to the State of Alaska. However, numerous parcels had already been transferred into private ownership prior to this. It is not clear whether public access has been reserved or granted through all of these properties. Additionally a spur trail to the Iditarod, a main access trail that is relied on by mushers in the Knik area, crosses approximately a half mile of private land.

Miscellaneous

The state has researched the history of this trail and believes there is sufficient historical documentation to assert that an RS 2477 easement was granted. One of the routes has been surveyed and is designated a national historic trail. Sections of the trail near Knik Lake that cross Knikatnu Inc. property only grant non-motorized winter access.

Description

The Iditarod Trail (see maps 1, 2 and 4) has a number of variations that have evolved as changing conditions dictated. The trail leaves Knik from the Knik Museum/Mushers Hall of Fame and heads west to Susitna Station, from Susitna Station the trailheads northwest to Skwentna and west to Rainy Pass near the Borough boundary and continues on to Nome.

Recommended actions

- Acquire necessary easements and public access.
- Work with the Knik mushing community to establish management recommendations to deal with trail conflicts with other user groups and install signage about trail etiquette in the Knik area. In accord with existing public access limitation. One proposal would be to restrict the first six miles of the trail from Knik and the adjacent Aurora dog mushing trails to non-motorized only except for maintenance purposes.

Crevasse Moraine/Kepler-Bradley Trail System (see map 1)

Length

Approximately 10 miles of trails total.

Uses accommodated

Non-motorized trail uses including hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding in the summer and dog sledding and skiing in the winter.

Land ownership

The Crevasse Moraine system is located on borough property. Adjacent lands connecting the Crevasse Moraine Trail System (see map 1) with Kepler-Bradley State Recreation Area consists of state and University of Alaska land.

Miscellaneous

This trail development project is specifically recommended in the Core Area Comprehensive Plan.

Description

Both Kepler-Bradley State Recreation Area and Crevasse Moraine Trail System (see map 1) have extensive year round trails. This project is to identify and legally protect the connecting route between the two trail systems.

Recommended actions

- Work with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Department of Public Works to establish plan for landfill reclamation and use of landfill property.
- Obtain legal protection of the connecting trail in the form of easements or other legal mechanisms.
- Continue to improve the Crevasse Moraine trailhead.
- Install trail lighting along a portion of the Crevasse Moraine Trail System (see map 1) for night skiing.

Fishhook and Jonesville Trails (see map 1)

Length

Approximately 15 miles

Uses accommodated

Popular equestrian trail also accommodates ATV's and hikers. Winter use includes snowmachines, dog sleds and skiers.

Land ownership

Approximately three miles of this trail in the south of Wishbone Hill lies on private and native lands. The remaining land consists of mostly state lands.

Miscellaneous

Portions of this route near Seven Mile Lake are depicted in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range Management Plan and the full trail is shown in the Susitna Basin Land Use Recreation Atlas.

Description

As noted on map. The trails connect Wendt Road (off of the Fishhook-Hatcher Pass Road) and Murphy Road/Buffalo Mine Road and Jonesville Road north of Sutton.

Recommended actions

- Acquisition of adequate public access across areas of private lands.
- Install signage and trail markings.
- Encourage the state to provide more onsite management of this heavily used area.
- Work with the local communities to determine a location for a suitable trailhead.
- Keep motor vehicles off the winter trails.
- Encourage the state to actively manage the area for trail recreation.

Palmer/Moose Creek Rail Trail (see map 1, #7 - Palmer-Sutton Trail)

Length

Approximately 6 miles from Arctic Avenue in Palmer to Moose Creek.

Uses accommodated

Could accommodate most types of trail use, except four wheel drive vehicles, depending on the improvements and annual maintenance necessary to clear the rock slides. The trail is mostly on a

relatively flat, well drained rail-line with small but significantly eroding sections consisting of rock slides.

Land ownership

All of the existing trail is located along the Alaska Railroad Corporation's right-of-way, although a connecting route across lands that are privately held needs to be established to access the former Moose Creek campsite.

Miscellaneous

This trail is also on the Borough's capital improvement project list requesting transportation enhancement funding and state Department of Transportation and Public Facilities oversight of construction.

Description

As noted on map. Most of the trail is well drained and flat however several sections cumulatively constituting approximately 1/3 of a mile consist of sloped areas of rock slides. Although the right-of-way is in existence in these slide areas and has not eroded away, the long term stability of these sections is a concern and will likely require annual maintenance to maintain a route through the slides. Additionally, there is no clear connection at the Moose Creek end of the trail with the highway or the cleared parking area at the former Moose Creek campsite. The portion leading to Moose Creek is well established, cleared and routinely used, the main impediment being the slide areas which is currently hazardous to negotiate with trail vehicles. Because of the hazards of negotiating the slide areas with a snowmachine or four wheeler and also because of the limited parking unsuitable for vehicles with trailers at both Palmer and Moose Creek the trail is proposed as a non-motorized trail except as necessary for trail maintenance.

Recommended actions

- Acquire right-of-way permit from Alaska Railroad Commission and legal public access to the former Moose Creek campsite location.
- Brush the portion of the trail connecting with the former Moose Creek campsite location.
- Excavate/expand trail through slide areas.
- Construct bridge over Moose Creek.
- Construct small trailhead facility with parking and signage at Palmer.

Matanuska River Bridge/Rail Trail Connector (see map 1, #7 - close to Palmer-Sutton Trail)

Length

Approximately 2 miles.

Uses accommodated

Uses would be limited to non-motorized uses since the trail is designed to access Swanson Elementary School, little league and soccer fields and the Matanuska River Park.

Land ownership

The trail could be constructed entirely on borough owned lands and a short 1/4 mile section of road right-of-way.

Description

The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities has constructed a new Matanuska River bridge and will be retaining the older bridge for trail use. The proposed route referred to as the Matanuska River Bridge Rail Trail Connector (see map 1, #7 - close to Palmer-Sutton Trail) would extend from the Matanuska River Bridge through the borough owned Matanuska River Park and soccer/softball fields past Swanson Elementary School. From Swanson Elementary it will be necessary to use an existing road right-of-way, probably Eagle Avenue, to access the Alaska Railroad right-of-way and trail.

Recommended actions

- Facilitate and encourage land swap of area north of the Old Glenn Highway immediately west of the Bridge.
- Develop trail preferably with assistance and funding from state.

Wolverine Creek Trail (see map 1)

Length

Approximately 6 miles up Wolverine Creek Valley until trail becomes indistinct.

Uses accommodated

Most commonly used as a foot trail after the initial several miles because of the steep topography, however also receives snowmachine, equestrian and ATV use.

Land ownership

The first 1/6 mile of this trail crosses private property. The next several miles follows an easement across native lands and then onto state lands.

Miscellaneous

The state has researched the history of this trail and believes there is sufficient historical documentation to assert that an RS 2477 easement was granted.

Description

As noted on map. The current location of the first portion of this trail crosses through a private parcel of property within 500 feet of two residences. Due to topographical constraints reasonable access to this trail and Wolverine Creek Valley cannot be established without traversing private property. The terrain is relatively flat and easily negotiable by most types of trail users for the first 1.5 miles. The trail gradually steepens and becomes challenging or difficult for most mountain bikers, four wheel drives, snow machines, ATV's and cross country skiers after approximately two miles. The use that is suggested for this trail is primarily non-motorized to limit impacts on adjacent private landowners as this trail is not well suited for motorized users. The trail is one of the few within this plan that does not have an existing pattern of heavy use and leaves the road system in an area of extremely low traffic volumes and hence limited public surveillance. Because of the anticipated low level of informal public surveillance this trail should not be advertised or promoted by the borough until there is a track record of adequate management of the proposed trail and trailhead.

Recommended actions

- Acquire public access through private property.
- Design and improve/construct trail in a manner that provides buffering to adjacent property owners. Initial portion of trail should include either split rail fencing or other method to clearly delineate the boundary of the trail. Install "trail etiquette" signage including notification to stay on trail as it travels through private land. Also signage should be installed that instructs trail users to park at turnaround at the end of the maintained portion of Wolverine Road.

Bartko Homestead Trail (see map 1)

Length

Approximately 14 miles of somewhat identifiable route from the turn around at the end of Wolverine Road. The trail gradually becomes less distinct until it is no longer identifiable above treeline in the foothills of the Chugach Range.

Uses accommodated

Trail is suitable for most all trail uses for the first ten miles. Once the trail starts climbing the foothills below the treeline, the trail becomes more challenging to negotiate and is extremely difficult or impassable for most motorized users.

Land ownership

Approximately the first twelve miles is in private ownership, however it appears there may be legal public access through these private lands.

Description

As noted on map. The first section of this trail is very well traveled and is often very muddy with standing water in areas during the spring and summer months. The trail is one of the few within this plan that leaves the road system in an area of extremely low traffic volumes and hence limited public surveillance. Because of the anticipated low level of informal public surveillance this trail should not be advertised or promoted by the borough until there is a track record of adequate management of the trailhead.

Recommended actions

- Research public access to assure that the route has the necessary public access. If not it will be necessary to acquire public access.
- Mark the route to prevent accidental trespass and provide signage indicating the adjacent lands are privately owned for the first twelve miles.
- Clear a larger area for vehicles with trailers at the existing turnaround at the end of Wolverine Road.

Lazy Mountain Trail (see map 1)

Length

Almost three miles with a vertical elevation of approximately 3,000 feet.

Uses accommodated

Primarily a foot trail due to steep terrain.

Land ownership

Trailhead and initial 2/3 mile of trail on borough property, remaining portion of trail is located on state lands.

Miscellaneous

One of several trail systems managed by borough staff.

Description

As noted on map. Trail is generally regarded as very steep. In some areas the erosion from foot traffic has created hard packed soils that are extremely slick when wet.

Recommended actions

- Reconstruct portions of the trail with sufficient switchbacks to alleviate the erosion and reduce hazards.
- Work with nearby property owners to evaluate ways to minimize inappropriate night-time activity.

McRoberts Creek/Matanuska Peak Trail (see map 1)

Length

Approximately 6 miles in length with approximately one mile of elevation gain.

Uses accommodated

Primarily a foot trail due to steep terrain.

Land ownership

Trail is located entirely on state lands.

Miscellaneous

One of several trail systems currently managed by borough staff.

Description

As noted on map. A small pullout able to accommodate only a few vehicles was formerly located at the top of Smith Road, however, recently a road was constructed north across what was formerly the pullout area.

Recommended actions

- It is necessary to reconstruct the trailhead that was removed as a part of the recent subdivision road construction. The borough should work with the community to determine which option is preferred.
- 1/8 mile east of the former pullout area at the southeast corner of section 31 (located on state lands). This option would allow more area for noise and visual buffering and be capable of accommodating all traffic and parking for both McRoberts Creek and Plumley Maud/Morgan Horse Trail (see map 1).

- Immediately east of the former pullout area at the top of Smith Road within the section line easement. This option would be more visible from Smith Road and may preclude less vandalism, theft and inappropriate late night use of the trailhead (most commonly “partying” by minors).
- Perform trail improvements and maintenance of trailhead as needed.
- Limit access east of the Morgan Horse Trail (see map 1) to non-motorized use.

Bodenburg Butte Trail (see map 1)

Length

Approximately one and a half miles in length.

Uses accommodated

Exclusively a hiking trail due to extremely steep topography.

Land ownership

The initial half mile of this trail exists on private lands. No formally dedicated public access exists along the trail. Access is currently permitted by the landowners who have posted access as being allowed at the informal trailhead.

Miscellaneous

Currently the landowners have posted the trail as being open to the public and have cleared a parking area.

Description

As noted on map. This trail is extremely steep and for this reason subject to extremely severe erosion. The end of the trail is the top of Bodenburg Butte, elevation 881 feet. The Bodenburg Butte is centrally located in the Knik River Valley and offers a 360 degree view of the Knik River Valley, the Knik Arm of the Cook Inlet and the Palmer and Wasilla region.

Recommended actions

- Work with the property owners to obtain clearly dedicated public access.
- Upgrade and maintain the trail to avoid excessive erosion and make the trail easier to negotiate.

Plumley Maud Trail/Morgan Horse Trail (see map 1)

Length

Approximately six miles in length from the end of Huntley Road to the end of Plumley Road.

Uses accommodated

This trail is used year round although summer use near the Bunt Butte area is through wet/muddy areas.

Land ownership

The majority of the trail is in borough ownership however 1.3 miles follows a section line easement between private parcels.

Description

As noted on map. This north/south trail connects Huntley Road and Plumley Road. The trail, described here collectively is composed of what has been named two separate trails; the Plumley-Maud Trail (see map 1), connecting the ends of Plumley Road and Maud Road, and the Morgan Horse Trail (see map 1) connecting Huntley Road with Plumley Road. The southern portion of the trail is prone to extreme wetness and muddy conditions.

Recommended actions

- Realign wet and muddy portions of the trail to dryer ground wherever such alternatives exist on public lands.
- Construct trail improvements to minimize mud and erosion in wet areas that are unavoidable due to topography or land ownership.
- Provide signage and trail markers along route, specifically in areas of private land informing individuals they must stay on trail to avoid trespass.
- Investigate or pursue connection to Wolverine Creek and Jim Creek/Knik Glacier Trail (see map 1).

Jim & Mud Lakes Canoe Trail (see map 1)

Length

Approximately 6 miles in length.

Uses accommodated

This is a Canoe Trail (see map 1) that is particularly well suited for day trips due to the almost circular network of lakes, creeks and swamps.

Land ownership

The area is State owned property.

Miscellaneous

The Susitna Area Plan proposes this area as being legislatively designated a state recreation area.

Description

As noted on map. The Canoe Trail (see map 1) relies on three lakes connecting streams and swamp systems to provide a circular route.

Recommended actions

- Establish a designated trailhead off of Maud Road extension and a small maintained path to the put in point.
- Install creekside and lakeside signage at critical junctions.

Jim Creek/Knik Glacier Trail (see map 1)

Length

Approximately 25 miles to Knik Glacier

Uses accommodated

Virtually all uses are accommodate along this trail including four-wheel drive vehicles.

Land ownership

This trail is a mix of state, borough and private lands. Public access exists along the entire length of the trail.

Miscellaneous

The part of this trail extending to Metal Creek is the only trail within the borough that has been successfully asserted as an RS 2477. The trail was originally established as a mining trail and occasionally heavy equipment is brought in along these trails to access mines near Metal Creek and other areas.

Description

As noted on map. The first part of the trail relies upon the sand and gravel bars adjacent to the Knik River. At Friday Creek the trail travels inland, northeast, before paralleling the river bed again. This section of the trail is routinely very muddy containing long stretches with standing water. Past Wolf Point the trail again follows sand and gravel bars along the river to reach Metal Creek. Crossing Metal Creek to reach the glacier can be hazardous.

Recommended actions

- Reroute and reconstruct portions of the trail using appropriate trail design to lessen the level of erosion and swampy conditions on the trail itself.
- Reconstruct the trailhead in an area more visible and likely to be subject to more public scrutiny and informal public surveillance.

Hunter Creek Trail (see map 1)

Length

Approximately 17 miles from Knik River Road to Eklutna Lake.

Uses accommodated

This proposed trail would be limited to non-motorized uses, low impact uses, primarily hiking.

Land ownership

Near Knik River Road the proposed trail would cross native lands on an unestablished public access easement. The majority of the proposed trail would exist on state lands including those in Chugach State Park.

Miscellaneous

This proposed trail is identified in the Chugach State Park Master Plan.

Description

As noted on map. This trail is not established but is proposed as an extension of the Bold Peak Trail (see map 1) from Eklutna Lake to Knik River Road. This trail is proposed to be constructed as a non-motorized trail accessing the Chugach State Park.

Recommended action

Work with the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation to construct and establish a trail and a trailhead at Knik River Road.

Pioneer Ridge/Knik River Trail (see map 1)

Length

Approximately 6 miles with a vertical rise of about one mile.

Uses accommodated

Topography limits this trail to hikers.

Land ownership

The first mile of the trail crosses through private lands on a public access easement.

Miscellaneous

The trail was constructed in 1988 and is one of the few trails established and managed by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Description

As noted on map. This trail is continuously steep until reaching the upper ridgeline and last two miles of the trail.

Recommended action

Install additional trail markers and upgrade and improve those sections needing work.