

Chugach State Park Master Plan Amendments

The Chugach State Park Master Plan (prepared by the Alaska Division of Parks, DNR, February 1980) is amended to include the following:

Resort Development

Resort development, with proper controls, is compatible with the purposes of Chugach State Park. Resorts shall not be located in the parks' wilderness zone. Prior to allowing for the development of a resort, the division shall conduct appropriate environmental and recreational impact reviews as required by AS 41.21.027 (park concession law). The results of these reviews shall be used to develop mitigation measures to protect other park values.

A downhill ski resort may be developed at the Eagle River site identified in the report by the division titled Comparison of Potential Alpine Ski Areas in Chugach State Park: An Analysis of Terrain Capability provided the requirements of AS 41.21.027 and other measures deemed appropriate by the division are met. Expansion of a resort developed at the Eagle River site into the South Fork of Eagle River or into the Highland Mountain East and West sites also identified in the above study, may not occur until potential conflicts with fish and wildlife, water quality, community growth and development and values, land ownership (i.g. military lands) are adequately dealt with through additional community involvement and environmental/social impact studies. However, the awarding of a park concession contract for the Eagle River site may include an option for the concessionaire to expand into these areas if the above work is completed and found by the division to be in conformance with AS 41.21.027 and other standards as determined necessary by the director. Boundaries of the sites identified in the above study may be adjusted by the director. The division may require impact and mitigation studies to be prepared by the bidders or concessionaire.

Alpenglow, an existing ski area in the park formerly called Arctic Valley, may be expanded provided the above conditions are met. Expansion of the area into the Ship Creek Wilderness Zone is expressly prohibited by this plan. Also, future developments at the resort shall be undertaken to minimize visual and noise impacts being projected into the Ship Creek Wilderness Zone.

Up to two additional ski resorts may be allowed in the non-wilderness portions of the Eagle River and Eklutna-Peters Creek

Planning Units. Any sites considered should be among those identified in the division's study of potential ski areas. However, the director may consider other sites if they possess suitable terrain and have a reasonable potential to comply with the requirements of AS 41.21.027 and other requirements and standards established by the division. If possible the division should begin snow surveys and wildlife studies of these sites to assist in any future decisions about these areas.

Other types of resorts or recreational facilities, such as an environmental education center or nordic skiing center, may be considered on a case by case basis, according to a set of general compatibility criteria under AS.41.21.027 and summarized as follows:

- implements or is consistent with the park's purposes, as specified in it's enabling legislation and this plan;
- enhances public use and enjoyment of the park while maintaining a high quality environment and recreational opportunities;
- provides services not feasible or appropriate for the state to provide;
- is based on a public need and desire;
- accommodates ordinary uses, at no cost;
- is not more appropriately located on private lands inside the park or on other lands outside the park,
- is not to be located in a wilderness zone,
- will not result in unacceptable impacts on park resources or existing recreational use of the park,
- no substantial impacts to adjoining wilderness areas,
- the facility and its operation is designed to minimize scenic and visual quality impacts,
- meets other requirements of AS 41.21.027 and other requirements as established by the division.

Helicopter Use

The landing of helicopters by private parties for recreational or scenic access or other activities in the park is prohibited. Commercial helicopters may not be chartered for general recreational access to the park.

The director may authorize helicopter landings for management purposes. Management purposes include: conducting or supporting scientific research including wildlife inventories, maintaining communications facilities which have been located in the park under special use permit, search and rescue operations, law enforcement, park ranger patrols, park facility development and maintenance. To the greatest extent possible, fixed wing aircraft should be used for these purposes because of their lower noise impact. Also, non-aircraft methods of accomplishing these projects or activities shall be considered before fixed-wing or

helicopter aircraft are used, particularly in wilderness areas.

The director may authorize helicopter landings for special events such as commercial filming or community festivals. In all cases, special event landings will not be allowed in or within 1 mile of a wilderness zone. The director shall consult with the Chugach State Park Citizens Advisory Board prior to issuing a permit. In issuing a permit for special events, the director shall take reasonable steps to avoid:

- landings in or low level flights over areas or at times of visitor use of the park,
- low level overflights of residential areas,
- disturbance to wildlife,
- landings in or low level flights over park wilderness areas,
- flights that will constitute a significant threat to public safety, or,
- landings that would be more appropriately located on lands outside the park or private lands within the park,
- other impacts which the division or director determines are significant.

The division shall, to the extent staff and budget allows, monitor and record authorized and unauthorized helicopter activities in the park. Flightseeing overflights should also be monitored. This information should be retained to help provide an improved information base for policy development and decision-making concerning helicopter activities in the park.

The division should focus law enforcement efforts on unauthorized landings in the park. Further the division should begin to work with the FAA, military, pilots associations and other land management agencies to resolve or reduce conflicts between aerial and ground users of the park.

Eagle River Greenbelt

The division shall establish a planning team to develop a detailed management plan for the Lower Eagle River Valley (Eagle River Greenbelt) planning unit. The team shall be comprised of representatives from the park's citizen advisory board, local community councils and organizations, state and local agencies, and others. The Lower Eagle River Planning Unit is established from within the existing Eagle River Planning Unit to focus planning and management efforts on this important portion of the park. It is comprised of the lands acquired by the state from Eklutna, Inc., in a land exchange and existing park lands in T13N, R1E, SM. The existing park lands in T13N, R1E, SM that are to be included in the Lower Eagle River Planning Unit include all lands in the valley bottom and a portion of the valley sideslopes from the former Eklutna, Inc., land to the Eagle River Visitor Center. The planning team shall prepare a base map that determines the exact boundaries of the planning

unit. The unit may be renamed by the director after receiving nominations from the park advisory board.

Until such time as a management plan is prepared for the unit, the division shall adopt the Municipality of Anchorage plan for the greenbelt on an interim basis.

Interim management of the unit under the municipality's plan and the development of the management plan shall adhere to the following policies:

1) Trails, shall be developed as determined appropriate in the detailed management plan for the area. Recreational access sites may be developed as identified in the MOA plan or the management plan which is to be prepared. When possible, facilities shall be sited to be buffered or screened from view of the river. The Eagle River Campground may be expanded if appropriate.

2) Facilities will be phased so as to satisfy existing recreational demand and anticipated demands of the near-term future.

3) Motorized recreational activities (including boats, snowmachines and ATV's) are prohibited.

4) Commercial activities shall be limited in number through concession contracts rather than through park use permits. Activities related to the possible development of a downhill ski area may be allowed but shall be controlled to insure that the natural and recreational resource values of the unit are maintained. The management plan shall determine the carrying capacity of the river for both commercial and non-commercial uses.

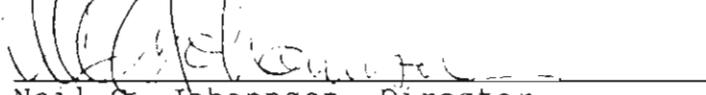
5) Pursuant to AS 41.21.022, the division shall seek the concurrence of the Board of Game to close the unit to hunting and designate it as a wildlife viewing area. The division and the planning team shall make wildlife viewing and wildlife education a goal of the area.

6) Motorized vehicle access on the existing 1D9 (Homestead Road) right-of-way is allowed for use by local residents and others. The road may be relocated, redesigned and upgraded so long as natural and recreational values of the unit are maintained. Special park use permits may be issued under 11 AAC 18.010 (8) to provide nearby landowners with access to the 1D9 road. Authorizations for public utilities to be located in or across parklands and water shall be under the permitting process authorized by 11 AAC 18.010. The division shall work closely with DOT/PF and the Municipality of Anchorage to insure that the proposed Eagle Loop Road connection to Hiland Road/Glenn Highway crossing of the greenbelt minimizes adverse impacts on the unit.

7) Modification of the river to enhance boater safety or improve whitewater kayaking should only be considered after a thorough

review of impacts and coordination with appropriate agencies (i.e. ADF&G, Corps of Engineers, Municipality of Anchorage, etc.). This issue should be addressed during the development of the management plan.

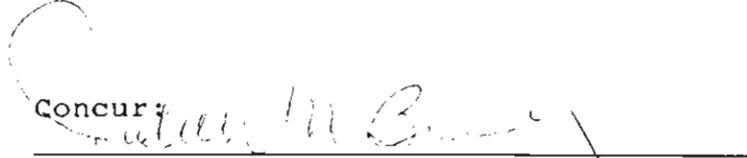
Approved by:



Neil C. Johannsen, Director
Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

9 OCT 87

Date



Judith M. Brady, Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources

9 OCT 87

Date