

DNR - Mining, Land & Water Online Public Comment

Knik River Public Use Area

Topic: Preliminary Mgmt Actions & Alternatives Comments

Comment 1 of 238 - received on 03/29/2007 at 01:00 PM:

I am a 28 year Alaskan resident & local business owner for 26 of those years. I have been traveling through & enjoying the Knik River Valley since 1984. During that time I have witnessed many things. Most of the superior things I've encountered were wild, natural & certainly tributes to the amazing country that Knik River Valley is. Its natural legacy is a powerful, dynamic & varying ecosystem, worthy of comparison to any of the wild lands in Alaska or in the entire United States.

As the "Knik River Public Use Area" it has the potential to be enjoyed by folks for generations to come. But before any plan is implemented, there are a few issues that need to be resolved.

First and foremost the entire area needs to be respected by all who enter it. The public must become very aware & educated about the whole area. They must be taught not to trespass on private properties, advised that it is not a 'shooting gallery' or that 'anything goes' in the area. Over the years I have experienced in the area, I have seen several destructive events occur that would keep the public from "enjoying it"!

Between the cars, trucks, motorcycles, 4 wheelers, refrigerators, washing machines, dryers & miscellaneous other garbage that is dumped, burned, shot at & left for 'all to enjoy', to the gaping, ripped up trails, mud bogs and countryside & the massive gasoline fires, high-powered target practice, automatic weapons fire & drug/alcohol induced parties that go on all over the place out there, one is hard pressed to 'enjoy themselves' a lot of the time.

Don't get me wrong, I don't mind a bit of target practice, a tasty beer around a nice bonfire, a bit of 4 wheeling, etc. However, when I see huge fires lit at 2:00 am that light up the side of the mountains & threaten to catch over into the forest, or hear automatic weapons sounding off at 4:00 am, or find out that local homes in the area have had rifle fire hit them, or young kids hurt or even killed in 4 wheeler accidents because they are drunk & out of control, or dead wildlife wantonly shot for 'target practice', I take issue with that.

There has to be something in the plan that will address those issues specifically or the safety of the public and, most importantly, of the local folks that live there year around will be compromised. As the surrounding area becomes more populated with homes and the public is attracted to the area to enjoy its grandeur, fish & game the few degenerates that make it bad for all of us need to be kept in check...as an integral part of the plan!

I have only enjoyed the area for a little over 20 years. That's nothing compared to the folks that have homesteaded the valley...some who have had family born, married, lived and died in the valley...they've seen the true changes over those years. They do not take Knik River Valley for granted. They have watched a part of it become ruined by a handful of destructive punks. Especially since about the early to mid 1990's. You can't hardly leave your vehicle parked anywhere for a nice long hike or a canoe trip now without worrying that you'll return to find your vehicle broken into or burned to the ground.

It is these types of problems that need to truly be addressed as soon as possible, prior to the full implementation of any public use plan.

Comment 2 of 238 - received on 04/02/2007 at 09:56 PM:

GOOGLE SEARCH: JIM CREEK

Jim Creek-Friday Creek Trip by Bill Wakeland, Scree 9/82

August 14-15. Six of us showed up August 14 to conquer the wilderness of Jim Creek to Friday Creek, located on the north side of Knik River, an area that used to be a veritable paradise for fish, ducks, sheep, goats, bear and moose.

We drove to within .8 mile of Jim Creek, which was easily crossed, and we headed toward Knik Glacier on hard sand. It soon became apparent that since I was last there many years ago, the channels of Knik River have shifted southward. The old ones have filled in with wind-blown sand, and we had some four miles of hard "highway", followed by another four or five miles of good "road" in the trees and eventually the flood plain of Friday Creek. The greatest hazard was getting run over by an A.T.V. -mostly 4x4 pickups.

Right in the middle of Friday Creek was a 4x4 tilted at a crazy angle, with that dirty glacier water up to the windshield. For some perverted reason that sight made us all feel much better! The feeling was short lived, however, because a character in another 4x4 let us know that "the whole valley" is private property-all 1,129 acres on both sides of Friday Creek where it emerges from the mountains, and there were ample signs and colored ribbons for emphasis. It is probably a mining claim from the looks of things, but getting shot at is another possible hazard up there.

That night, after the swamped 4x4 had been winched out by other tribal members, the maintenance required to make it run again was accompanied by shooting of variety of weapons until about midnight-apparently these types get their kicks out of seeing the fire come out the end of the barrel!

On the bright side, we had a nice camp site, the only serious rain was at night, several of us took a short and steep hike up the mountain that evening for some grand views, extending from Sleeping Lady to the Knik Glacier. The next morning Dona and John left early for a prior commitment in Anchorage, while Bruce and I crossed Friday Creek and followed the less traveled road that continues toward Metal Creek, to beyond Wolf Point where the whole river swung in close. At this point some beavers had been doing their thing and we gave up the road when we saw a fish jump in the middle of it! We assume the road dries out and continues to Metal Creek, as it used to many years ago.

It was easy to see where the swamped 4x4 had been beached. The oil (and water and silt) had been drained on the gravel and the empty oil cans another trash lay where they fell.

Hikers Bernie Helms, Dona Agosti, John Nevin, Eileen Cavanaugh, Bruce Poulin and I suggest that serious hikers wear earplugs getting through this area-the ATV's airboats, planes and motorcycles have taken over.

<http://www.alaska.net/~jlanders/HikerGuide/page149.html>

Comment 3 of 238 - received on 04/02/2007 at 10:00 PM:

Google Search: Jim Creek

Originally Posted by SockeyeOrange Is there a boat launch at Jims Creek? I hear it is real popular with the airboat crowd.

NO "BOAT RAMP" PICTURE THIS: 150 PEOPLE TROMPING IN, THROUGH SCHOOLS OF

FISH THROWING EVERYTHING AT THEM, AIR BOATS SCREAMING THROUGH, PEOPLE DIVING OUT OF THE WAY, A MAKESHIFT GUNRANGE 1/8 MILE AWAY, SO CONSTANT MACHINE GUN, HANDGUN, RIFLE FIRE VERY VERY NEAR, STRAY BULLETS ARE VERY COMMON, LOTS OF ALCOHOL, 4-WHEELERS SCREAMING EVERYWHERE, PEOPLE CAMPED EVERYWHERE, BURNED OUT CARS LAYING HERE AND THERE THAT GET HOOKED UP AND DRUG BY 4 WHEEL DRIVE TRUCKS ON OCCASION JUST FOR FUN, TRUCKS AND 4-WHEELERS CROSSING THE CREEK AND GETTING STUCK ON A FAIRLY REGULAR BASIS. OTHER THAN THOSE THINGS IT A BEAUTIFUL PLACE WITH FISH...

We have launched at the old Knik Bridge or decades. The trick is to find a deep spot, usually by the tree, but keep an eye out for the thick mud. It will grab you really quick, and its unforgiving. When the water was deep enough we used to unload right in the mouth of Bodenburg, and if it is really high we unloaded in that pond to the right after pulling off the highway.

In previous years the traffic wasnt that bad, so I wouldnt be worrying about accidents. Worry about someone breaking out your window.

We also used to unload at the new Glenn bridge. This was much easier and not very difficult. Unload down river as far as you can. This side offers much more gravel and less sticky mud. The current isnt that bad.

On another note, I watched a guy try to cross Jim Creek with a jet boat. The driver was standing up working the tiller and he had two people sitting in front of him. He hit a sandbar at about half speed and came to a dead stop. All three went flying to the bow. It looked painful. The boat crept forward just enough to make it to the other side though. I laughed just because no one was seriously injured and that has happened to us many times. Some of the most memorable white knuckle moments of my life has ocurred on the Jim Creek flats in a boat

<http://forums.outdoorsdirectory.com/showthread.php?t=2382>

Comment 4 of 238 - received on 04/02/2007 at 10:05 PM:

Typical Summer Day

Location: Palmer Text: On 6/11/06 at approximately 0400 hours, a 18 year old female from Anchorage reported three unknown individuals assaulted her. Investigation revealed she was out at Jim Creek in the Palmer area and three unknown white males assaulted her.

Investigation continues. Anyone with information is asked to contact AST at 745-2131.

Author: DLH2 Received and posted Sunday, June 11, 2006 12:43 PM

Location: Palmer Type: Vehicle Theft I, Criminally Negligent Burning Text: On 6/11/06 at 0142 hours, the Alaska State Troopers received a report of a vehicle fire in the Jim Creek area in Palmer. Investigation revealed the vehicle was a 2005 Dodge Neon and had broke down at mile 26 of the Glenn Highway. Unknown person or persons unlawfully stole the vehicle, drove it to the Jim Creek area and set it on fire. Investigation is continuing. Anyone with information is asked to contact AST at 745-2131. Author: DLH2 Received and posted Sunday, June 11, 2006 12:37 PM

Location: Palmer Text: On 6/11/06 at 0418 hours, State Trooper conducted a traffic stop at approximately 1 mile Old Glenn Hwy in Palmer on a vehicle for erratic driving. Investigation revealed William J. Gittins, age 19 of Anchorage was subsequently arrested, transported and

remand in MSPT to be released to a sober adult. Author: DLH2 Received and posted Sunday, June 11, 2006 12:35 PM

Location: Butte Case number: 06-49598 Type: Theft, Criminal Mischief Text: On 6-11-06 at approximately 0359 hours Rachel Gerard, 18, of Palmer reported to Troopers that sometime on 6-11-06 between the hours of 0001 and 0400 someone damaged a white 1995 Mitsubishi Montero while parked at Knik River access in Palmer and took miscellaneous items estimated at approximately \$1000.00. Damage to the vehicle is estimated at approximately \$300.00. Investigation is continuing. Anyone with information to this case is asked to contact the Alaska State Troopers at 745-2131 or Crimestoppers at 745-3333. Received and posted Sunday, June 11, 2006 10:01 AM

Type: Arrest Warrant Text: On 6/11/06 at approximately 0520 hours, State Troopers did a welfare check on a female on the side of the road at 10.5 mile Old Glenn Highway. Investigation revealed Jessica J. Gammons, age 18 of Anchorage was subsequently arrested for a \$100.00 outstanding arrest warrant for FTA original charge Minor Consuming Alcohol. Gammons was transported to and remand in MSPT. Received and posted Sunday, June 11, 2006 12:37 PM

Comment 5 of 238 - received on 04/02/2007 at 10:22 PM:

Google Search Jim Creek News

Knik River revelers keep police busy on weekend: MEMORIAL: Bonfires, ATV accidents, alcohol lead to almost constant calls to area. COPYRIGHT 2006 Anchorage Daily News
Byline: Andrew Wellner

Jun. 7--WASILLA -- Alaska State Troopers and ambulance personnel got a workout Memorial Day weekend in the Butte, where hundreds of weekend campers and ATV riders descended on the Jim Creek-Knik River area.

"It was a busy weekend," Butte Fire Chief Charles Von Gunten said.

With a few short breaks, "we were on call almost 24 hours all weekend," he said. He said they spent a lot of time in the Jim Creek area, telling partiers to put out their bonfires in keeping with a state Division of Forestry open-burning ban....

ATV accident claims man's life near Jim Creek on Knik River Published: July 4, 2006 Last Modified: July 4, 2006 at 02:06 AM

WASILLA -- A Wasilla man died Saturday after the all-terrain vehicle he was driving rolled over near Jim Creek on the Knik River flats, Alaska State Troopers said.

Driving ambition quelled by river RESCUE: Family of six washed downstream after failed crossing. By ANNE AURAND Anchorage Daily News Published: September 12, 2006 Last Modified: September 12, 2006 at 02:07 AM A dive team using a boat plucked a family of six from the top of an SUV stuck in the Knik River on Sunday night, about a half-mile upstream from the Old Glenn Highway....

Comment 6 of 238 - received on 04/03/2007 at 08:49 PM:

I have used this area for at least 20 years. Mainly in the winter for bike riding to the glacier and in the fall for hiking and kayaking. I used to go in the summer but all the shooting and ATVs chased me and my family out. I understand this is a good area for motorized activities and I don't want to exclude them. But I believe certain areas should be off limits to motorized

recreation for protection of the lands and enjoyment for the "quiet sport" users. There is much documented proof of abuse and destruction by machines in the wetlands and all the trash left behind that can only be hauled in with vehicles, not on the backs of hikers or bicycles. Even airboats have caused much damage in the wetlands between the creeks and lakes as they motor cross-country. This has left much long-term damage and chased away wildlife. I can talk also about all the garbage dumping and target shooting on the road to Jim and Mud Lakes that is terrible. In short, all users need to be included yet certain areas need to be left for non-motorized activity to protect the wildlife, fragile wetlands and give people and their children a place to enjoy without the noise and destruction. Thanks.

Comment 7 of 238 - received on 04/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. I believe that all existing trails should remain open to ATV's. A non motorized trail should be designated as mentioned in Alternative 2 (Lower Knik Flats). 2. Please do survey and plat the RST 17 trail (corridor). Make a non motorized trail from the pavilion to the Knik Flats. 3. Unit B (Lakes) please use Alternative 2 (Loop Trail). Inventory all trails! 4. Need to keep the Rippy Trail Extension from Jim Lake to Friday Creek area open. The trail connects to the RS2477 trail at Friday Creek,

Comment 8 of 238 - received on 04/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

I am "extremely disappointed and troubled" by the proposed management plan for the Knik River Recreational Use Area that you and the planning team have developed. The management alternatives are severely biased towards motorized recreation with little concern for the environment. In fact, environmentally sensitive and nonmotorized alternatives are either nonexistent or unbalanced. The lack of alternatives for the protection of critical wildlife habitat and nonmotorized use is a flagrant disregard of the existing legislation and is inconsistent with existing statutes, regulations and policies. You and your planning team have greatly misunderstood your own role in this planning process. In the Department of Natural Resources No. 2 Update, it was stated that, "Access to the KRPUA and impacts to habitat were issues that drew less public comment." This was in comparison to complaints pertaining to shooting, littering, car burning, and numerous other criminal activities "all" of which cause environmental degradation. It is neither the job nor the responsibility of the general public to assess the impacts of human activities on the environment. That it is your job and your responsibility. That is what the planning team was hired to do. The employees of the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fish & Game, and other government agencies are responsible for determining the cause and effects of destructive human activities, identifying the resulting environmental degradation, and defining an appropriate management plan. The initial management plan also proposes alternatives to overturn laws, which will allow the continued destruction of vegetation and habitat loss in order to enhance motorized recreation. And, that these regulations be overturned "to recognize and allow current recreational uses, and their associated impacts, to continue..." with no alternative actions offered. Please remember that trails existing within the KRPUA and "not" to be considered as "grandfathered-in" for future use. According to the legislation, historical trails shall be "recognized" but this does "not" guarantee its use in the future. Any trail that is found harmful to the surrounding wildlife, wildlife habitat, and local residents should be closed. Period. I plan to further review and comment on the preliminary alternatives and management actions.

Comment 9 of 238 - received on 04/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

4. I heard about this meeting on the evening news after it had started. I'm so glad I caught it and came to the meeting - I'll go to the website. In the meantime - I am in favor of "No Shooting" on the Knik River. I've been concerned I'll be hit by a bullet - I live on the Knik River

(6204 Annette Circle).

Comment 10 of 238 - received on 04/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Concerns 1) DNR proposes to rescind laws (regulations) to allow ongoing destruction of vegetation and the creation of ruts to continue in order to enhance motorized recreation, and that these rules be rescinded, "to recognize and allow current recreational uses, and their associated impacts, to continue in the majority of this unit." No alternative actions, such as restricting weight limits or mitigating impact otherwise are offered. 2) While DNR solicited and received our priorities, they excluded them from the alternatives. Our priorities offer specific options presented by residents that would "lessen the impact of continued and 'enhanced' motorized recreation on their neighborhoods," their quality of life and their health. Our options include non-motorized access at the Knik River, except for parking and quiet camping, and time-share periods throughout the Public Use Area which are set aside equally for motorized and non-motorized users. This will not only heighten the experience of each particular type of user, but will increase the quality of life for residents who live near the area who have no respite from noise, dirt, frenetic traffic and chaos all summer long. It will also give respite to the wildlife from getting run down and having no place to hide from motorized activity. 3) DNR excluded alternatives which offered specific management options based on an array of 25 years of professional studies of the area, photo documentation of continued destruction, and dispatch reports from Alaska State Troopers and Emergency Services/Butte Fire Department. 4) DNR excluded alternatives which refer to the continued traditional use of trails in the KRPUA where increased motorized use has forcefully displaced and shut out quiet use for the past 30 years. Everyone knows that. Why doesn't DNR? 5) DNR will continue to allow power boats in the wetlands and lakes placing no limit on motor size. While some restrictions may be put in place to protect a nesting swan pair in a lake, this protection is gone as soon as the little guys hatch. The first thing they need to learn is how to scramble into the bushes when a motorboat comes close. Some of these cygnets never make it back to the nest. Our priorities as given below, as well as many other sensible comments from many individuals and organizations statewide, should have been included as alternatives. It is our observation, that DNR intends to legalize the existing mayhem and destruction of this valuable and beautiful area. People who live here will have to deal with ever more dust, noise, traffic, and contamination. Reasonable users of the area will continue to be disenfranchised.

Priorities Butte Area Residents Civic Organization offer the following priorities. They are part of the solution to combat and mitigate the loss of our quality of life and wildlife habitat. They will allow multi-use recreation without conflict and will open the door to new economic opportunities based on our world-class scenery and Butte's proximity to Alaska's population center and its visitors. 1) Immediate strong and on-the-ground law enforcement to ensure safety of residents and users. 2) Immediate ban on target shooting pending the Commissioner's determination of an area where shooting is not a threat to public safety. 3) Immediately place and maintain temporary sanitary facilities and dumpsters at the following locations: Man-Made Lake off Knik River road, upstream and downstream access of Knik River Access, Pavilion and/or close to RS2477 -Knik Glacier Trail access, Jim Lake Access and Mud Lake Access. 4) Create a Critical Habitat Area to include lakes, wetlands, alpine transition zones and dunes to prevent further destruction. This allows fish, waterfowl and other wildlife habitat to recover. Such a designation is based on recommendations of previous "studies" and findings. 5) Restore wetlands and revegetate dunes. 6) Develop a central access point for motorized users to the Public Use Area at the RS2477 Knik Glacier Trail head on State of Alaska land. This will prevent continued unauthorized use of private lands above the mean/high water line along both sides of Knik River, will protect Bodenbug Creek

and its salmon and waterfowl habitat from ORV damage and harassment, will protect residents from noise and dust and irresponsible recreational behavior. 7) Prohibit airboats from traveling in anadromous streams, the wetlands and all lakes due to documented harassment and disturbance of waterfowl including the declining population of trumpeter swans and other wildlife. Create a horsepower limit for all watercraft and do not allow motorized boats and recreation vehicles near nesting, birthing and spawning areas. 8) Dedicate Knik River/Bodenburg Creek Access to non-motorized use. DNR owns lands on the river bank only for approx. 1.5 miles north when they pass Mat-Su Borough lands and then join with DNR onshore property. DNR lands on the river bank adjoin private lands at the high water mark/permanent vegetation for 5 miles to the south and 1.5 mile to the north of the Knik River Bridge/Bodenburg Creek Access. DNR lands cannot be traversed during high water. Fourwheelers, dirt bikes and 4x4s have to trespass on adjoining private lands to get to Jim Creek and beyond. ORVs also use this access to trespass a major Matanuska Electric power line on private property, and travel on unpaved neighborhood streets and the non-motorized pathway to visit a nearby bar or gas station. These activities add to health issues of residents from "dust and noise," endanger the non-motorized public, disenfranchise residents from enjoying their homes and land and discourage visitors and residents from "quiet camping and picnic" at the Knik River, taking their dogs for a walk, or just going there on a nice evening to see the sun go down in the west or "to watch the river go by." 9) Develop a time-share schedule for motorized and non-motorized recreation, but allow existing commercial airboat tour operations to continue on a daily basis. This will benefit different users to recreate without conflict and residents to enjoy their homes and yards without nuisance noise from power boats, personal watercraft and ORVs. We also would like for DNR to consider the comments of several residents in our group who have been thoughtfully "tweaking" these priorities. As time allows, we shall add to these posts. Butte Area Residents Civic Organization encourages residents and users to remain vigilant and actively participate in the public process. Residents look forward to normal lives, protection from the current chaos and a well balanced recreation area which everyone can enjoy and be proud of.

Comment 11 of 238 - received on 04/06/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. Alternative 2 appears to be fairest & most viable for most. 2 law enforcement persons need to be on duty in KRPUA every Fri, Sat & Sun 2 PM - Midnight with radio contact between the 2 for security reasons. Regardless of which alternative is chosen. 2. Alternative 3 for Rippy Trail seems best. Airboats need to be restricted to the river (as other high powered motorized boats). 3. They are a good start - However not clear enough regarding wetland protection... or how to keep multiple use trails in usable condition & safe for all users. 4. Hiway vehicles (up to 10,000 #) should require a permit to operate in this area. Also speed restrictions for all motorized need to be considered - speeds should not occur which endanger other users, livestock in numbers or herds should be restricted to 6 or less.

Comment 12 of 238 - received on 04/08/2007 at 10:37 AM:

I pretty much agree to alternative #2 management plan across the board.

Comment 13 of 238 - received on 04/09/2007 at 02:32 PM:

I fully support management alternative #2 across the board.

Comment 14 of 238 - received on 04/11/2007 at 01:00 PM:

When I discussed with you at the Butte public meeting on April 4th that non-motorized users need trails free of motorized vehicles for numerous reasons, one of which is the need for quiet, your response to me was that some law or regulation you mentioned precludes you

from managing for aesthetic reasons and that you (presumably DNR) leave that (quiet) for the Palmer Hay Flats. I still find it difficult to believe or comprehend this statement and am inclined to think I may have misheard you. If on the other hand my recollection is correct, then allow me to point out that your assumption that the requirement for quiet is based on aesthetics is incorrect. Also, this assumption is indicative of an apparent lack of understanding of non-motorized recreation activities and shows a bias towards motorized vehicles over non-motorized activities. There are important needs for quiet other than aesthetics. Hunters need and want quiet in order to stalk game. Bird watchers want and need quiet in order to hear bird calls and find birds. Hikers need quiet in order to commune with nature. In each case quiet is an integral part of the recreational activity and not some nebulous, removed, aesthetic experience. While you insisted numerous times at the Butte meeting that motorized recreation has as much value as non-motorized recreation, there was little if any evidence that for you and DNR the opposite is equally true. Your proposed plan heavily favors motorized recreation over non-motorized recreation and puts the latter at the mercy of the former. The "enabling legislation" (HB307) referred to in your comments at the Butte meeting includes in Section 41.23.180(3) "provide an area for the public to enjoy the FULL SPECTRUM of public uses, including maintenance and enhancement of off-road motorized vehicle and NON-MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES." Since your current preplan document is absent reasonable alternatives for non-motorized recreational opportunities that depend on quiet as an integral characteristic of the pursuit, it is not in compliance with this legislation. Your preplan need to be rewritten to include alternatives that are not just variations of the same alternative which provide for motorized recreation only, which is largely the case as it now stands.

Comment 15 of 238 - received on 04/12/2007 at 08:36 AM:

Concerning any future lands that may be added to the public use area: It would be desirable that there be no covenants or restrictions on their use at the time of transfer that would be more restrictive than the KRPUA management plan.

Under the "Actions Common to All Alternatives" Item #3: The sentence-- Vehicle use off of existing trails in vegetated areas is prohibited. Should be deleted. Define vegetated. It appears that as long as you don't disturb the vegetative mat this would be a moot point. Especially during the winter.

Comment 16 of 238 - received on 04/14/2007 at 03:34 PM:

In response to the preliminary alternatives for Unit A. Lower Knik Flats, I would propose that either Alternative 3 be revised or a new Alternative 4 be added. This revised or new alternative would be the same as Alternative 3, with the addition of new language requiring the establishment of an authorized target shooting area within Unit A. This authorized target shooting area would be located and constructed in such a manner as to facilitate the safe recreational shooting of handguns, rifles, and shotguns, while minimizing the risk of injury to those enjoying other authorized uses within and in the proximity of Unit A. Use of appropriate earthen berms and vegetation would minimize the visual and audio impact on other users and area residents. Such an authorized target shooting area should accommodate no fewer than 20 shooting lanes and provide a minimum unobstructed range of 200 yards for at least 5 of those lanes. A simple concrete pad for the shooting stations would provide a clean and usable area, while minimizing expense and maintenance of the facility.

Thank you for your efforts and for considering my proposal!

Comment 17 of 238 - received on 04/15/2007 at 12:25 PM:

I want to be on record as supporting a proposed 5th alternative as put forward by the Knik River Watershed Group (enclosed below).

In addition I strongly recommend a campground on Borough land near the Pavilion parking area - with sanitary facilities and supervision and the closing of the Knik River shore to camping up and downstream of the Knik River bridge. This would mitigate the noise, pollution of area through bodily waste being discarded on the ground, and serve to improve the behavior of the users of this area. It is imperative that the Borough and DNR work together to establish this campground.

For 14 years I lived at mile 0.5 Knik River Road across from the Knik River Bridge. I witnessed countless instances of unsafe gun fire at any hour of day or night any day of the year. In addition the noise from motorised vehicles constantly buzzing back and forth was a tiresome nuisance.

Currently I use the area from the end of Maud Road through Rippy Trail and adjacent lakes for walking and canoeing. I am happy to share the trails with motorised vehicles and have never had a bad experience with any of them. In recent years however I have noticed degradation of some areas due to apparent overuse or use by oversized vehicles such as trucks, the tire tracks indicate large vehicles. I would like to see the area preserved and am happy to share with responsible motorised use.

Thank you for your consideration

Knik River Public Use Area Alternative 5

Unit B. Lakes (Jim-Swan Wetlands)

Provide for low to moderate use compatible with protection of fish and wildlife habitats. User fees may be imposed.

Rippy Trail will be developed as a single track nonmotorized trail and is subject to rerouting or seasonal closure to avoid Trumpeter Swan nest sites.

The Jim-Swan wetlands will be open to multiple use recreation from August 1 through April 15. Fall use is subject to posted horsepower limits for resource protection and user safety. Snowmachining will be restricted during periods of inadequate snow cover to protect vegetation. The wetlands including waterways will be closed to motorized recreation from April 16 through July 31 to protect wildlife resources, such as migrating, nesting and brood-rearing Trumpeter Swans, loons and ducks, and vegetation. Nonmotorized recreation will be restricted as needed to protect active loon and Trumpeter Swan nest sites.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game will monitor wildlife resources to evaluate recreational impacts. Facilities that may be developed in this unit include:

Mud Lake (Facilities, use and alteration done via cooperative agreement with Eklutna, Inc.)
" Shoreline restoration and improved small craft launch area. " Canoe concession, wildlife viewing platform, educational kiosk on wetlands, waterfowl, migration " Improved upper parking area to halt erosion into the lake.

Jim Lake " Shoreline restoration and improved small craft launch. " Close access road to lake and develop into a handicapped accessible path to viewing site. " Improve small upper parking area. " Develop upper area campground.

ALL units:

Do not rescind existing regulations. Existing trails, with the exception of RS2447 trails, are subject to closure, rerouting or designation, pending environmental analyses and safety considerations.

No new trails will be created or expanded until the trails management process is complete.

Key habitats, including salmon streams, wetlands and dunes, will be closed until restoration, revegetation, trails management process and environmental analyses are complete.

Install public restrooms and bear-proof garbage receptacles in all moderate to high-use parking areas.

For safety, prohibit recreational shooting within a ½ mile of all facilities and moderate to high-use areas. To prevent lead deposition into the water, prohibit recreational shooting within ¼ mile of any waterway.

Lawful hunting will not be restricted.

Comment 18 of 238 - received on 04/16/2007 at 02:33 PM:

The SOA DNR has the mandate to protect natural resources in perpetuity for the good of the people. Protection of natural resources in itself would require the DNR to have enforcement capabilities. For DNR to continually say they do not have enforcement abilities is only because the authority to have those was revoked. DNR State Parks has enforcement capabilities; so should the other resource management divisions within the DNR. This is the time to become proactive and protect those resources that are economically viable and sustainable for all to enjoy for now and in the future. It is naive for the DNR and the SOA to continue to revert to the 70's and 80's hiding behind a clause that they can not do something instead of doing what is right for all users of public lands. With that said, the Knik Watershed Plan needs to be addressing those resources that are viable, critical, and the direct result of poor management. To overcome these weaknesses, the DNR needs to recognize that sustainable fisheries is the most important economic resource the Knik Watershed provides. This requires protection of sensitive wetlands and associated habitat for maintaining a fisheries market. The second and part of, the fisheries is EcoTourism that is one of the only sustainable resources this State has to offer. The Knik is unique in it's scenic package it provides and its proximity to Anchorage. People come from all over the world to see just a fraction of an ecosystem that can not be witnessed anywhere else. In stead of exploiting this for shortterm enjoyment for those who do not respect this resource, the State should be doing everything it can to ensure this growing and billion dollar income for the state keeps on coming. The only way this can happen is if the DNR supports Alternative 5 for protecting the most important aspect there is within the Knik Watershed and that is habitat for wildlife; habitat for people. They are the same but they need to be managed and protected even if the general public does not understand that the Public Entity is required by law to protect those resources. That is why there is government; that is why we have regulations to protect public health and safety. I strongly encourage the DNR to address these issues in a proactive and responsible manner. We are no longer living in the 60's where population was few and motorized vehicles were a minority. To continue to manage in that world is irresponsible. Please provide a platform to manage these resources sustainably because they are the only goldmine we have! There are plenty of financial and technical resources to assist the DNR to help manage these lands for all to enjoy.

Comment 19 of 238 - received on 04/16/2007 at 09:10 PM:

I use the Jim/Swan Lake area for bird and wildlife watching and canoeing. I am concerned that non motorized users of this area are being crowded out by motor powered users. The two are incompatible, the non motorized users lose out. Of particular importance is noise pollution and hazards due to speeding.

I would suggest you consider a plan like the one used in the Eklutna Lake area where motorized and non motorized uses are permitted on alternate days.

Comment 20 of 238 - received on 04/17/2007 at 09:20 PM:

I support Alternative 5 for the Jim-Swan Wetlands (DNR's Lakes Unit) as developed by the KRWG, as well as KRWG's area wide recommendations. Habitat protection and compatible recreation is a priority for my continued enjoyment of this area. Thank you. K

Comment 21 of 238 - received on 04/19/2007 at 02:23 PM:

The DNR has mistakenly requested to rescind the protection of brush along the River and maybe elsewhere. This is a huge mistake as sand blows like a dust storm from ATV useage since the last decade alone. All ATV's need to be on assigned trails - period. I have an ATV and am perfectly willing to follow this simple preservation rule.

Comment 22 of 238 - received on 04/20/2007 at 04:19 PM:

Comments on Preliminary Alternatives Unit A Lower Knik Flats 1. Recreational use of firearms should be restricted in the whole area, per alternative 3. 2. There should be no motorized activity at Manmade Lake within 100 feet of the shoreline, as small children are there and migrating swans stop there, it should be a safe area for families and children, during ice free periods. Unit B Lakes 1. I support alternative 3 for Rippy Trail. 2. I support alternative 1, reference protecting Trumpeter Swans, facilities at Mud Lake and Jim Lake. Unit C Upper Knik Flats 1. I support alternative 2, also recommend fire arm use be restricted from east to Friday Creek to protect wetlands. Unit D Upper Jim Alpine 1. I support alternative 2. Unit E. Upper Jim Alpine 1. I support alternative 2 Unit F Grasshopper Valley Unit G Glacier Unit H Metal Creek 1. I support alternative 2 on all the above Units, with more protection for the salmon and wetlands. Fees 1. I strongly support fees to be added at, at least \$3.00 per day and would support a \$5.00 per day fee.

Other items I support, 1. Tougher penalties for violations, change from misdemeanors to violations with tickets being issued. 2. More signs, plus signs with rules and regulations, along with amount of fines for violations. 3. If burning vehicles continues, then close off access to big vehicles. 4. Register cars sold at auction at time of sale. 5. Fees for rescues of persons involved in accidents due to reckless behavior. 6. Make it a violation for not using legal access area. 7. Dumpsters and restrooms be added at trailheads and Manmade Lake. 8. Infrared cameras to be hidden for observance of misbehavior. 9. Burning cars should be a felony. 10. 11 PM to 6 AM quiet time rule. 11. Development of playground and campground, for family use. 12. Do not rescind law against motorized use in vegetated areas, we already have a problem with the duststorms.

Comment 23 of 238 - received on 04/20/2007 at 05:04 PM:

UNIT A - Lower Knik Flats. Recreational discharge of firearms, and fireworks, must be prohibited in this entire unit, extended to FRIDAY CREEK. Residents need safety and sleep, and the animals need peace to restore their habitats, which we are there to enjoy. DO NOT rescind regulations regarding 11AAC96.020(a)(1)(D)(E), or 11AAC96.025(1)(2)(3)(A-C) Dust storms have been blinding as vegetation gets destroyed. The Pavilion is one place for an infrared security camera to be concealed. A parking fee of \$3.00 is necessary. and many

signs. A rugged log bridge may be constructed for ATV's to cross creeks. A non-motorized trail from the Pavilion to the Flats is necessary. Sanitation facilities are necessary. Manmade lake and the entire Unit A must be restricted to 10MPH Motorized use on Manmade lake must be prohibited during ice-free periods. Remove junk cars, then use huge rocks to block ordinary road vehicles.

UNIT B - LAKES Recreational shooting prohibited in entire UNIT B. RIPPY TRAIL - multiuse to upper Jim Creek, then non motorized. MUD LAKE - Develop campground, playground, and sanitation facilities, \$5.00 fee JIM LAKE - Develop campground, playground, and sanitation facilities, \$5.00 fee.

UNIT C - Upper Knik Flats No special restrictions. Develop trails

UNIT D - Upper Jim Alpine No special restrictions. Develop trails

UNIT E - Upper Friday Alpine No special restrictions. Develop trails

UNIT F - Grasshopper Valley Improve existing trail. No special restrictions

UNIT G - Glacier Develop trail

UNIT H - Metal Creek Develop trail.

In addition - all violaters may be issued citations with a fee, and bail. Quiet Zone in most UNITS from 11PM to 6AM A shooting range developed somewhere in Butte area.

Comment 24 of 238 - received on 04/21/2007 at 12:08 AM:

Unit A Lower Flats Recreational use of firearms should be restricted to the whole area.

Comment 25 of 238 - received on 04/22/2007 at 09:05 PM:

I some how missed the public comment periods but would like to make comments. For the past 25 year or so I enjoy the Knik River area almost every weekend in the spring, summer and fall seasons. During good snow years I have also used it in the winter. Many of the user are like myself off road recreators who no longer have an area in Anchorage open to them. The large and open area of Knik is the primary area with in resonable travel distance for motorized users. During the years I have traveled in the Knik drainage the amount of users has grown and will most likely continue to expand. I have concerns about the dumping of trash and cars, the gun fire. At one time it was safe to camp out but I would not do so now as the party people who I believe are responsible for the dumping and burning of cars control the area at night. I understand the need to control access to sensitive areas, but I am very concerned that many of the trails I now enjoy will be declared non-motorized. This will contrate motorized use on the remaining trails leading to increased danger to riders (2 way traffic) and to the trails themselves. I have lifed in Alaska for 51 years I appreciate the natural wonders that suround us and believe they make Alaska very special. I do hope that the DNR will work with the motorized user to improve the Knik area for all users. If I can be of assistance please feel free to contact me.

Comment 26 of 238 - received on 04/23/2007 at 08:06 PM:

I reviewed the proposals for the Jim/Swan Lakes area and support ALTERNATIVE 5. It is important to protect fish and wildlife habitat by restricting motorized vehicles in this wetlands area and on the Rippy Trail which I usually trek on each summer. Thank you. Frank Gwartney

Comment 27 of 238 - received on 04/23/2007 at 09:54 PM:

RE: Procure a grant to purchase land at the mouth of Bodenbug Creek and institute a "leave-it-alone" management policy.

Bodenbug Creek is an anadromous stream. The creek's graveled area between the Knik River and forest floor are exposed to high levels of recreational activities. At this time, there are no rules or prohibitions protecting this stream bed or surrounding environment. Future commercial development at this site may have further negative impacts on water quality. A state agency, working in conjunction with local interest groups, could procure a grant to purchase the land and establish a "leave-it-alone" policy. A few of the reasons for leaving this forested area intact: 1.) to protect salmon spawning areas, 2.) to protect the riparian zone, 3.) for erosion control, and 4.) to act as a natural buffer zone to protect the neighboring community from noise and air pollution.

Comment 28 of 238 - received on 04/24/2007 at 12:47 PM:

Lower Knik Flats Alt 4 Add playground at Pavillion

Comment 29 of 238 - received on 04/24/2007 at 01:00 PM:

I believe we should be able to shoot there in the upper part but near Jim Creek where it enters the Knik River and everyone fishes we shouldn't have any shooting. I don't think there should be a user fee as of now but when the time comes and we have sanitation facilities then come up with a fee and these fees be used for the Knik River access when you enter the use area. And my understanding is we have some private property near the River bridge and the borough should see about purchasing this for access later on. And for bird watchers I believe since I have gone up and down the Knik River since 1968 I have seen the river bed change and I haven't seen any change in the birds. I don't believe we should have any restrictions and Swans or any other birds. I think motorized restrictions is out. There is people who live up the Knik and they need thing that maybe would have to have a truck then they would be out if we had restrictions on this and the ??? up there has been getting better as time goes by. There shouldn't be any new trails but we should be able to use any and all of the river bar.

Comment 30 of 238 - received on 04/24/2007 at 01:14 PM:

Add hidden remote night vision cameras

Comment 31 of 238 - received on 04/24/2007 at 08:41 PM:

There is no listing on the DNR Knik River site as to who public comments on the Preliminary Management Actions and Alternatives, should be addressed to. This needs to be fixed. It certainly sends the message that DNR would prefer not to have public comments. As far as the Management Plan and Alternatives...

To start with, I am confused by the Unit map. What happens in the areas where there are no unit assignments?

Concerning the actions common to all alternatives:

Is DNR really going to inventory all the trails? With the decreases in funding that always seem to affect conservation projects, how is the work going to be accomplished within a short enough period of time that there is a true base line for existing trails? If it takes two years to do the work there will always be more and more trails. Major trails should quickly be identified and all others closed. Deal with the sustainability of the major trails before inventorying all the rest. Trails can always be added at a later date when planning and

conservation can be included in the process.

Unit A - Lower Knik Flats:

* One would be crazy not to completely eliminate recreational discharge of firearms. Too many people LIVE in this area.

* Why would you rescind motorized restrictions? Motorized users as a whole have not proven themselves to be considerate of other users, and they have not proven that they can follow simple stream buffer restrictions. If they can not be responsible users than their privileges should be removed.

Unit B - Lakes:

I would promote the Alternative 5 as described by the Knik River Watershed Group. Rippy Trail should return to a non-motorized trail.

All other Units:

Also refer to Alternative 5. However all recreational discharge of firearms should be prohibited, shooting ranges exist for this purpose. The wilderness does not need to be littered with bullets and casings, and what are people shooting at out there anyway if they are not hunting? We don't need trees full of bullet holes, and the wildlife deserves some peace and quiet.

It occurred to me while reading the preliminary alternatives that DNR has no particular interest in conserving this area. Much of the planning process seems to be occurring because it is required, with little regard for input from those who wish to protect the area and the wildlife within. If this area gets a management plan with no backbone it will set a precedent. Irresponsible users of state land will be assured that if they abuse it and then promote their own legislation to govern it when concerned members of the public promote conservation and regulation, they can have it their way. Might I remind the planners for this area that Alaska is a very special place, truly there is no other place like it. If our natural resources and wildlife disappear because we did not take steps to protect them, then only we are at fault. When its gone, it really is gone, and when its going we can't return it to what it once was, but we can save what remains. And if we let it all go for political reasons then truly we do not deserve it.

Comment 32 of 238 - received on 04/25/2007 at 07:46 AM:

Please protect the Jim-Swan wetlands from unrestricted motorized vehicle use including the use of airboats in the critical wetland area. I visited these wetlands every year for bird photography but in recent years found that the experience was ruined by the airboat traffic and vandalism of my truck (two occassions). I looked over the alternatives and have come to conclusion that Alternative 5 is the best alternative listed.

Comment 33 of 238 - received on 04/25/2007 at 11:18 AM:

The mouth of Jim creek is one of the very few sandy beach areas in the Valley. Please plan for this area to be non-motorized swimming area. This would make a great picnic and possible bathroom area somewhere. I have been taking my kids there for over 17 years. I know that their grandparents took their kids to this spot. On a hot sunny day, if you close your eyes, you can feel you are in Hawaii. I only go there on weekdays now. My other concern at the mouth of the Jim Creek is Air boats. Small air boat (with two people) seem to have little impact. HOWEVER the big airboats with 6+ passengers suck all the

water up ...the creek bed is completely exposed. Water rushes away and the back to the edges. There is no way the impact of the large airboats does not affect the Salmon.

Comment 34 of 238 - received on 04/25/2007 at 01:00 PM:

First, I want to commend the Alaska Department of Natural Resources for their efforts in attempting to develop a plan for the Knik River Public Use Area. I know it is a difficult and tedious process. I am a long time user of the area and have accessed it both by motorized and non-motorized transport. I fully support multiple use and traditional use of as much of the area as possible as long as it doesn't degrade the area for future users. The usage must be sustainable and maintain the natural quality of the area. My children grew up enjoying the area and now my grandchildren are beginning to use it. While I don't want to see anyone "locked out" of a traditional use, I also do not want to see my grandchildren and their grandchildren "locked out" because the natural qualities that make the area so special have been destroyed. I support several of the proposed alternatives but have serious concerns about others. I fully support those alternatives that will make the area safer, especially from the improper use of firearms. I support alternative 3 regarding firearm restrictions in Unit A. However, I think this needs to be balanced by the development of a safe shooting range or area to encourage proper firearm usage. I support Alternative 2 for Unit A relative to a non-motorized trail from the Pavilion Parking Area to the Flats. This is strongly needed from a safety standpoint to prevent accidents between motorized and non-motorized users on the existing heavily used trail. I support Alternative 2 for Unit A relative to motorized restrictions on Manmade Lake during ice-free periods. This has always been a very popular swimming area during the summer, especially with families and young people. Motorized use in this small lake is a relatively recent occurrence and its' continuance is going to result in a serious accident to someone. I also support a fee program for facilities and management within the PUA. I support a fee structure that would parallel the fee structure used by Alaska State Parks. I do have two serious concerns with all of the other alternatives for each unit that deal with trail usage, whether current or future. First, any planning effort dealing with management of natural resources needs to be based on both a thorough knowledge of the natural resources and the social issues. The alternatives presented are based solely on social issues without any regard for what the resource base can or cannot sustain. A baseline assessment needs to be made of the natural resources in the area. This includes hydrology, physical soil properties, vegetation, and wildlife habitat. Almost all of this information is already available in published and publicly accessible documents, but there is no evidence that it has either been used or understood. The data needs to be arrayed so that areas that can sustain heavy usage and impacts are identified as well as areas that are sensitive to disturbance and cannot sustain certain levels of use. Done properly, you will have a defensible resource assessment based on sound data, and not on assumptions or opinions. Simply doing a GPS survey of the trails is not a resource assessment. Once this resource data is compiled, then the social issues need to be addressed in view of the resource data. Every user group, if they are truly interested in the long-term sustained use of the area, will have to accept reasonable compromises. Without this process, this is not a 'planning effort' but simply accommodation to who can scream the loudest. Without this process, AK-DNR is not doing its job as steward of Alaska's state lands. My other, and deepest concern, is Alternative 2 for Unit A relative to rescinding, in part, provisions in 11AAC96.020 and 11AAC96.025. I cannot comprehend how this option is even being considered. This alternative basically allows for the establishment of a 'sacrifice' area where current Alaska statutes related to sustainability of resources will not apply. I support the rights of all Alaskans to use state lands but not when that usage degrades the land and impacts the

ability of other Alaskans to enjoy an area. This alternative should be dropped from any future consideration.

Comment 35 of 238 - received on 04/25/2007 at 08:38 PM:

after review of the latest alternatives - if i had to choose one without changes it would be # 1. i do want to make some comments on areas either to be added or ones i do not want to lose with other alts. first i want to commend the efforts put forth with enforcement , which is the area everyone will agree is of the highest priority and will yield the greatest benefit - thanks much! 1--do nothing to close any trail or waterway - ref swan nest 2-- nothing should be more restrictive than the current generally allowed uses under DNR as with current off trail use in vegetated ares 3--there should be no restrictions in the jim lake area 4--an allowable shooting area should be established between mud and jim lakes. however hunting should not be effected with any shooting restrictions. 5-- user fees will be difficult to monitor however if they are implemented they should be reasonable and the revenue used in the knik area. 6-- the private land on each side of the bridge should be purchased or obtain access.

Comment 36 of 238 - received on 04/25/2007 at 09:26 PM:

I have reviewed all of the information that I could get my hands on for proposals and different ideas. I am in agreement with the actions common to all alternatives. These actions alone, if they could be enforced, would be all this area would require for now. The public access does get taken for-granted by individuals, but there are many that do not need to be regulated and these are the people that help enforce what is right. I do not want to see a fire-arms restriction, but if the "actions common" (fully enforced) did not work, then I would support the idea of a designated area.

I believe the hurdle for an effective solution, before any major restrictions take place, is to figure out how to enforce the "actions common to all alternative". Once we have tried this approach for a reasonable amount of time, then more educated decisions could be made based upon the findings.

How do we enforce the laws that already exist and the new ones to come?

There probably are hundreds of legally creative ways, but that is truly the question (I believe) that needs to be asked and answered before we impose too many restrictions on such a unique multi-use area. Thank you for offering a "nobody" some say.

Comment 37 of 238 - received on 04/26/2007 at 09:23 AM:

Thanks for all your hard work and dedication into this matter(really). I'll express my thoughts in list form. You should know I first adventured into the area(Jim Creek/Lake) as a youth in the late 1960's fishing with my father. I have been an avid user of the area for both off-roading and fishing until the late 1990's.

1. The packet sent to me by DNR DMLW on this topic was hard to read, hard to follow without(I imagine) being directly involved in the ongoing process. A briefer,simpler "overview" with a map identifying the debated areas should/could be included in future mailings for us "less involved" people.

2. After a few scary encounters during the late 1990's, I have not visited Knik drainage due to undisciplined target shooting, vandalism and an obvious criminal element that has saturated the area.

3. After seeing the major vegetation destruction develop over the years I am in favor of seeing a large educational program similar to the "tread lightly" programs instituted in various other states. I feel by educating the masses, that would greatly help with the erosion problems

associated with off-roaders(I feel most people are ignorant and don't fully comprehend the damage thier atv is capable of, and would change thier riding style). In the mean time, I favor greatly restricting sensitive areas to motor-vehicles of all kinds and prefer limited numbers of trails through less sensitive areas with areas slowly becoming developed with study.

Comment 38 of 238 - received on 04/26/2007 at 01:00 PM:

As an avid outdoor enthusiast, typically non-motorized, I support Alternative 5 as described by the Knik River Watershed Group.

Comment 39 of 238 - received on 04/26/2007 at 03:13 PM:

I would like to see better boat launching Facility's on the Knik River. A clean up effort made to clean up trash and old cars. Camping spots with in the tree line at the Knik River bridge and Jim Creek would keep conflicts to a minimum. A designated shooting area away from the high use area's.

Comment 40 of 238 - received on 04/27/2007 at 07:55 AM:

in preparing plans for the Knik River Public Use Area, please (1) Do not rescind any laws to allow habitat damage (2) Close Rippy Trail and important wetland areas to motorized destruction (3) Protect sensitive habitats, including salmon streams, wetlands and dunes (4) Construct important facilities, with restrooms and bear-proof trash cans (5) Limit target shooting to designated areas for the safety of other users (6) New trails should not be constructed or expanded until plans are complete

Comment 41 of 238 - received on 04/27/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Comment 42 of 238 - received on 04/27/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. Law enforcement is a big part of successful management of area. Suggest results of meeting at Butte Fire Hall be implemented. 2. Unit A, Alternative 1: Have a designated shooting area using mountain as back stop (small area already used for this purpose). 3. Manage the area according to 11 AAC 96.020 of the generally allowed uses on state land. 4. The original legislation HB307 was a use area for off-road motorized vehicles, DO NOT CONSIDER TIME SHARE! Non-motorized user has unlimited to recreational areas.

Comment 43 of 238 - received on 04/27/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Unit A. Alternative 1 is my preference here. The firearms discharge provisions of Alternative 2 are not in public interest as the best locations for a possible shooting area with the mountain as a backstop are in this area. Alternative 2 needs motorized uses along Jim & Bodenbug creeks before restrictions are mandated. Other parts of this alternative would be very difficult to enforce equitably, although the parking and sanitation facilities part is commendable. Unit B. Alternative 1 is my preference as this time. Alternative 2 has ideas that need much more public input before implementation. Alternatives 3 & 4 are objectionable. Unit C&D&E&F&G&H. At this time current management practice will be best. Let the future determine the management necessary. Other considerations: 1) The private property currently being used to access the gravel bars at the Old Glen Hwy, Knik river bridge is for sale and should be purchased for public use. 2) Several times it is mentioned that "use off of existing trails in vegetated areas will be prohibited" this should not be considered in less utilized areas to prevent hunters from recovering game. Once or twice across the grass or small brush is not harmful. 3) Public education - Signage & Brochures, among other options are important. 4) Changes in Laws of Alaska to make some offensive behavior a VIOLATION instead of a Misdemeanor. This would make enforcement more effective. (Suggested by Troopers.) 5) Fireworks is enforced burn prohibition at State level.

Comment 44 of 238 - received on 04/27/2007 at 01:00 PM:

This is to express my grave concern over use of the Jim-Swan wetlands by motorized vehicles, particularly airboats. While Alaska is known for its marvelous variety of natural fauna and the protection of the dwindling remnants of a number of endangered or threatened species, the degradation perpetuated by man in a senseless search for thrills dramatically affects the good. The Department of Natural Resources will soon have no natural resources to protect! Alternative Five would give a last chance to helpless fowl to retain their peace in our environment, as well as giving other struggling species a last bit of freedom. Please give this your consideration.

Comment 45 of 238 - received on 04/27/2007 at 01:00 PM:

I'm disappointed in the direction the Management Actions & Alternatives that have been proposed for this area. Do we really need to set aside an area for people completely trash? Can we not develop this area for all to use and enjoy, to conserve. There are plenty of areas for motorized use without degrading this area as well - what of the people who live within earshot of this area. I request that you adopt Alternative 5 as proposed by the Knik River Watershed Group.

Comment 46 of 238 - received on 04/27/2007 at 01:48 PM:

To: Brandon McCutcheon, Plan Project Manager I live off Knik River Road so each morning I am blessed to have a view of the gorgeous Knik River and I was pleasantly surprised to find a photo of my husband and myself in our kayak on the river displayed on your website, so yes, we do use the KRPUA. I have many concerns about the proposed Alternates 1-4 because of their lack of foresight in balancing habitat protection and recreational use. The Jim-Swan Wetlands have been abused by motorcraft of all shapes and designs for many years now, each year the degradation of the surrounding area is compounded. My neighbors and I have watched the changes in the nesting Trumpeter Swans for many years now and it appears that their habitat is at a critical point. I do not feel that the proposed Alternates 1-4 address the issues at hand, and they obviously favor unlimited motorized use. Studies are available showing that frequent airboat/motorized vehicle use kills new vegetation, erodes the shorelines of lakes and creeks, changes the drainage damaging salmon streams and eroding the wetlands, this kind of damage is obvious in the photos on this website. In 2003 the Jim Creek/Knik River Cooperative Management Initiative was established "...to undertake a suite of community outreach, education and collaborative planning projects aimed at reducing on-going riparian, wetlands, and stream damage in a popular recreational watershed due to unregulated ATV use, dumping of trash and hazardous substances, and malicious fires". The damage is done, we now need to repair the damage, and stop all development of new trails until the trails management process is completed. One of the purposes KRPUA was established was to "protect and maintain migratory waterfowl nesting areas; habitats for moose, Dall sheep, and brown bear; and other fish and wildlife habitat so that traditional public uses of fish and wildlife populations may continue", again Alternates 1-4 do not provide for this. The Rippy Trail and Jim-Swan wetlands should be designated nonmotorized, protecting the primary Trumpeter Swans nesting areas. This area makes up only approximately 5% of the entire KRPUA. The only way to return the wetlands to their healthy origin is to completely stop motorized traffic in the area. I am not against maintaining existing trails outside of this area. As there are already hundreds of motorized trails weaving around the majority of the area I don't see where this compromise should in anyway be a problem. In reviewing the existing statutes 11 AAC 96.020 Generally Allowed Uses state: A.1.E. Travel that causes or contributes to water quality degradation, alteration of drainage systems, significant rutting, ground disturbance, or thermal erosion requires a permit or other written

authorization. Obviously KRPUA has been ignored and abused, now requiring critical intervention. Statute 11AAC 96.025 Conditions for Generally Allowed Uses are subject to the following conditions 1) activities employing wheeled or tracked vehicles must be conducted in a manner that MINIMIZES surface damage; 2) vehicles must use EXISTING ROADS AND TRAILS whenever possible; 3) activities MUST be conducted in a manner that MINIMIZES: A) disturbance of vegetation , soil stability, or drainage systems; B) changing the character of, polluting, or introducing silt and sediment into streams, lakes, ponds, water, holes, seeps, and marshes; and C) disturbance of fish and wildlife resources. Once again the ground work for protecting KRPUA from unregulated motorized degradation is already on the books, but Alternate 1-4 appear to ignore these statutes in favor of recreation. Another concern I have, along with my neighbors, is the allowing of "recreational shooting", all you have to do is drive down the Old Glenn Highway & Knik River Road to see the reality of "recreational shooting". Every sign is shot up and currently the refrigerator that was dumped at the carpool parking area near the Glenn Highway has been used as target practice. There is absolutely no reason to allow any recreational shooting anywhere near Knik River Road because of the many homes in the area. Recreational shooting belongs at a shooting range, NOT in our front and back yards! Is "recreational shooting" allowed in residential areas of Anchorage? NO, and for a very obvious reason. Because of these and other concerns I am urging you to support Alternative 5 developed by the Knik River Watershed Group, although it doesn't address all of my concerns it is a stable plan to make improvements (parking lot, bear-proof trash receptacles, toilets, educational platforms, etc), it also addresses the wetland damage, repair and protection of the Jim-Swan Wetlands, and allows for the trails management process to be conducted according to existing protocol. KRPUA is an amazing gem and should be protected for generations to enjoy, fish, walk, hike, ride, & explore it's amazing and diverse wildlife. It is your job to protect this area. Thank you for your time.

Comment 47 of 238 - received on 04/27/2007 at 01:51 PM:

Trumpeter swans are one of the most rewarding sites in our state. During their spring and fall migrations we make special trips out to areas to view them. There are lots of recreational areas in this state, and it's a lot easier for humans to figure out another place to go. For migrating and nesting animals, it's different. They don't have the resources that we have. Give the swans, the wetlands, the salmon streams, and other natural areas a BREAK! We need to live in harmony with a balance of human and wildlife use. I support Alternative 5 for this project.

Cherie Northon, Ph.D.

Comment 48 of 238 - received on 04/27/2007 at 01:53 PM:

I've been a long-time resident of this state and I've worked for both the USFWS and ADF&G. I have devoted much of my life to helping the wildlife of this state, and I feel stongly that we need to give the critters the benefit of the habitat. Don't degrade this area more. Allowing additional recreational access will impact too many aspects of the ecosystem. The Jim-Swan Wetlands need to be protected and I support Alternative 5 as a good compromise. Thomas J. Eley, Ph.D. Biologist

Comment 49 of 238 - received on 04/27/2007 at 09:55 PM:

All of the preliminary alternatives seem to prioritize motorized use over non-motorized use. I would prefer a better balance, with some areas where motorized use is welcome (though restricted to existing trails to protect soils, water quality and wildlife) and others where it is prohibited, to allow for quiet, non-motorized recreation and unimpacted wildlife habitat. I

would like to see some of the easily accessible areas protected from motorized use (not just the areas that take a week or more to get to when traveling on foot). Unit B is of special interest to me because I use it extensively, especially in winter when it is my primary training grounds for ultrarunning races. This past winter I spent many dozens of hours running hundreds (yes, really) of miles there--mainly on the Plumley-Maud, Burnt Butte and Rippy Trails--preparing to run the Susitna 100.

In addition I would like to see some areas where recreational shooting is prohibited, not just along the waterways (though I am very appreciative of the proposed restrictions there) but also in areas where people are likely to be traveling. As with motorized use, recreational shooting is appropriate in some areas of the Knik River Public Use Area, but specifying where the appropriate areas are and restricting it to those areas would improve the feel of the area for people who, like me, want to feel safe from stray bullets while walking, running, hiking, biking, skiing, four wheeling, etc. in our own neighborhood with family and friends.

Thank you for taking the time to read and record my comments. I appreciate the chance to give input on how this area, which feels like my backyard and is very important to me, will be managed.

Comment 50 of 238 - received on 04/28/2007 at 01:00 PM:

In general . . . Pardon my ignorance, but many of your names for trails and features are unfamiliar - they're not what we called them decades ago. For specific planning issues, accurate maps are needed showing not only your names for the features but details of the resource. Web pages maintained by ADNR and several other very dedicated entities have great photos of why we like this area and the very real threats to our continued enjoyment, but we don't know where they were taken. We have the GIS tools to accurately reference and convey the details needed to make decisions. Photos can be linked to exact locations. Trails can be displayed over aerial photographs, as can wetlands, creeks, salmon spawning areas, swan nesting areas, sheep lambing, prime lookouts, launches, mudholes and travesties - indeed, things we need to know to enhance our good times and become better stewards. I suggest ADNR provide GIS references and sufficiently detailed display for the KRPUA. Encourage users to submit GIS referenced photos, enabling ADNR to identify both good uses and areas/practices we need to improve. Trails planning and management critically depends on this. Unit B. Lakes This is an important or critical habitat area for birds, salmon, and sheep. The resource can be significantly damaged by some of the intense uses more tolerable for other management units. I strongly object to any expansion of ATV trails in this area or wetlands in other units. Extending Rippy Trail to make a loop is especially disturbing, as many wetlands will need to be crossed. There are other well-researched alternatives presented for this Unit that I support: The Butte Area Resident's Civic Organization and the Knik River Watershed Group separately present good ideas, concepts, and specific alternatives that preserve the resource and enhance user recreation. These two alternatives share an important concept - the resources and appropriate uses of this unit are significantly different from the other units: - The wetlands habitat is more fragile and can be irreparably damaged by increased motorized use in summer or spring - some damage has occurred and should be mitigated. - Use restrictions are needed to preserve migrant bird staging and nesting waterfowl, such as limiting time of access, horsepower, or approach distances to swan nests. - The Rippy Trail and wetlands are better managed as "The Quieter Side", emphasizing hiking, canoeing, bird watching, and camping during the critical spring and early summer. - Traditional access during hunting season can continue (the birds will be more plentiful if undisturbed during spring), but some means to mitigate vegetation damage is needed. - To a large extent, this area is conducive to more accessible quiet family outings in

all seasons with much less of the noise, speed, and danger associated with Unit 1.

Comment 51 of 238 - received on 04/28/2007 at 04:31 PM:

To protect this area the first thing needed is law enforcement of existing laws and regulations. This must be stepped up to the point where it becomes an immediate concern to the problem people who are presently engaging in misuse, and the high level of enforcement must be maintained until the present crop of despoilers is discouraged completely.

Motorized vehicles should be cut back, and Rippy Trail should be closed to wheeled units as well as all wetland areas.

The amount of habitat damage already inflicted requires immediate action to preserve and restore salmon spawning and scenic viewing areas.

Fifty plus years ago I hunted this area but would not consider firing a rifle in there now; there are too many careless people to allow firearms to be discharged in the heavier use areas, and when I hear a gunshot there, it spoils the whole visit as I become apprehensive based on what has been going on for all too long.

Do not make more trails until you have made restroom facilities and bear proof disposal for trash to serve those already existing; this should take priority over any more trails.

Years ago there was a project to plant spring willow cuttings in suitably selected areas to improve and restore moose and varying hare brouse. This should be considered along with repairing and enhancing habitat there.

Comment 52 of 238 - received on 04/29/2007 at 02:16 PM:

I would like to create a NON-MOTORIZED business for visitors to Alaska but, due to the existing motorized use of Non-motorized trails, sign destruction, and abuse of the existing area I am concerned. I respect the ability of others to use the area however, I would like to have the same tolerance to hike, bike, or use my horse and have the peace of nature available to my family and myself. How can I help to educate the populace, post more signs, or put posts into the highway 'non-motorized' path so that non-motorized traffic can 'safely' use it? I don't feel safe out there when at any time dirt-bikes or ORV may be tearing along it at high speed. What can I change about the path that fronts my property to make it and the rest of the path less attractive? What could the Butte Community do to help the police be more visible?

Comments on Management Action: 1. 2. & 3. Classify ' trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: access roads into KRPUA, trail/road for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational areas. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails.

1.& 2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for

repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4.DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisitions were not identified, nor was a need or use for such land described.

Comments on Actions Common to All Alternatives: to add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc. Comments on Preliminary Alternatives 1, 2, 3: DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the unrestricted access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for access trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail..

Other Comments: Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenbug Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area..

Comment 53 of 238 - received on 04/29/2007 at 02:31 PM:

I visit the Knik River area for recreational purposes including hiking, fishing, and bird watching. I would like to support Alternative 5 proposed by Audubon Alaska and the Knik River Watershed Group. I would like ADNR to protect critical fish and wildlife habitat in your management plan by restricting motorized vehicles in the Jim-Swan Wetlands area and on the Rippy Trail.

I find air boats obnoxious, and assume birds do as well. I wish they were not allowed at all, but if you feel they must be allowed in some areas to meet the goals of "multi-use", then please fully consider the restrictions described in Alternative 5.

Please confirm that you have received and read this comment from the public.

Comment 54 of 238 - received on 04/29/2007 at 03:23 PM:

The KRPUA is one of the greatest places to recreate in the State of Alaska! The largest drawback for the general public is the manner in which the recreation takes place. There is a large lawless nature to a majority of the recreation in the area. With burning cars, dynamite explosions, automatic gun fire, reckless use of snowmachines and ATV's of all kinds up and down salmon streams and swimming holes; makes it dangerous to say the least to recreate in the area!

What needs to happen in the KRPUA is to have enforcement of existing laws!

I support responsible recreation in the area; which includes environmental, social, and legal responsibility. The area must be preserved for use today and in the future. The area must be safe for the general public to bring their families and pets. The area must be enforced!

A general access point should be made at the pavilion; with access to the area being limited to this point only. It should include dumpsters, restrooms, picnic tables, a boat launch area @ Jim Creek and parking for large vehicles with trailers. This should be the only area to launch motor boats of any kind. This area should be manned with a representative from DNR that has authority to write tickets and levy fines for illegal and inappropriate behavior within the KRPUA. This person should be able to call in re-enforcements on an as needed basis to keep the peace within the KRPUA.

Along those lines, there needs to be designated shooting areas east of Jim Creek, and STEEP fines for those who are in violation. It should be illegal to burn cars in the area and ridiculous fines should be assigned to all who do! With a few examples made out of people who find it necessary to burn vehicles in the area it will not take long for others to think twice about doing it. I'm talking \$10,000.00 or more for this violation! The laws should have teeth or they will not be effective!

The area should remain open to access for motorized vehicles entering from the pavilion location. Bridges should be constructed to protect habitat and streams and to make it safe for motorized vehicles to cross salmon streams while people are fishing. Remember, this was turned into an open public use area, and needs to be safe for ALL that come to recreate; not just those in the largest vehicle. This means for hikers, campers, equestrians and anyone else that comes to recreate in their own way!

Please make the necessary changes to keep it open for use and safe for all those that use the area. Please keep access limited to one location for ease of enforcement, and please provide the necessary facilities for people to clean up after themselves.

Thank You, M. Barbee

Comment 55 of 238 - received on 04/29/2007 at 04:33 PM:

Dear folks at DNR:

I think it is critical to protect the Jim-Swan Wetlands. I am very concerned that unless the proper management is adopted the area will continue to lose valuable habitat for trumpeter swans and other waterfowl to nest and raise their young. Airboats and ATV can be deadly to swans and waterfowl and their nesting areas.

Continued use by airboats and jet skis without restriction and exempting the Rippy Trail and a planned loop extension from the trail management and environmental analysis will be detrimental to the area.

I have just reviewed the new proposed Alternative 5 by the Knik River Organization, and urge

you to adopt this Alternative. I think it will be the best course of action.

Thank you.

- Ruth Wood

Comment 56 of 238 - received on 04/29/2007 at 05:49 PM:

I would like to see trails open for various uses, but I disagree with multi-use. Some trails should be designated for motorized use, some trails for horseback-riding, some trails for mountain biking, and some trails for walking/hiking. It is far too dangerous to mix these activities on the same trails. Habitat conservation is also very important in trails designations. Low impact vs. high impact need to be considered when determining which activities are appropriate in what areas.

Comment 57 of 238 - received on 04/30/2007 at 06:42 AM:

Dear Folks,

I wish to comment on the Jim-Swan Wetlands plan.

I am going on my 30th year of Alaska residency. Over the years, I have fished, hunted and recreated all over this great state.

I have a very distinct recollection of my first trip to the Jim Lake area. It was a Labor Day weekend. My spouse and I, along with another family, took our young children canoeing in the lakes and portaged over into Jim Creek for further exploration. It was a lovely, clear, crisp fall day, with beautiful vistas at every angle, rich in birdlife. Our experience was only marred by passing airboats, and the vast amount of garbage and abandoned cars along the access and its terminus.

This jewel of an area needs protection. I would suggest protection by the State of Alaska to forestall any further degradation of the area by adopting the new Alternative Five to restrict motorized vehicles in the wetlands.

Drive in some deep pilings. Put in rumble strips. Stop the motorized madness that is degrading and destroying the fragile tundra environment. Allow for motorized access in the winter ONLY, with a DNR employee checking onsite to determine if the ground is properly frozen and has adequate snowcover to allow motorized recreation.

This plan CAN work; motorized and non-motorized interests have successfully intertwined at Eklutna Lake, Turnagain Pass, and Glen Alps. It just takes a little education and enforcement. When folks KNOW that there are rules, they will obey them. Remember the RAMBO rest stop? although there are still some issues at Knik River, the situation has vastly improved along the Knik River.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Jim-Swan Lake Wetlands.

Sincerely,

April J. Cook

Comment 58 of 238 - received on 04/30/2007 at 08:47 AM:

I appreciate the efforts that have gone into the development of the draft Management Plan for the Knik River Public Use Area, but I do not think adequate attention has been given to some large issues.

General Comments:

1. The legislation for the KRPUA states that the commissioner shall identify wetland areas within the Knik River Public Use Area and provide for protection and use of the wetland areas in the management plan. The draft management actions address impacts to fish and wildlife critical habitat and wetlands as related to and as impacted by trails. This is a good step, but I don't see other significant references in the management actions that address the protection and use of wetlands- or other habitat. The legislation clearly indicates that public use, public enjoyment of fish and wildlife resources, and habitat protection to sustain the resources are all important priorities. I think the Preliminary Management Actions and Actions Common to All Alternatives should more clearly address all of the goals of the legislation.

I recommended at least one additional section under management actions, such as:

5. The Department will address the protection and use of wetlands and other waterbodies within the KRPUA by identifying the wetland/waterbody acres within the area and prioritizing protection needs based on susceptibility to impacts from all uses. This will be accomplished by working with state, federal and local resource agencies and others with knowledge of the wetlands and the values they provide to the KRPUA and its users.

2. Develop trails management guidelines for the entire KRPUA that address: motorized and non-motorized uses, impacts and conflicts; sensitive wetlands, waterbody and upland habitats; access within the KRPUA and to/from outside lands. Specific trails management actions, recommendations and alternatives should then be aligned with the trails management guidelines. The Butte Area Residents Community Organization has made very specific recommendations that point to the need for an overall planning and management scheme for trails, access and ORVs. 260,000 acres needs large scale guidelines or goals derived from the legislation that can then house specific management actions to address those goals.

3. Throughout the KRPUA, develop, provide for/maintain- prioritized by degree of use:

restrooms and/or outhouses, adequate parking/trailheads for existing areas, safe, designated trails, trailheads and boat launches free of shooting threats.

Comments specific to Unit B:

I would like to see the alternatives reflect the strong concerns from the community about safety, habitat protection, and trash and noise.

" DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES THAT FURTHER RESTRICT SHOOTING IN THIS HIGHLY USED AREA. I believe the alternatives should range from current management to no shooting within a larger area- a half mile, or more, of developed facilities, trails (including boating trails), any other areas where shooting poses a potential threat to public safety. The Mud-Jim lakes access and user areas are dangerous. The three alternatives in the preliminary alternatives are far too similar to each other to be called alternatives.

" Limit motorized uses as outlined in Alternative 5 proposed by the Knik River Watershed Group-unless a multi-agency assessment of resources threats indicates that unrestricted motorized uses-on land or water- will not significantly degrade habitat, decrease nesting success, or have other deleterious environmental effects.

I also would like to see strong consideration given to the comments submitted by both the Knik River Watershed Group and the Butte Area Residents Community Organization. Both groups have worked hard to identify issues of concern to many of us who live near and recreate in the KRPUA.

Thank you for considering my comments. Lynn Fuller Box 1814 Palmer, AK 99645

Comment 59 of 238 - received on 04/30/2007 at 09:26 AM:

Please support the practical alternative - the BARCO alternative. What is currently happening in the Knik River Valley is a disgrace to the land and to the people of Alaska.

Comment 60 of 238 - received on 04/30/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. If fees are collected for camping around the Pavilion parking lot, request an expansion of the area to accept RV and trailer camping separate from the regular parking lot. Allow and provide fire rings for camping. While support non motorized trails having them in the same area of ATV traffic will possibly set up these trails for failure. Need lots of signage and ways to insure trail does not cross ATV trails. 2. Insure funding remains for security of the parking and camping area. All access is capable to be blocked to ATV access. 3. Insure access and use of ATVs for hunting. Retrieval of game is allowed with ATVs in all units. Parking of ATVs in the act of hunting more than 100 ft off the trail is allowed. 4. Insure other access with ATV are worked and provide parking for vehicles.

Comment 61 of 238 - received on 04/30/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Please protect habitat for the Trumpeter Swans and all of the other wildlife species by restricting motorized vehicles in the Jim-Swan Wetlands area and on the Rippy Trail. I have spent time in this area - and it is incredibly beautiful. As Alaska is growing and putting pressure on wildlife habitat, so grows the need to protect this habitat for our migratory and resident species so all of us can continue to enjoy them. Please protect this habitat for future generations to enjoy.

Comment 62 of 238 - received on 04/30/2007 at 01:00 PM:

My review of the 3/23/07 document outlining Preliminary Management Actions & Actions Common to all Alternatives plus hearings and other reports brings me to the following comments. For the most part, DNR has set forth in "Alternative 1 (Current Management)" a reasonable plan. The major key to Alternative 1 working is an adequate trooper presence to insure enforcement of all applicable existing statutes, regulations, and policies as well as regulations and policies developed through the Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan. Trooper presence during all high use periods is a must. The Alternative 1 outline states, "the Knik River Public Use Area will be managed consistent with all applicable existing statutes, regulations, and policies as well as regulations and policies developed through the Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan." If the previous statement from Alternative 1 is adequately enforced, the concerns of most reasonable people should be met. With adequate trooper presence and enforcement as stated above, no additional restrictions on motorized use is needed. By enforcement of "all applicable existing statutes, regulations, . . . etc." there need be no restriction on firearms for those legally hunting and with license & harvest tickets (when needed) on their person. Concerns about recreational shooting on portions of the Lower Knik Flats Unit A have merit and may need to be addressed for appropriate regulations and policies and if adopted, enforced. Current statutes, regulations

and policies as well as regulations and policies developed through the Knik River Public Use Area Plan, as outlined in Alternative 1, are adequate when enforced. Concern exists regarding private land that currently has public use. This land is on the north side of the old Knik River bridge. DNR should purchase this parcel of private land to permit continued future use as public land. Other alternatives state concern about swans. Many people have indicated to me that it is very rare for more than one pair of swans to nest on any given lake. It would appear that at least one nesting pair of swans occupy each lake. Since a problem does not appear to exist, restrictions should not be needed. Funds for support of trooper enforcement should come from state funding. User fees would be extremely difficult to fairly administer. Access to the area comes from many places. A good number of people live within the area. In some cases whole families use the area. This is especially true of families living within the area. For this public area, I just think access fees would be very inappropriate. My thanks for your time & consideration.

Comment 63 of 238 - received on 04/30/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Friends of Mat-Su has the following comments for your consideration: - DNR should post this public notice on the State DNR webpage along with the other DNR public notices. - DNR should conduct a thorough inventory of the area's resources prior to engaging the public in a process for creating management plans. For example, the Jim-Swan wetlands provide critical habitat for wildlife, so DNR may need to designate habitat protection as a primary consideration for this area while promoting compatible recreational activities that support the natural values of the Jim-Swan area. Although this is a challenging endeavor it is important that the policy makers and the public have accurate information about this area before the public are asked to provide comments. However, Friends of Mat-Su does offer the following comments based on preliminary studies and local knowledge: - Rippy trail should be designated as a single-track nonmotorized trail subject to rerouting or seasonal closure to avoid Trumpeter Swan nest sites. - Consider opening Jim-Swan wetlands to multiple use recreation from August 1 through April 15, with snowmachining restricted during times of inadequate snow cover. The Jim-Swan wetlands, including waterways, should be closed to motorized recreation from April 16 through July 31 to protect wildlife and habitat. - No new trails should be created or expanded until the trails management process is complete. Important habitats, such as salmon streams, wetlands and dunes, should be closed until restoration; revegetation, trails management process and environmental analysis are complete. - Noise impacts on local neighborhoods from shooting, motor-cross activities along the Knik River and coastal dunes should be mitigated with a combination of multiple use and enforceable quiet time regulations. - Consider timesharing designations for multiple uses so that horseback riders, mountain bikers, and hikers may enjoy the area safely while motorized users have access on alternate days. - Implement a sustainable trail plan that would accommodate the following: - Designate specific stream crossings and bridging - Close motorcross trails with the most damaged vegetation and provide for restoration efforts and protect the remaining mature trees. - Establish areas where shooting is prohibited to ensure the safety and quality of life for local residents and trail users and to prevent lead pollution of the Knik River, streams and wetlands. Recreational shooting should be prohibited within ¼ mile of any waterway. - Establish a designated public outdoor shooting area. Friends of Mat-Su is pleased that a plan is being developed to manage this heavily used area in the Mat Su borough. We feel that it is important for both motorized users and non-motorized users to discuss the particulars of how this area should be managed so that fair representation occurs and all voices are heard. Thank you for your efforts and we look forward to participating in the next phase of the planning process.

Comment 64 of 238 - received on 04/30/2007 at 01:00 PM:

These comments are a consensus of the ATV Club members and the leadership. All members as individual users of the area have been encouraged to send their own comments on the Alternatives provided. The Knik River is an area used by many groups. Its proximity to the largest center of population in the state makes it an important, if not the main, recreation center for many ATV users in the area. This use will increase as recreational ATV riding continues its' course as the fastest growing recreational use of public land nationally. And it is growing fastest as a family oriented recreational pursuit. It is also used by many of the military people stationed here, single soldiers as well as families, as the only place they know to ride their ATVs. With the creation of the Knik River Public Use Area we see a tremendous opportunity to provide all ATVers with a quality recreational riding experience as well as the means to educate all with the rules of responsible conduct on all State lands. The growing sport of recreational ATV riding, the largest existing user group of the area, differs from other utilitarian uses of ATVs in Alaska. This recreational user group includes a large growing segment of older people and also the physically handicapped who cannot access these areas any other way. Where the utilitarian rider uses the ATV as a tool to accomplish another activity (i.e. hunting, fishing, birding, camping etc.), the recreational rider's main goal is to ride for the sake of riding. This includes taking in the views available from the trails, animal watching and other activities but the main focus is using the ATV and most time is spent doing that. Seldom does a ride start with a specific destination in mind but a general direction or type of riding one wants to do. Loop trails or multiple trails make for better, more interesting rides for the user as well as decreasing the total impact on individual trails. Two trails through an area will result in half the impact on each trail and improve traffic flow, making for safer riding. Three trails helps even more. Trail riding in varying terrain on trails of varying difficulty and riding on the flats are both important to the recreational rider. The flats areas are very important as a way for new riders to learn to ride and the capabilities of their ATV. The whole of the KRPUA is ideal for recreational ATV riding and the more utilitarian ATV user. In general, the ATV Club is pleased with the progress of the planning effort to this point. We are looking forward to working with the Planning Group over the remainder of the process, and stand ready to assist the Management Team in any way we can. Only a few items prevent us from declaring across the board support for Alternative 2 for all areas and Alternative 3 for the Fees section. These items have been referenced below for your review. The "Actions Common to all Alternatives", with the changes referenced below, are key to management of the area. We fully support placing the amended Actions as violations as soon as possible, we do not see a need to wait until the whole plan is approved in 2008 to formalize and start enforcing these as violations. Let's get started making the area better now!

CHANGES REQUESTED AND CLARIFICATIONS NEEDED Preliminary Management Actions and Actions Common to all Alternatives We generally support the "PRELIMINARY MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AND ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES" as set out in the Alternatives document. There are some suggested specific changes described below but see these actions as a good start to reining in the extreme behavior we all want to stop.

Management Actions First Para We submit that the inclusion of "close" in "Through this process, trails may be developed, designated, re-routed, or closed by the Department." is against the intent and letter of the statute (per Sec 41.23.200(d) (1)). This direction in the statute applies to the whole of the KRPUA, and is applicable to all established sub-units. While we are looking forward to working with the Management team to improve trails we will not support closing any existing trail. If it is deemed that a specific trail is causing a problem, repairing or slight rerouting of the trail can and should be the remedial action. Sec. 3. Second

Bullet Add "significantly" between trails and impacting. This would put this management action in line with the Generally Allowed Uses. Sec. 3. Third Bullet Again, remove the "close" provision. Sec. 3. Add new Para Take aggressive action to acquire land required to maintain access to the KRPUA from the Knik River bridge area and acquire the lands within the KRPUA scheduled to be conveyed to the Eklutna Native Corporation. Acquiring these parcels would maintain the cohesiveness of and access to the area.

Actions Common to All Areas Third Para; Change "Vehicle use off of existing trails in vegetated areas is prohibited. This does not apply to units or areas designated to allow these activities through the KRPUA Management Plan." to new Para "Generally Allowed Uses on State Lands will remain in effect for all areas unless specifically waived for a designated area." The Generally Allowed Uses provides adequate protection for the land and maintains one base set of standards for users on State owned/controlled lands they may use. The education given users of the KRPUA would then apply to other DNR controlled lands. Add Para: "Any lands acquired by the State of Alaska within the boundaries of the KRPUA must have no covenants more restrictive than the "Generally Allowed Uses." This is needed to preclude piecemeal management plans/restrictions on small areas within the area.

SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT AREAS Unit A - Lower Knik River Flats We support Alternative 2 for this area with the following changes; A. We support the ban on recreational shooting for this area. However we stress that a safe alternative area for legitimate recreational shooters must be identified and created within the KRPUA. We feel that the safest shooting area would be on the north side of Maude Road between Mud and Jim Lake. This area would be more accessible to this user group, more easily regulated and with one road access be more readily patrolled and enforced by State Troopers in any type of vehicle. B. Clarification on the 100 foot buffer for the vegetated areas along Jim Creek is needed. Some of RST 17 comes within this area, we feel the restriction on new trails in this buffer is sufficient. C. We feel that the creation of a new non-motorized trail from the Pavilion to the flats is within the scope of the KRPUA objectives. We do strongly recommend that it be placed between the existing motorized RST 17 and Envy trail to keep motorized and non-motorized users semi-isolated from each other and keep signage costs down.

Unit B - Lakes We support Alternative 2 for this area with the following changes; A. We enthusiastically support the development and maintenance of the Rippy Trail as a multiple, non-motorized and motorized, use access to the upper Knik valley. In light of the seasonal flooding along the Knik River flats discounting that route as a certainty, another access route is sorely needed for safely reaching users in the upper valley in emergency situations as well as allowing in-holders sure year-around access to their homes and property. B. The suggested restriction on motorized travel within 300 feet of swan nests should be reconsidered and determined if it is required by any State or Federal statute. As a minimum this should be amended to allow continued use of the established trails per Sec 41.23.200(d) (1) of the statute. We recommend that signs warning users of the proximity of the nests be placed on the trails where they approach active nests. This would allow all users the chance to observe the swans, even the people who cannot travel that far on foot. C. We support banning recreational shooting within ¼ mile of facilities as long as this rule does not interfere with the establishment of a shooting area between the lakes as suggested before.

Units C, F, G and H - General Upper Knik Valley We support Alternative 2 for these areas with the following changes; A. Adding "Uses in accordance with the Generally Allowed Uses will be allowed" B. We would like to see specific allowance for motorized use on non-vegetated areas be added. The rock flats and gravel moraine in this area make the

possible designation of specified trails or routes difficult to identify as well as enforce while travel on them has no ecological impact.

Unit E - Upper Friday Alpine We support Alternative 2 for this area with the following changes; A. Adding "Uses in accordance with the Generally Allowed Uses will be allowed"

FEES We would not object to the minimum fee structure if the following policies are in place; A. DNR needs to ensure that all of the fees collected are used to maintain the facilities within the KRPUA. B. Fee structure would allow family season pass holders to use more than one specific vehicle and allow all family members to use individual OHVs within the area. Many families use this area to recreate, we feel that encouraging family activities is a beneficial use of the area to be made easier, not more expensive. C. Any fee structure should evenly tax all area user groups. We cannot approve of a fee plan that is to support facilities and trail building for all user groups when the fees are paid by a few user groups. D. Any fee structure needs to consider the diversity of the access means and access points. There are many access points into the area, application of a fee structure would need to specifically address this fact to insure that all users are in fact complying with the fee structure. E. Users already paying snowmobile/ATV or boat registrations should be exempt as they already pay fees to use public resources.

Again, we thank the Planning Group for allowing our comment on these Alternatives. We look forward to seeing the Draft Plan emerge from this process and move forward to successful adoption as the Final Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan. The ATV Club has been working at improving the Knik River Area since our inception and the Club and individual members are ready to start working with DNR to make it better.

Comment 65 of 238 - received on 04/30/2007 at 01:00 PM:

BARCO Substitutes for DNR Management Actions 1) DEVELOP MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH PRIME CONSIDERATION HOW ANY PROPOSED ACTION WOULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT RESIDENTS regarding traffic, noise, dust, air quality and personal safety and how to mitigate such impact. 2) DEVELOP A TIME-SHARE SCHEDULE FOR MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION. Existing commercial airboat tour operators and aircraft should be exempted from the limitation. Existing ATV guided tours may be exempted on a permit basis. During the trapping and hunting seasons, legally licensed hunters and trappers shall be allowed motorized access. This will benefit different users to recreate without conflict, give respite to wildlife, and give residents and quiet users equal time to enjoy their homes and yards without nuisance noise from power boats, personal watercraft and ORVs and high-use traffic in their neighborhoods. 3) SEPARATE MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED ACCESS POINTS: Centralize Motorized Access: a) from RS 2477 (Knik Glacier Trail/Jim Creek Trail) trail head and parking lot on State of Alaska Land. b) Public Access to Upper Knik River from South Knik River to be determined; Private Access for residents only onto motorized trails if their private property adjoins KRPUA is allowed. Multi-Use Access: From Pavilion Parking Lot for access to Jim Creek Fishing on Sexton Trail. Motorized access to terminate in existing DNR parking lot uphill from Jim Creek Fishing area. Non-motorized access for campers, hikers, horses, bikers etc to Jim Creek Fishing and beyond. Non-motorized Access: a) from Knik River/Bodenburg Creek Access to protect fish and waterfowl habitat at Bodenburg Creek; to protect adjoining private lands from ongoing trespass, and to allow residents and visitors the enjoyment of quiet recreational endeavors near our homes. b) from Jim Lake Parking Lot to Rippy Trail and Wetlands c) Allow access for motorized handicapped persons and non-handicapped companion in

non-motorized areas by permit. 4) CRITICAL HABITAT AREAS SHOULD BE CREATED to include lakes, wetlands, alpine transition zones and sand dunes, to prevent further destruction. Restoration/revegetation plans should be established and implemented for these areas. The Jim - Swan wetlands area and adjacent Rippy Trail should be made a non-motorized area, with a possible relaxation of restrictions during hunting /trapping seasons if daily enforcement is in place. During these times, motorized use should be limited to designated trails and access points. This area has been specifically recommended for special protection by numerous groups, agencies and studies at least since the 1981 USF&W Knik Arm Wetlands Study. 5) ANY LAND ACQUISITION FOR INCLUSION TO THE KNIK RIVER PUBLIC USE AREA will require a public process regarding cost for management, facilities and law enforcement and available funding. Any land acquisition from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough will require a full public process regarding preferences of local residents for that parcel and proposed management actions to ensure a variety of recreational activities for the benefit of residents, and particularly the Youth of the Community of Butte; and the cost of such a land transaction to the State of Alaska and the income to be derived by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough from the sale of these lands. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough shall not "give away" borough-owned assets until the Community of Butte can be assured that they be managed for the benefit of the community. 6) Establish fines for bailable offenses including the intentional or unintentional contamination of land and waters by lead, automotive fluids and other hazardous materials; cutting life trees; rutting and destroying vegetation; contributing to the erosion of river, lake and stream banks; disturbing or harassing wildlife including waterfowl.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES TO DNR ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL UNITS

Limit off-road vehicles to established and hardened trails. Prohibit snow-machine "water skippers" from operating in Knik River or any of its tributaries. Establish bailable offense for this activity for disturbing the peace of residents at any hour. Oppose rescinding any existing rules or other regulatory action in the entire KRPUA which protect streams, fish and wildlife habitat, etc., or are designed to prevent rutting of trails and disturbing vegetation. Do not allow existing destructive uses to continue or expand. Restrict curb weight to 1,000 lb for highway and off-road vehicles until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging in all units is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large-vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES BY MANAGEMENT UNIT

UNIT A. Lower Knik Flats INTENT: Change language to read: "The intent is to encourage a wide variety of recreational uses including nonmotorized and motorized uses as described in HB307. DNR recognizes the high value of this area for quality multiple use recreation. DNR shall not manage any unit as a motor park, moto-cross or mudbog venue but provide a high quality experience for responsible ORV travelers and sightseers. The management goal includes to separate nonmotorized from motorized uses by creating specially hardened trails for motorized and equine users to lessen impact on the environment and to create safe conditions for all uses. To further this goal, multiple access points will be created which separate motorized and nonmotorized users and which provide safety and quiet for adjacent property owners. DNR shall mitigate high-use multiple use recreation for the benefit of residents and responsible motorized and quiet users. Mitigation measures to include speed limits, speed bumps, controlled access and a highly visible law enforcement presence. Indestructible sanitation facilities and camping area style trash containers shall be placed as

soon as possible to protect the health of the public. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Discharge of Firearms: "Recreational discharge of firearms will be prohibited in this entire unit to protect human safety and to prevent pollution of lead from skeet targets and ammunition into the waters of Knik River Valley. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Rescinding of Regulations including Remedies for well documented current Damage in this unit: 1) No existing regulations will be rescinded. All regulations will be developed in compliance with existing laws and regulations, including but not restricted to 11AAC 96.020 (a)(1)(D)(E), 11 AAC 96.025 (1)(2)(3)(A-C) as well as any and all Alaska Statutes which protect fish, game and waterfowl and its habitat. 2) Repair rutted trails and vegetation in forests, wetlands and lowlands. Harden where appropriate. Repair stream banks. 3) Revegetate Dunes. Dunes protect Butte and Palmer from Knik River changing course. 4) Allow unrestricted vehicle curb weight only for travel on Sexton Trail from Pavilion Parking Lot to DNR Parking Lot on the uplands prior to Jim Creek Flats and on Jim Creek Trail to existing DNR parking lot, or parking lot to be established on uplands in forest prior to approaching the Flats. Both Jim Creek Trail (aka RS2477, Knik Glacier Trail) and Sexton Trail should be hardened with speed bumps added for the safety of the public. 5) Restrict curb weight of highway and off-road vehicles to 1,000 lb curb weight until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging from UNIT A to KNIK GLACIER is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit. 6) Prohibit the use of trees for extricating "winching" vehicles out of mud or water. 7) Recommend and agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3 regarding 100' stream buffer protection on all water ways. NEW Alternative 4 regarding utilization of Mat-Su Borough Pavilion Parcel. In addition to equalize the number of motorized and non-motorized trails on this parcel, Mat-Su Borough shall utilize a large portion this parcel for community recreational purposes, including a community park, BMX park, multi-age playground, soccer fields, volleyball and tennis venues to give young adults and families, "something to do." A public campground should be established there as well. The Pavilion Parking Area was built by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough. The picnic pavilion at the site was subsequently destroyed by motorized users. The Pavilion Parking Area should be designated access for non-motorized users. Two non-motorized trails should be designated to accommodate different users, such as for hikers, bikers and horses. A separated parking lot on the west side of the "Pavilion" should allow cars to travel the Sexton Trail to Jim Creek. In addition, An ATV trail should be developed and designated to allow ATV access from the "Pavilion" parking lot to Jim Creek. Residents should be allowed planning participation on this Mat-Su Borough parcel. All motorized access to the entire area should be from the trail head for the RS2477 Knik Glacier Trail (aka Jim Creek Trail) on State of Alaska Land to minimize adverse impact to residents from high traffic, noise, dust and air pollution. Sanitary facilities will be developed and may be shared by users of both the Pavilion and RS2477 parking areas. Separate sanitary facilities may be developed for a public camp ground on the Pavilion parcel. NEW Alternative 4 regarding Manmade Lake: "No Motorized use" at Manmade Lake except for parking access for picnics, swimming and other non-motorized activities. The bottom of Manmade Lake should be dredged and cleaned from an accumulation of glass, metal and lead and restored to its original purpose as a community "swimming hole."

UNIT B. Lakes - Unit B should be renamed to read "Lakes and Wetlands." INTENT language should be changed to read: Provide for moderate density quiet use and limited motorized use for all seasons for the protection of water fowl in the summer and moose and sheep in the winter. The area in this unit was recommended as Critical Habitat in previous studies.

Designate and manage this area as Critical Habitat. Motor size for boats in this unit and Jim Creek shall be restricted to 3 HP to protect nesting and rearing waterfowl including trumpeter swans in all lakes of the unit. No motorized recreational vehicle use in lakes and wetlands area during the summer. No power boats, including airboats, in lakes and wetlands. Establish snowmachine corridor in the winter. NEW BARCO Alternative 5 regarding Rippy Trail; Rippy Trail to remain designated non-motorized in its entirety. No Loop Trail. Rippy Trail was established by and for non-motorized use by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough in the 1980s. Motorized users have destroyed one salmon stream and several springs feeding the wetlands and lakes and, because of their large numbers, have created sanitary issues. A "Loop Trail" would cut into an established wild life corridor which extends from the Alpine environment west to the Knik River-Matanuska River Delta and connects with the Palmer Hay Flats NEW Alternative 5 for the entire unit: Use of any waterbody with a motorized watercraft is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Approaching within 1500 feet of an active Trumpeter Swan nest on land or water is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Legal hunting is allowed; however, swans gathering on the lakes in preparation of their fall migration may not be approached within 500 feet either on land or on the waters they are gathering in. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Mud Lake. In addition, construction of a boat launch/ramp at Mud Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Jim Lake. In addition, construction of a canoe launch at Jim Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. NEW Alternative 5 to prohibit recreational shooting at Jim Lake in order to protect public safety and preventing disturbance of nesting/rearing waterfowl. Legal hunting is allowed after Swan fall migration.

UNIT C - Upper Knik Flats NEW Alternative 3: No vehicles more than 1000 lbs curb weight until an improved road for access is developed to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids.

UNIT D - Upper Jim Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT E - Upper Friday Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT F - Grasshopper Valley Agree with DNR Alternatives 2, with the exception that no additional trails be developed.

UNIT G - Glacier Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. In Addition: NEW ALTERNATIVE 3 regarding future development: Recommend that the area past the Knik Glacier Lake if that is within the PUA be made a non-motorized area, except for aircraft. At this time no other motorized vehicles can generally access it (except if transported by helicopter or other air transportation). However, as the glacier recedes, motorized access may be possible, with deleterious effects to the wildlife and environment. At present this area is almost pristine, with some aircraft landing sites and virtually no other tracks, litter etc. Taking a non-motorized (except for aircraft) stance at this time, while having no effect on present usage, would protect the area against possible future abuses. As has been seen throughout the accessible PUA, any place an ORV can get, someone will take one, and many will not be cognizant of possible environmental damage.

UNIT H - Metal Creek Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. NEW Alternative 3: Prohibit vehicles to travel through Metal Creek in order to prevent pollution of the waters of Metal Creek and Knik River from automotive fluids while traveling through the water and to prevent abandonment of vehicles in the waterways of the Knik River.

FEES Agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3, Point 1 regarding the collection of fees. In addition, amount of fees charged should be based on cost of management, law enforcement and facilities to be determined as the management plan is developed.

Comment 66 of 238 - received on 04/30/2007 at 03:03 PM:

for my 53 years of residency within 10 miles of the Knik River, I used that area for hiking, canoeing, ice fishing, X/C skiing, dog walking, and playing.

My three daughters all stayed in this area to raise their five children, who have been forced to find other places in the Matanuska Valley to recreate. We do not feel safe in that area. It is sickening and appalling to see the destruction. I respect the land and the residents of Knik River Valley. I ask you to do the same.

Helen Woodings

Comment 67 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. Do not punish everyone for the actions of a few idiots. 2. See above. 3. See above. User fees would be impossible due to multiple access routes. I do not believe there are any "Trumpeters" on the Knik, Whistling Swans are common everywhere. 4. Education - Education - Education! If you teach your kids to be responsible citizens, if you know & care where and what they are doing - we would not have any problems. Plus we need enforcement of laws already on the books.

Comment 68 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. I would like to see NO user fees. Maybe have a little more cops to stop the trash and car burning. 2. Make a shooting area around Mud & Jim Lakes. 3. There should be no regulated motorized areas, as this is what most people come here to do. 4. This area should have new trails built to open this area for family outings. As this is a great area with lots of room to bring people.

Comment 69 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

3. Alternative 1 is the only acceptable one printed however I have 3 issues: 1) I don't think shooting should be allowed in Unit A, all others should be open to hunting or shooting. 2) There should be no restrictions on motorized vehicles that are more restrictive than the state's current regs. 3) Exemption for motorized access if a swan does build a nest within 300 feet of a trail or waterway.

Comment 70 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

2. We should be able to get off of trails in a vegetated area! 4. No restrictions on trails or water channels from the Pavilion to Knik Glacier!

Comment 71 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

First off I would like to thank you all for all the work & time you have put in to help keep this area open to everyone. Thank you. Alternative 1 is a great start, with few clarifications would be a fair and reasonable plan. One would be to leave the general allowed uses as it is & not limit. And I don't know of any problem with harrassing swans of disturbing nest sites, but if there is there shouldn't be any restrictions on the trails or water way channels. If a nest is within them. Also I do not want to see any restrictions on shooting, I know everyone has to be safe for that to work, but I believe the ones that aren't won't follow the laws either. If there was a shooting area I believe the best location would be at the end of Maud Road at the lakes toward the mountains.

Comment 72 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Leave access to all type vehicles no restriction. Continue to enforce rules as appropriate. Let us keep our freedom as much as possible.

Comment 73 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. No limitations on distance from swans. 4. Do not regulate off road or trail uses for ATVs or four x trucks / extend shooting areas in a safe factor / make designated trails around private lands or through / no motorized use on Manmade Lake.

Comment 74 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

3. Try to keep a main pathway or trail that ATVs or four wheel drives can get to these upper Knik River use areas, the units in the upper Knik Glacier area and above, C, E, H & F. 4. Also have areas on the lower units that a person can do some shooting and use fireworks in the summer time and winter also.

Comment 75 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

2. Stop only the parties and car burning & trash dumping and every thing will be fine. 4. Prove to us that all user fees are going to our trail system and that will be fine. A safer shooting range (area) needs to happen. Limiting motorized use needs to be stopped. We should be able to go within 100-300 ft of vegetation.

Comment 76 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

TARGET SHOOTING: The target shooting area proposed in Alternative 2 is not a safe location. Trails nearby would not be safe as there is no approved back stop at this location. People will still be shooting across the river and the "noise" of the gunfire will continue to upset residences in the vicinity. The area around the Jim and Mud Lakes is an ideal location. The current target area is .06 of a mile from both lakes, with a mountain for a back stop. This area has no residences. Enforcement would be able to apprehend offenders because there is only one direct route to and from this area. State approved targets and shell casing collection should be enforced. **TRUMPETER SWANS:** Trumpeter Swans should not be protected with a 300 foot buffer which supersedes the current Fish and Game laws that protects all wildlife from harassment. Nesting Swans along highways are not affected by highway traffic, and return yearly. **GENERALLY ALLOWED USES:** All Alternatives should have the protection of the Generally Allowed Uses Statute to protect the vegetated areas. **MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED TRAILS:** Trails that are currently multiuse trails should not become closed for non-motorized use. There should not be "Time Sharing" on the trails throughout the KRPUA. **FEES:** Fees would be impossible to collect as there are many access routes. Many areas of the State are under a fee system and that only leads to regulations that are hard to enforce. **MANMADE LAKE:** Waters of Manmade Lake shall remain closed to motorized use during ice free periods to protect the lake and its users. Sanitary facilities should be made available and in a viewable location to protect them from vandalism. **TRASH COLLECTION:** "Free to Dump Fee" coupons and "State marked bags" should be available at the local facility when people want to clean up a site when not in a clean up program. Make a limit on the amount of bags could be issued per person to eliminate personal household trash. **RIPPY TRAIL:** Should the Knik River change course and destroy the existing trail then the Rippy Trail should be connected with EIN 97 to protect travel on the RS2477. **CAMPING FACILITIES:** Camping facilities should be constructed at the Jim and Mud Lakes and accessible with highway vehicles.

Comment 77 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Unit A: Lower Knik Flats - Alternative 1, Paragraph 2: The State and Borough should work to

survey and plat the Sexton Trail and Trail of Envy leading from the Sullivan Parking Lot. This should be #1 priority within this Alternative. Any other trails created within this area should also be surveyed and platted. Trails already dedicated to multiuse should not become a non-motorized trail. There shall be no Time Sharing on the trails throughout the KRPUA. - Alternative 1, Paragraph 3: The parking facility on Sullivan Road should be available to provide access to the KRPUA. This parking lot should be under State management (traded or bought from the Borough). A safe speed limit only within the parking lot should be established. There should be no gates or barriers to restrict trail users. Overnight camping facilities should be constructed in areas adjacent to the Sullivan parking lot on Borough or State lands. The private land at the mouth of Bodenbug Creek should be purchased by the State to protect that access point from possible closure by a private owner. - Alternative Boat Launch Area: A year round alternative Boat Launch area could be established at the Eklutna Tailrace 300 feet from the existing parking lot. - Alternative 1, Paragraph 4: No Comment - Alternative 2, Paragraph 1: Recreational Target Shooting should not be moved to the proposed site. This does not fix the current problem it only moves it to an area that does not have a safe backstop. The RS 2477 also known as the Inside Trail is less than 50 feet from the suggested location which would be a hazard to trail users. The area within Unit B. Lakes in the area known as Jim/Mud Lakes would be a more logical location because enforcement would be better able to access the area with a highway vehicle, with one way in and no other way out and the rules of the KRPUA would be easily enforced. Paper targets, or an approved target by the State, no other unauthorized targets should be used. The mountain would be the backstop; no trails would be endangered by target shooting. There are no nearby resident dwellings in this area. - Alternative 2, Paragraph 3: The Generally Allowed Uses statute should be added to this paragraph. - Alternative 2, Paragraph 4: Trails created for non-motorized use should not be ones that are currently multiuse trails. - Alternative 2, Paragraph 5: No Comment - Alternative 2, Paragraph 6: No Comment - Alternative 2, Paragraph 7: Sanitation facilities should be developed during the summer months only and within sight of users of the area to eliminate vandalism of the facility. - Alternative 3, Paragraph 6: There should not be a buffer of 100 feet of the shoreline at Manmade Lake. There should be a boat launch in this area (on the river) should the launch area at the Knik River bridge become an issue. A speed limit of 10 miles per hour should be enforced during ice free periods. No motorized use on the lake during ice free periods. Units A. and C. Upper and Lower Knik Flats - Alternative 4: The current problem with "throw away cars" in these units is the purchases at local car auctions for a low price. Many of these cars show up on the river bar and have no current owner liable for removal. Cars purchased at these auctions should be registered in the purchasers name before leaving the auction site.

Unit B: Lakes - Alternative 1, Paragraph 1, 3, 4 I Agree - Alternative 2, Paragraph 1, Sentence 2, Replace the word "may" with "will". - Alternative 2, Paragraph 2: Survey and platting of the Rippy Trail should be done as soon as possible. - Alternative 2, Paragraph 3: Replace the last sentence with the Generally Allowed Uses statute. ORV travel in Unit B. should not be restricted by snow depth. This area does not sustain an adequate amount of snow cover. Ice or frost depth of 2-4 inches would be sufficient to protect this area. - Alternative 2, Paragraph 4: Trumpeter Swans, this Alternative is unnecessary, laws already exist to protect wildlife from harassment, and should be enforced. Signs should be erected at Jim Lake, Mud Lake and all access points to the KRPUA stating that harassment of wildlife is against the law and will be enforced. - Alternative 2, Paragraph 5: The Mud Lake camping/sanitary facilities should be constructed on the west side of the existing boat launch area. An improved boat launch at the present location should also be constructed.

Jim Lake camping facilities should be constructed on the east side of the existing trail leading into the lake. - Alternative 2, Paragraph 6: No ¼ mile restrictions on target shooting. A safe target area already exists .6 tenths east of a mile from Mud Lake and .6 tenths west of a mile from Jim Lake. State approved targets and shell casings must be collected. - Alternatives 3 and 4: I am Opposed.

Unit C.: Upper Knik Flats - Alternative 1, Paragraph 1: I Agree - Alternative 1, Paragraph 2: The State should do everything within its power to retain all 17(b) easements in this Unit. High water and Navigable waters should remain in State ownership. The State should not relinquish the 50 foot recreational corridor leading from the Knik River Bridge on the south side of the river to Lake George. See attached map. - Alternative 1, Sentence 1: I disagree. There are many trails in this Unit. - Alternative 1, Sentence 2: No Comment - Alternative 2, No Comment

Unit D: Upper Jim Alpine - Alternative 1, Paragraph 1: I Agree - Alternative 1, Sentence 1: There are 2 non-motorized Trails within this Unit. The Nickel Trail and the Old Boy Scout Trail leaving from the Rippy Trail near the Jim Lake Parking Lot should remain non-motorized. - Alternative 1, Sentence 2: No Comment - Alternative 2, No Comment

Unit E: Upper Friday Alpine: No Comment Unit F: Grasshopper Valley: - Alternative 2, Paragraph 1: Generally Allowed Uses Statute should occur in this unit.

Unit G: Glacier: No Comment Unit H: Metal Creek: No Comment

Fees: - Alternative s 1 and 4: I Agree - Alternatives 2 and 3: All Paragraphs.

If user fees are imposed, DNR needs to ensure that 100% of the monies are returned to the area. Fees need to allow families to use multiple vehicles and multiple family members on one pass. Inholders within the Public Use Area, including future inholders shouldn't be required to pay a fee to reach their properties. Any fee structure should evenly tax all user groups. Any fee structure needs to consider the diversity of the access means and access points. Users already paying Snowmobile, ATV and Boat registrations have serious objections to paying yet another fee to use public resources that their fees already support. Trails should not be on "Time Share" in the KRPUA. The whole intent of the Public Use Area is to protect all user groups, and to keep trails open at all times. The State Parks currently have time sharing on the trails and it does not work especially during hunting season. Private tourism companies should not be allowed to lease large tracts of the Public Use Area lands to benefit their incomes. Fireworks should be allowed in a safe location and during the months of November until March when there is adequate moisture on the ground to prevent the threat of fires. There is a fireworks area in Houston and one should be created in the Knik River Public Use Area.

Comment 78 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

The existing target shooting area in between Jim & Mud Lake is the best spot for this and should not be moved to another location. The trumpeter swans are already protected. We don't need more laws to protect them. I think the Rippy Trail is an important multi use trail because it ties into the 17B easement trail that connects to the RS2477. I do not want to see time shares on the trails in this area. Enforcement and trash problems should be the number one priority. I would like to see the state purchase the eight acres at the mouth of Bodenber Creek. And create a boat launch. I would also like to see a designated area along the river for store bought fireworks. I do not want fees to use this area.

Comment 79 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. I don't think there should be any regulations in the Knik River Public Area. 2. Shooting range at Mud Lake & Jim Lake area near the mountains. 4. I think this area is a good unregulated area for all uses.

Comment 80 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. Knik Public Use areas I would like to see unregulated with no user fees. 2. A safe shooting area between Mud Lake and Jim Lake. To be a safe shooting environment. 3. Do not regulate motorized vehicles in any and all areas in the Knik River Public Use Area. 4. "I believe that the Knik area is one of the safest places to go 4 wheeler riding because of the fact that the ground isn't rock hard and if someone was to wipeout they'd be able to get up and keep goin."

Comment 81 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. Fairly happy with Alternative # 1. 4. Keep motorized use the same. Move shooting to other side of Jim Creek 1/4 mile upstream of Knik River. Keep trails - water ways open when it comes to swan's reg. User fees if needed.

Comment 82 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. I have a pretty strong opposition to user fees. Mainly because they can never be fair. It would be very nice to eliminate all recreational shooting in Unit A, lower Knik River flats. 2. I would not ever want Alternatives other than maybe Alt 1. If ever there is a restriction in place on the swan nests, I would like to see all trails and channels excluded from the 300 foot rule. 3. Please vote for Alternative 1 if any. 4. I feel that any restrictions on getting off the trails would be out of line, that would be way too restrictive on Jim Creek & lakes area. Never let any bans on motor vehicles come into play.

Comment 83 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

I live off Knik River Road, so each morning I am blessed to have a view of the gorgeous Knik River and I was pleasantly surprised to find a photo of my husband and myself in our Kayak on the river displayed on your website, so yes, we do use the KRPUA. I have many concerns about the proposed Alternates 1-4 because of their lack of foresight in balancing habitat protection and recreational use. The Jim-Swan Wetlands have been abused by motor craft of all shapes and designs for many years now, each year the degradation of the surrounding area is compounded. My neighbors and I have watched the changes in the nesting Trumpeter Swans for many years now and it appears that their habitat is at a critical point. I do not feel that the proposed Alternates 1-4 address the issues at hand, and it obviously favors unlimited motorized use. Studies are available showing that frequent airboat/motorized vehicle use kills new vegetation, erodes the shorelines of lakes and creeks, changes the drainage damaging salmon streams and eroding the wetlands, this is obvious in the photos. In 2003 the Jim Creek/Knik River Cooperative Management Initiative was established "...to undertake a suite of community outreach, education and collaborative planning projects aimed at reducing on-going riparian, wetlands, and stream damage in a popular recreational watershed due to unregulated ATV use, dumping of trash and hazardous substances, and malicious fires". The damage is done, we now need to repair the damage, and stop all development of new trails until the trails management process is completed. One of the purposes KRPUA was established was to "protect and maintain migratory waterfowl nesting areas; habitats for moose, Dall sheep, and brown bear; and other fish and wildlife habitat so that traditional public uses and wildlife populations may continue", again Alternates 1-4 do not provide for this. The Rippy Trail and Jim-Swan wetlands should be designated non-motorized, protecting the primary Trumpeter Swans nesting areas. This area makes up

only approximately 5% of the entire KRPUA. The only way to return the wetlands to their healthy origin is to completely stop motorized traffic in the area. I am not against maintaining existing trails outside of this area. As there are already hundreds of motorized trails weaving around the majority of the area I don't see where this compromise should in anyway be a problem. In reviewing the existing statues 11 AAC 95.020 Generally Allowed Uses state: A.1.E. Travel that causes or contributes to water quality degradation, alteration of drainage systems, significant rutting, roud disturbance, or thermal erosion requires a permit or other written authorization. Obviously KRPUA has been ignored and abused; now requiring critical intervention. Statute 11 AAC 96.025 Conditions for Generally Allowed Uses are subject to the following conditions (1) activities employing wheeled or tracked vehicles must be conducted in a manner that MINIMIZES surface damage; (2) vehicles must use EXISTING ROADS AND TRAILS whenever possible; (3) activities MUST be conducted in a manner that MINIMIZES: (A) disturbance of vegetation, soil stability, or drainage systems; (B) changing the character of, polluting, or introducing silt and sediment into streams, lakes, ponds, water, holes, seeps, and marshes; and (C) disturbance of fish and wildlife resources. Once again the ground work for protecting KRPUA from unregulated motorized degradation is already on the books, but Alternate 1-4 appear to ignore these statutes in favor of recreation. Another concern I have, along with my neighbors, is the allowing of "recreational shooting", all you have to do is drive down the Old Glenn Highway & Knik River Road to see the reality of "recreational shooting". Every sign is shot up and currently the refrigerator that was dumped at the carpool parking area near the Glenn Highway has been used as target practice. There is absolutely no reason to allow any "recreational shooting" anywhere near Knik River Road because of the many homes in the area. Is recreational shooting allowed in residential areas of Anchorage? No, for a very good reason. Recreational shooting belongs at a shooting range, NOT in our front and back yards! Because of these and other concerns I am urging you to support Alternative 5 developed by the Knik River Watershed Group. Although it doesn't address all of my concerns it is a stable plan to make improvements (parking lot, bear-proof trash receptacles, toilets, educational platforms, etc.), it also address the wetland damage, repair and protection of the Jim-Swan Wetlands, and allows for the trails management process to be conducted according to existing protocol. KRPUA is an amazing gem and should be protected for generations to enjoy, fish, walk, hike, ride, & explore its amazing and diverse wildlife. It is your job to protect this area. Thank you for your time.

Comment 84 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. Knik public use areas I would like to see unregulated. No user fees. 2. I would like to see the areas from Jim Lake through Mud Lake to be a safe shooting area. 3. Do not regulate motorized use in any and all areas. 4. I would like to see any and all land trails & water ways stay open to motorized access.

Comment 85 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. I don't believe in item # 3 that it should read "closed by the Department". Maybe "closed for evaluation in order to correct any problems that may be occurring to cause it to be closed.", or some wording similar. 2. I believe fireworks should be used in a safe location on the Knik River bar. Maybe limit usage of fireworks to only those that can be purchased as a legal fireworks stand. Nothing homemade. Used only in a safe timeframe such as late October through March where fire hazards are low. 3. Alternative # 2, I agree to no motorized use on Manmade Lake and I agree to the sanitation facilities. By restricting the crossings on Jim & Bodenbug, the non restricted areas may be unsafe at some times of the year. This would cause more people to get stuck. 4. Leave the shooting area between Jim Lake and Swan Lake right where it is. It is already 6/10 of a mile from either lake and has the mountain

as a natural backdrop w/no trails, making it safe for the public. I like Alternative # 4 for the "fees intent" it is too hard to implement & we don't know where the money goes.

Comment 86 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 05:30 PM:

Is this incorrect information appearing on the header of this form? I thought we had until May 4, 2007?

Comment 87 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 06:45 PM:

UNIT B. Lakes: Addition- Recreational discharge of firearms in entire PUA MUST be prohibited for public safety- or DNR will find itself responsible should someone get shot in the PUA. - Mark Simpson

Comment 88 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 06:53 PM:

Unit C- Upper Knik Flats: Agree with DNR alternative 2- Try to keep vehicles on main established trail. Also NO recreational discharge of firearms in the entire PUA for public safety or DNR will find itself responsible should someone be shot in the PUA. - Mark Simpson

Comment 89 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 09:53 PM:

I regret missing the deadline, but please consider this comment nonetheless. It seems to me there is a 'minimal management' alternative that basically doesn't restrict any activities, but there is not an 'extreme environmental' alternative to balance it. I don't expect that either extreme alternative will be selected, but if there is no extreme environmental alternative, then the most environmental alternative will be viewed as the extreme environmental alternative and will be unlikely to be selected.

I think it's very important to bookend the alternatives with a strong no-holds-barred option and a strong environmental option. That way, people can feel better about selecting an option in the middle that won't seem so offensive in comparison.

Thank you.

Comment 90 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 10:33 PM:

The Knik River Public use Area should be designated a non-motorised public use area. Perhaps a few trails close to an existing public road can be designated motorised, to satisfy motorised recreational use, but it should be very limited, not to disturb the natural habitat of so much wildlife.

Comment 91 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 10:46 PM:

I am a recreational horseback rider, and one of my favorite places to trail ride is at Jim Creek. I have been riding there for the past 7 or 8 years. I try to go on week days as the weekends are very busy with dirt bikes and 4-wheelers. The majority of these riders have been courteous, but there are always a few who blast by me without slowing down. I would really like to see some enforcement of the litter problem, especially broken glass/beer bottles. I would love to have it be a safe multi-use area with users having respect for the area and not littering.

Thank you, Karen Johnson

Comment 92 of 238 - received on 05/01/2007 at 11:08 PM:

I would like to thank the Planning Group for presenting these Alternative directions for the KRPUA Management Plan. I am looking forward to the Draft Plan and on to implementation of the Plan in the area. I am an active user of the area, primarily for recreational ATV riding

and the exposure to the views, animals and geology of the area. I ride in the area every month of the year and enjoy each trip. These trips range from short rides on the trails by the Pavilion with my grandchildren to, more often than not, rides out to Metal Creek or onto the glacier if passable. I am a founding member of the Alaska ATV Club and have been heavily involved with the Jim Creek Cleanups organized by that organization.

There are a few items in the Management Actions and the Alternative 2 for areas A and B, Alternative 1 for Areas C, D, E, F, G and H, and Alternative 3 for the Fees section I would like to address before declaring my support for those alternatives.

For the Actions segment I feel that the option to close a trail is counter to the letter and spirit of the legislation that created the KRPUA. That phrasing and all references to closing trails through-out the document should be rewritten without the closure option. I would request bringing the management objectives more in line with the Generally Allowed Uses on State Land. This document has protected other state land for some time and with the Actions Common to all Areas becoming violations believe this would adequately protect this area. It would also be one base set of conduct for educational purposes, I see the Knik area as a place where riders not only learn to ride their ATVs but also a place to learn how to conduct themselves while using any other trail on state land. I would like to encourage putting the amended Actions Common to all Areas into effect immediately. I see no need to wait for next summer, why not start correcting the bad behavior there right now?

Unit A Lower Knik River I would support Alternative 2 with the following changes. I would support a shooting ban if there is a designated area developed for this user group. Clear and open a Shooting Allowed area between Mud Lake and Jim Lake, configured so shooting is safely done against the bluff of the mountain. This area would be easier for recreational shooters to get to with road vehicles, allowing the use of the shooting area by families to grow. The access on Maude Road is also easier for the Troopers to use with any of their vehicles and allows them to block egress if trouble is suspected or reported. Make the use of any non-commercial metal target or backstop a violation to preclude trashing the area. I would also suggest making the non-motorized trail a new trail, closely paralleling and to the south of the existing RS2477 trail. This would minimize crossings of existing motorized trails and the needs for interaction.

Unit B - Jim Lake I support alternative 2 with the following concerns. I have in the past and still fully endorse the need for an additional multi-use trail to the Upper Knik Valley. With the seasonal flooding (and occasional severe flooding) of the Knik flats, not having another route for all users to get in and out of the upper area is a serious concern. This is required just for safety sake to allow emergency personnel as well as users and in-holders a guaranteed way in and out. It will take a lot of work but should be the first priority of the Management Team to complete. I question the practicality of the prohibition of approaching the swan nests. Is there a state or federal statute that requires this? Since the trails that people and boaters use are (or will be) in fixed positions, and the swans not restricted in where they put their nests, we should at least exempt travel on established trails and waterways from this restriction.

Unit C, D, E, F, G and H General Upper Knik Valley and Alpine areas I support Alternative 1 for these areas. If Alternative 2 is selected I would ask that the Generally Allowed Uses be specified as the base set of restrictions. Fees I do not oppose the use of the fee structure of Alternative 3 but feel the following provisions must be added to make the fees fair to all the user groups. * Fees collected must be returned to the area in facilities development and trail improvement. * All users must share the same fee burden. * There

must be provisions for family packages. This area is used by many families for different activities, the fee structure must not be burdensome to younger, beginning families. * Recreational vehicles that already have paid for state licenses should not be required to pay again to use the same state resource. We encourage the Management Team to pursue grants from the existing state licensing agency that collects the snowmachine, ATV and boat license fees for use to maintain the area.

Comment 93 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 08:17 AM:

I am in favor of your Alternative Plan #1. It best suits the needs and use of this area for all Alaskan residents. Also, I am very much in support of purchasing the land from private ownership in the area of east side of the Old Glenn Hwy Bridge. This will help keep a free access to the area for all users.

Comment 94 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 09:15 AM:

The Alaska Outdoor Council's position regarding the Knik River Public Use Area is my position as well. Purchase of the land east of the bridge by the State of Alaska is necessary to assure 'public' access.

Thank you for considering my request in this matter.

John

Comment 95 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 09:25 AM:

I support Alternative # 1.

Comment 96 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 10:12 AM:

Dear Sirs or Madams:

Having reviewed the use proposals for the Knik/Jim Creek area, I believe that Proposal #1 represents the best overall plan.

While I agree that there are issues that need to be addressed in this popular scenic recreational area--such as garbage, dangerous use of firearms, and some erosion issues--I believe the other proposals overkill the solution by adding a host of confusing regulations, costs, and restrictions that will only serve to prevent free access for all people to public lands.

The current plan works if we the users work together to safeguard the beauty of the environment we well as to police ourselves in proper outdoor etiquette. I know that the resources of law enforcement are stretched thin in this area, so while I would encourage and welcome more Trooper presence in the Knik River area, I am also aware that we as the community of users need to do a better job of policing each other.

Additionally, I like the suggestion by some that the State pursue purchase of the private land that is on the east side of the Old Glenn Hwy Knik River Bridge to protect the access point in that area.

Thank you for your consideration. Rev. Martin W. Eldred Eagle River, Alaska

Comment 97 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 10:12 AM:

Brandon McCutcheon Plan Project Manager 550 w. 7th Avenue, Suite 1050 Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Mr. McCutcheon:

These are my comments on the Draft Preliminary Alternatives and Preliminary Management Actions and Actions Common to All Alternatives for the Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan.

Although I have a general interest in the entire KRPUA, I am specifically concerned about the Jim-Swan Wetlands. The Jim-Swan Wetlands is biologically rich and highly sensitive habitat, especially for birds, and as such is a significant public asset that must be protected by any management plan. It is surely in the broad public interest to do so.

Unfortunately, none of the Alternatives offered by DNR adequately protects the area. I have looked at Alternative 5, suggested by the Knik River Watershed Group. I support Alternative 5, but even that I believe needs to be strengthened to not only better protect the resource but also to provide a fair balance between motorized and non-motorized use.

It is important to a solid public process for the public to be presented with the full range of reasonable management alternatives to evaluate and comment on. By failing to offer such a range, DNR does the public a disservice. By limiting the options, DNR biases the public process, which would likely lead to policy decisions that do not necessarily reflect the public interest.

Regarding Alternative 5, I agree wholeheartedly that Rippy Trail should be non-motorized, and that it should be re-routed or subject to seasonal closures to protect Trumpeter Swan nesting, rearing, and molting areas.

I believe that Alternative 5 should be strengthened to prohibit airboats and ATVs at all times of the year. Airboats and ATVs create heavy impact. The noise from airboats alone is a major disturbance, to say nothing of the tracks and later trenches that are formed when they go across wetlands. These impacts are significant and are inappropriate for this sensitive area.

Please remember, and this applies to the entire KRPUA, that restrictions that protect the natural resource and the enjoyment of an area by other user groups do not represent a withdrawal of the land from the people. The restrictions, in fact, represent protection and management of the area for the people. This is a key distinction that I hope DNR recognizes and stands firm on. After all, protection of bird nesting and wildlife habitat is one of the underlying purposes of KRPUA.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

John Strassenburgh

Comment 98 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 11:05 AM:

I support the State purchase of the private land East of the Old Glen Hwy. Knik River Bridge to protect the access point to the Knik River Public Use Area in that area.

Comment 99 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. You have been doing a great job so far. I ask that you be fair to all groups involved. 4. Keep it fair for each and every person that has a right to use this area. Don't start breaking up the area into specific group use areas.

Comment 100 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. Barring recreational discharge of firearms without alternatives has proven to only move the problem & the further we move this problem, the worse it seems to get. 3. My suggestion would require coop. of land owners but I believe is possible if the Borough & Eklutna Corp would work together, Eklutna Corp could apply for grant money to build a shooting range on their property, included would be a improved road to the facility along with money to train some of the young people to run the range. This would give a shooting area; an improved road & prople on the ground which would discourage illegal activity in the area.

Comment 101 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 01:00 PM:

BARCO Substitutes for DNR Management Actions 1) DEVELOP MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH PRIME CONSIDERATION HOW ANY PROPOSED ACTION WOULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT RESIDENTS regarding traffic, noise, dust, air quality and personal safety and how to mitigate such impact. 2) DEVELOP A TIME-SHARE SCHEDULE FOR MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION. Existing commercial airboat tour operators and aircraft should be exempted from the limitation. Existing ATV guided tours may be exempted on a permit basis. During the trapping and hunting seasons, legally licensed hunters and trappers shall be allowed motorized access. This will benefit different users to recreate without conflict, give respite to wildlife, and give residents and quiet users equal time to enjoy their homes and yards without nuisance noise from power boats, personal watercraft and ORVs and high-use traffic in their neighborhoods. 3) SEPARATE MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED ACCESS POINTS: Centralize Motorized Access: a) from RS 2477 (Knik Glacier Trail/Jim Creek Tral) trail head and parking lot on State of Alaska Land. b) Public Access to Upper Knik River from South Knik River to be determined; Private Access for residents only onto motorized trails if their private property adjoins KRPUA is allowed. Multi-Use Access: From Pavilion Parking Lot for access to Jim Creek Fishing on Sexton Trail. Motorized access to terminate in existing DNR parking lot uphill from Jim Creek Fishing area. Non-motorized access for campers, hikers, horses, bikers etc to Jim Creek Fishing and beyond. Non-motorized Access: a) from Knik River/Bodenburg Creek Access to protect fish and waterfowl habitat at Bodenburg Creek; to protect adjoining private lands from ongoing trespass, and to allow residents and visitors the enjoyment of quiet recreational endeavors near our homes. b) from Jim Lake Parking Lot to Rippy Trail and Wetlands c) Allow access for motorized handicapped persons and non-handicapped companion in non-motorized areas by permit. 4) CRITICAL HABITAT AREAS SHOULD BE CREATED to include lakes, wetlands, alpine transition zones and sand dunes, to prevent further destruction. Restoration/revegetation plans should be established and implemented for these areas. The Jim - Swan wetlands area and adjacent Rippy Trail should be made a non-motorized area, with a possible relaxation of restrictions during hunting /trapping seasons if daily enforcement is in place. During these times, motorized use should be limited to designated trails and access points. This area has been specifically recommended for special protection by numerous groups, agencies and studies at least since the 1981 USF&W Knik Arm Wetlands Study. 5) ANY LAND ACQUISITION FOR INCLUSION TO THE KNIK RIVER PUBLIC USE AREA will require a public process regarding cost for management, facilities and law enforcement and available funding. Any land acquisition from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough will require a full public process regarding preferences of local residents for that parcel and proposed management actions to ensure a variety of recreational activities for the benefit of residents, and particularly the Youth of the Community of Butte; and the cost of such a land transaction to the State of Alaska and the income to be derived by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough from the sale of these lands. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough shall not "give away" borough-owned assets until the

Community of Butte can be assured that they be managed for the benefit of the community. 6) Establish fines for bailable offenses including the intentional or unintentional contamination of land and waters by lead, automotive fluids and other hazardous materials; cutting life trees; rutting and destroying vegetation; contributing to the erosion of river, lake and stream banks; disturbing or harassing wildlife including waterfowl.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES TO DNR ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL UNITS

Limit off-road vehicles to established and hardened trails. Prohibit snow-machine "water skippers" from operating in Knik River or any of its tributaries. Establish bailable offense for this activity for disturbing the peace of residents at any hour. Oppose rescinding any existing rules or other regulatory action in the entire KRPWA which protect streams, fish and wildlife habitat, etc., or are designed to prevent rutting of trails and disturbing vegetation. Do not allow existing destructive uses to continue or expand. Restrict curb weight to 1,000 lb for highway and off-road vehicles until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging in all units is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large-vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES BY MANAGEMENT UNIT

UNIT A. Lower Knik Flats INTENT: Change language to read: "The intent is to encourage a wide variety of recreational uses including nonmotorized and motorized uses as described in HB307. DNR recognizes the high value of this area for quality multiple use recreation. DNR shall not manage any unit as a motor park, moto-cross or mudbog venue but provide a high quality experience for responsible ORV travelers and sightseers. The management goal includes to separate nonmotorized from motorized uses by creating specially hardened trails for motorized and equine users to lessen impact on the environment and to create safe conditions for all uses. To further this goal, multiple access points will be created which separate motorized and nonmotorized users and which provide safety and quiet for adjacent property owners. DNR shall mitigate high-use multiple use recreation for the benefit of residents and responsible motorized and quiet users. Mitigation measures to include speed limits, speed bumps, controlled access and a highly visible law enforcement presence. Indestructible sanitation facilities and camping area style trash containers shall be placed as soon as possible to protect the health of the public. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Discharge of Firearms: "Recreational discharge of firearms will be prohibited in this entire unit to protect human safety and to prevent pollution of lead from skeet targets and ammunition into the waters of Knik River Valley. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Rescinding of Regulations including Remedies for well documented current Damage in this unit: 1) No existing regulations will be rescinded. All regulations will be developed in compliance with existing laws and regulations, including but not restricted to 11AAC 96.020 (a)(1)(D)(E), 11 AAC 96.025 (1)(2)(3)(A-C) as well as any and all Alaska Statutes which protect fish, game and waterfowl and its habitat. 2) Repair rutted trails and vegetation in forests, wetlands and lowlands. Harden where appropriate. Repair stream banks. 3) Revegetate Dunes. Dunes protect Butte and Palmer from Knik River changing course. 4) Allow unrestricted vehicle curb weight only for travel on Sexton Trail from Pavilion Parking Lot to DNR Parking Lot on the uplands prior to Jim Creek Flats and on Jim Creek Trail to existing DNR parking lot, or parking lot to be established on uplands in forest prior to approaching the Flats. Both Jim Creek Trail (aka RS2477, Knik Glacier Trail) and Sexton Trail should be hardened with speed bumps added for the safety of the public. 5) Restrict curb weight of highway and off-road vehicles to 1,000 lb curb weight until such time as damaged trails are restored and a

permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging from UNIT A to KNIK GLACIER is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit. 6) Prohibit the use of trees for extricating "winching" vehicles out of mud or water. 7) Recommend and agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3 regarding 100' stream buffer protection on all water ways. NEW Alternative 4 regarding utilization of Mat-Su Borough Pavilion Parcel. In addition to equalize the number of motorized and non-motorized trails on this parcel, Mat-Su Borough shall utilize a large portion this parcel for community recreational purposes, including a community park, BMX park, multi-age playground, soccer fields, volleyball and tennis venues to give young adults and families, "something to do." A public campground should be established there as well. The Pavilion Parking Area was built by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough. The picnic pavilion at the site was subsequently destroyed by motorized users. The Pavilion Parking Area should be designated access for non-motorized users. Two non-motorized trails should be designated to accommodate different users, such as for hikers, bikers and horses. A separated parking lot on the west side of the "Pavilion" should allow cars to travel the Sexton Trail to Jim Creek. In addition, An ATV trail should be developed and designated to allow ATV access from the "Pavilion" parking lot to Jim Creek. Residents should be allowed planning participation on this Mat-Su Borough parcel. All motorized access to the entire area should be from the trail head for the RS2477 Knik Glacier Trail (aka Jim Creek Trail) on State of Alaska Land to minimize adverse impact to residents from high traffic, noise, dust and air pollution. Sanitary facilities will be developed and may be shared by users of both the Pavilion and RS2477 parking areas. Separate sanitary facilities may be developed for a public camp ground on the Pavilion parcel. NEW Alternative 4 regarding Manmade Lake: "No Motorized use" at Manmade Lake except for parking access for picnics, swimming and other non-motorized activities. The bottom of Manmade Lake should be dredged and cleaned from an accumulation of glass, metal and lead and restored to its original purpose as a community "swimming hole."

UNIT B. Lakes - Unit B should be renamed to read "Lakes and Wetlands." INTENT language should be changed to read: Provide for moderate density quiet use and limited motorized use for all seasons for the protection of water fowl in the summer and moose and sheep in the winter. The area in this unit was recommended as Critical Habitat in previous studies. Designate and manage this area as Critical Habitat. Motor size for boats in this unit and Jim Creek shall be restricted to 3 HP to protect nesting and rearing waterfowl including trumpeter swans in all lakes of the unit. No motorized recreational vehicle use in lakes and wetlands area during the summer. No power boats, including airboats, in lakes and wetlands. Establish snowmachine corridor in the winter. NEW BARCO Alternative 5 regarding Rippy Trail; Rippy Trail to remain designated non-motorized in its entirety. No Loop Trail. Rippy Trail was established by and for non-motorized use by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough in the 1980s. Motorized users have destroyed one salmon stream and several springs feeding the wetlands and lakes and, because of their large numbers, have created sanitary issues. A "Loop Trail" would cut into an established wild life corridor which extends from the Alpine environment west to the Knik River-Matanuska River Delta and connects with the Palmer Hay Flats NEW Alternative 5 for the entire unit: Use of any waterbody with a motorized watercraft is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Approaching within 1500 feet of an active Trumpeter Swan nest on land or water is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Legal hunting is allowed; however, swans gathering on the lakes in preparation of their fall migration may not be approached within 500 feet either on land or on the waters they are gathering in. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Mud Lake. In

addition, construction of a boat launch/ramp at Mud Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Jim Lake. In addition, construction of a canoe launch at Jim Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. NEW Alternative 5 to prohibit recreational shooting at Jim Lake in order to protect public safety and preventing disturbance of nesting/rearing waterfowl. Legal hunting is allowed after Swan fall migration.

UNIT C - Upper Knik Flats NEW Alternative 3: No vehicles more than 1000 lbs curb weight until an improved road for access is developed to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids.

UNIT D - Upper Jim Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT E - Upper Friday Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT F - Grasshopper Valley Agree with DNR Alternatives 2, with the exception that no additional trails be developed.

UNIT G - Glacier Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. In Addition: NEW ALTERNATIVE 3 regarding future development: Recommend that the area past the Knik Glacier Lake if that is within the PUA be made a non-motorized area, except for aircraft. At this time no other motorized vehicles can generally access it (except if transported by helicopter or other air transportation). However, as the glacier recedes, motorized access may be possible, with deleterious effects to the wildlife and environment. At present this area is almost pristine, with some aircraft landing sites and virtually no other tracks, litter etc. Taking a non-motorized (except for aircraft) stance at this time, while having no effect on present usage, would protect the area against possible future abuses. As has been seen throughout the accessible PUA, any place an ORV can get, someone will take one, and many will not be cognizant of possible environmental damage.

UNIT H - Metal Creek Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. NEW Alternative 3: Prohibit vehicles to travel through Metal Creek in order to prevent pollution of the waters of Metal Creek and Knik River from automotive fluids while traveling through the water and to prevent abandonment of vehicles in the waterways of the Knik River.

FEES Agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3, Point 1 regarding the collection of fees. In addition, amount of fees charged should be based on cost of management, law enforcement and facilities to be determined as the management plan is developed.

Comment 102 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 01:00 PM:

I was present at the meeting at Butte Elementary last month. It appeared to me at that meeting that many objections to the plan were explained away by staff as being due to the "enabling legislation." At the same time, the plan called for "recessions of existing regulations" to loosen things up even more. All along I've been concerned that the process was being slanted to "grandfather in" use and abuse of the natural resources, even if irresponsible, while paying "lip service" to planning, public safety, resource protection and provision for non-motorized use. The current plan says it will "address trail impacts to critical fish and wildlife habitat." That sounds good but I bet that what it means is that the addressing will be literally limited to the physical trail itself and will ignore the often more critical general habitat and the impacts that lead to wildlife displacement due to activity on the trail. Likewise the plan inadequately deals with impacts caused by airboats. The plan

doesn't even consider at all the possibility of potential future impacts and abuse due to helicopter flight-seeing and/or fishing. The plan doesn't want to consider that natural resources are greater than just the piece of water a fish occupies, or a spot a swan has a nest on or where a moose goes to calve. Habitat is more than that; just as there are intangible but real natural resources, such as natural sounds in the forest, beautiful scenery, peace and quiet, a feeling of safety. These make up critical habitat for animals as well as natural resources people value. Likewise, while the plan makes an attempt to protect swan nests with prohibitions between May 1 and June 15, it ignores that swans arrive earlier than that and won't build a nest in a place that is too busy. There are some areas that need a more comprehensive approach to what natural resources are. The Jim Lake and lakes area is a lovely area I've visited and have taken visitors to get a view of the area yet I've never taken visitors canoeing there because of fear of leaving our vehicle unattended. This whole Unit (B) should have more rigorous controls. Non-motorized use areas need more emphasis. All people can use and enjoy non-motorized areas, even owners of vehicles without their vehicles, but not everyone can use and enjoy many motorized trails or streams due to mud holes, noisy machines passing by, an absence of wildlife, danger of airboats to canoeists and the like. Concerning the alternatives, they improve as the number gets higher. The missing alternative, #5 of the Knik River Watershed Group, is closer to real management and the one I favor. It is a mistake to "grandfather in" an activity merely because its been done before without consideration of cumulative impacts associated with continued and future increased use. Both animals and people, even habitats, can tolerate a certain occasional disturbance, but repeated disturbance has a cumulative impact that now becomes unacceptable. This plan in its desire to perpetuate and accommodate legitimate motorized use does not recognize cumulative impacts nor provide sufficient natural resource protection nor appropriately accommodate non-motorized users. Recreational shooting has no place in this management area due to public safety. Further, it handicaps law enforcement in their efforts to provide safety to both home owners and visitors. Lawful use of firearms related to trapping and hunting have a legitimate role, but not recreational shooting, as has been demonstrated frequently.

Knik River Watershed Group's Alternative 5 Unit B. Lakes (Jim-Swan Wetlands) Provide for low to moderate use compatible with protection of critical fish and wildlife habitats. User fees may be imposed. Rippy Trail will be developed as a single track nonmotorized trail and is subject to rerouting or seasonal closure to avoid Trumpeter Swan nest sites. The Jim-Swan wetlands will be open to multiple use recreation from August 1 through April 15. Fall use is subject to posted horsepower limits for resource protection and user safety. Snowmachining will be restricted during periods of inadequate snow cover to protect vegetation. The wetlands will be closed to motorized recreation from April 16 through July 31 to protect critical wildlife habitat and resources, such as migrating, nesting and brood-rearing Trumpeter Swans, loons and ducks. Nonmotorized recreation will be restricted as needed to protect active loon and Trumpeter Swan nest sites. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game will monitor critical areas to evaluate recreational impacts. Facilities that may be developed in this unit include:

Mud Lake - (Facilities, use and alteration done via cooperative agreement with Eklutna, Inc.)
- Shoreline restoration and improved small craft launch area. - Canoe concession, wildlife viewing platform, educational kiosk on wetlands, waterfowl, migration - Improved upper parking area to halt erosion into the lake.

Jim Lake - - Shoreline restoration and improved small craft launch. - Close access road to lake and develop into a handicapped accessible path to viewing site. - Improve small upper parking area. - Develop upper area campground.

ALL units: Do not rescind existing regulations until trails management process and environmental analyses are complete. Existing trails, with the exception of RS2477 trails, are subject to closure, rerouting or designation, pending environmental analyses and safety considerations. No new trails will be created or expanded until the trails management process is complete. Key habitats, including salmon streams, wetlands and dunes, will be closed until restoration, revegetation, trails management process and environmental analyses are complete. Install public restrooms and bear-proof garbage receptacles in all moderate to high-use parking areas. For safety, prohibit recreational shooting.

Comment 103 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 01:00 PM:

I am a frequent visitor to the Jim Lake/Swan Lake area on the north side of the Knik River. My particular interests are bird watching, hiking, ice skating and wildlife viewing. I was particularly disappointed to find that all of the draft alternatives for the Knik River Public Use area allow the continued abuse and degradation of this rich and important wildlife area. For too long the Jim/Swan area has been treated as yet another "Rambo-zone" with uncontrolled ORV's and de facto firing ranges. The damage that has been inflicted on the land and its wildlife is blatant and disturbing and should finally be stopped. I urge the ADNR adopt the proposed "Alternative Five" advocated by Audubon Alaska to reign in some of the abusive activities that have marred the Jim/Swan wetlands. In particular, there must be some regulations placed on ORV use to help heal the wetlands that have been torn up by airboats, jetskis and four-wheelers. The damage along the Rippy Trail is particularly disgusting, and I ask that ADNR take immediate steps to contain the problem. It really is time for Alaska to grow up and stop treating its land as a disposable commodity. The area around Jim Lakes/Swan Lakes is a good place to start.

Comment 104 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 02:50 PM:

I am in support of Knik river public use area Alternative 1. I am also in support of the State purchasing the privateland on the east side of the Old Glenn highway Knik river bridge to protect access the access point in that area. Sincerely, Robert T Biehl

Comment 105 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 03:18 PM:

Hello: I am in favor of the Current Management. (Alternative 1) I also favor that the State purchase land on the East side of the bridge so that we will have access to the Knik River and surrounding area. It would be a wise purchase in planning for the future. Sincerely, Ray L. Schaeffer

Comment 106 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 03:33 PM:

I strongly prefer alt 1 for the knik river use areas. We don't need to pay for parking etc.. Too many rules leading to too much bureaucracy in the other alternatives. Adequate enforcement of existing laws would squelch the majority of problems that alts 2 and 3 seem aimed at. Finally, it is imperative to secure permanent access at the old knik river bridge area to connect with the up river trails. Thank You.

Comment 107 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 04:11 PM:

Regarding the Knik River Public Use Area (KRPUA):
The Jim-Swan Wetlands is in danger. Under present management, airboats are degrading the area and leave few places for Trumpeter Swans and other waterfowl to safely raise their broods. Airboat and PWC disturbance increases nest failure, separates broods, exposes young birds to predation, and reduces time for feeding and resting (Korschgen, Dahlgren/USFWS. 1992). Reports indicate that airboat use kills emergent vegetation, erodes shorelines, creates permanent open canals, and alters hydrology.

In January, DNR received many comments from nonmotorized users and groups who specifically asked that the Rippy Trail and the Jim-Swan Wetlands be a nonmotorized area, especially during the spring and summer because of the sensitive nature of the habitat and wildlife. This entire area makes up only 5% of the entire KRPUA, the vast majority of which will be motorized. DNR is mandated to enhance nonmotorized recreation as well as motorized recreation.

Suggested actions:

Provide for low to moderate use compatible with protection of fish and wildlife habitats.

Rippy Trail should be developed as a single track nonmotorized trail, subject to rerouting or seasonal closure to avoid Trumpeter Swan nest sites.

Snowmachining should be restricted during periods of inadequate snow cover to protect vegetation. The wetlands including waterways should be closed to motorized recreation from April 16 through July 31 to protect wildlife resources, such as migrating, nesting and brood-rearing Trumpeter Swans, loons and ducks, and vegetation. Nonmotorized recreation should be restricted as needed to protect active loon and Trumpeter Swan nest sites.

Install public restrooms and bear-proof garbage receptacles in all moderate to high-use parking areas.

For safety, prohibit recreational shooting within a ½ mile of all facilities and moderate to high-use areas. To prevent lead deposition into the water, prohibit recreational shooting within ¼ mile of any waterway.

Thank you.

Comment 108 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 05:08 PM:

Comments on Management Action: 1. 2. & 3. Classify ' trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: access roads into KRPUA, trail/road for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational areas. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails.

1.& 2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4.DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisitions were

not identified, nor was a need or use for such land described.

Comments on Actions Common to All Alternatives: to add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc. Comments on Preliminary Alternatives 1, 2, 3: DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the unrestricted access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for access trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail..

Other Comments: Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenbug Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area..

Please consider the protection of the valuable wetland habitats and the critical role they play for birds in this area. The Jim-Swan wetland complex is a unique area with exceptional habitat that supports high density water bird populations. Jim-Swan is within the Upper Cook Inlet, an Area of Continental Significance for waterfowl. (CWS, USFWS 2004). Surveys and anecdotal reports also indicate a wide diversity of land birds use the area. ORV unmanaged use in these wetland areas is incompatible to the continued use of this area as bird habitat.

It is past time that specific habitat saving measures be put in place for this area. All existing studies have identified this as critical wetland habitat. DNR is responsible as a land manager of this area to assure these wetlands survive for habitat protection.

Please consider more uses for this important area to include non motorized use area and habitat protection for these important wetland habitats. Consider managing noise in other areas where motorized use is allowed.

Comment 109 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 06:08 PM:

I believe that the knik river use area should have an archery registration hunt only area to be used as a buffer from the noise and trash. If this was done from the present parking area out past jim creek more animals would come back to the area. it would resolve the serious abuse of target shooting in the area and would allow more enforcement by troopers to be in

effect. It would also put the main shooting events hunting or target shooting take place a few miles back. John Godsey

Comment 110 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 06:53 PM:

I am placing my vote on Alternate #1. This area needs management but not to the extent that the other alternates want.
Thank you.

Comment 111 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 07:16 PM:

Any Management Plan for the Knik Public Use area needs to:
IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY; PROTECT HABITAT; CONSIDER NEARBY RESIDENTS

LOWER KNIK FLATS AREA § Do not rescind existing regulations that help protect against habitat damage o One of the major stated purposes of the PUA is to protect habitat § Establish speed limits to help prevent noise pollution for nearby residents § Manage the multi use so that non-motorized users are not eliminated § Divide motorized & non-motorized access & use where possible Ø Motorized use primarily on gravel bars & out of wetland areas would solve a lot Ø Making Knik River Access non-motorized would help noise & access issues Ø access problems at high water level times - Mental HealthTrust & privately owned land Ø New primary motorized use access at a new trailhead at the access point for RS2477

BUTTE ASSET PLAN PARCEL (the parcel next to the Knik River Public Use) § Borough should keep at least half of parcel for future Butte community recreational needs, if the Borough gives this area to DNR to manage as part of the KRPUA

LAKES AREA § All use needs to be compatible with habitat protection, § Multiple use July 15th to April 15th ; Non-motorized only April 16th - July 31st § Seasonal closure will help protect waterfowl & habitat § Establish motorized horsepower & speed limits § No jet skis anywhere in lakes area incompatible with wildlife § Work with AK Fish & Game to monitor impacts on wildlife from recreational activity RIPPY TRAIL § Do not exclude Rippy from the trail evaluation principals set out in Managements guidelines § Develop it as a single tract non-motorized trail, § Motorized use should not extend beyond Jim Lake § It should be subject to rerouting or seasonal closure to avoid trumpeter swan nest sites.

MUD LAKE § Work with Eklutna on any plans since they own most of the surrounding land § Development ideas could include: wildlife viewing platform, educational kiosk on wetlands, waterfowl, migration § Improve small boat launch § Restore shoreline erosion

JIM LAKE § Non-motorized. Has been an active loon nesting site for many years § Do shoreline restoration and improve small craft launch § Close access road to lake. Develop handicapped accessible path to lake with viewing site § Improve small upper parking area § Develop small primitive upper area campground GENERAL § We need strong on the ground law enforcement now § No target shooting o Current proposals would still allow shooting near trails where people could be walking § Target shooters leave an enormous amount of litter & lead pollution § Construct and maintain restrooms or facilities and bear proof trash cans at all main access points. § New trails should not be constructed or expanded until plans are complete § Evaluate and protect sensitive habitat areas such as wetlands, salmon streams, and dunes § User Fees should be collected at all access points Establish annual pass § Consider the recommendations made by Butte Area Residents Civic Organization " Consider the recommendations made by Knik River Watershed Group

Comment 112 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 08:51 PM:

Alaska DNR Brandon McCutcheon, Plan Project Mgr. 550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1050
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Mr. McCutcheon: Just a few words in support of the new Alternative 5 proposed by Audubon Alaska and the Knik River Watershed Group for use in management of the Knik River Public Use Area . Over a period of 20 years, whenever I visited my wifes family in Palmer we used to walk into this once wonderful area. During our walks we saw an ever increasing abuse of the habitat there by snow machines and three wheelers, then by four wheelers. Inclusion of the provisions of the new alternative as part of your management plan would help address the abuse of habitat in the Knik River Public Use Area, especially that in the Jim-Swan Wetlands. As you are undoubtedly aware, this wetland is important not only for Trumpeter swans and other waterfowl, but for many other wildlife species as well. Prohibition of motorized vehicles in this wetland is of absolute paramounce to prevent the continued deterioration of the wildlife habitat there and to allow its restoration to the conditions in which we first found it more than 25 years ago. Thankyou.

Frank J. Keim 2220 Penrose Lane Fairbanks, AK 99709 451-9308

Comment 113 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 09:17 PM:

Comment on Proposed management alternatives.

Unit A: Alt. 2 preferred

Unit B: Alt. 3 or 4 are fair options. Alt 1 and 2 would be a travesty to this area and wholly inconsiderate of responsible comment. Motorized boats should NOT be allowed where inappropriate and unecessarry to use and enjoyment of the area. Motorized boats are not appropriate onJim or Mud Lake, nor on any waters of Jim Creek above the first fork.

Unit C - H: Alt 3 preferred

Fees: Alt 4 preferred

Comment 114 of 238 - received on 05/02/2007 at 11:57 PM:

Comments on Management Action: 1. 2. & 3. Classify ' trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: access roads into KRPUA, trail/road for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational areas. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails.

1.& 2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4.DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle

access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisitions were not identified, nor was a need or use for such land described.

Comments on Actions Common to All Alternatives: to add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc. Comments on Preliminary Alternatives 1, 2, 3: DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the unrestricted access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for access trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail..

Other Comments: Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenburg Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area..

Comment 115 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 06:39 AM:

I generally support the PRELIMINARY MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AND ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES as set out in the Alternatives document. There are some suggested specific changes described below. Management Actions First Para I submit that the inclusion of close in Through this process, trails may be developed, designated, re-routed, or closed by the Department. is against the intent and letter of the statute (per Sec 41.23.200(d) (1)). This direction in the statute applies to the whole of the KRPUA, and is applicable to all established sub-units. While users are looking forward to working with the Management team to improve trails they will not support closing any existing trail. If it is deemed that a specific trail is causing a problem, repairing or slight rerouting of the trail can and should be the remedial action.

Sec. 3. Second Bullet Add significantly between trails and impacting. This would put this management action in line with the Generally Allowed Uses.

Sec. 3. Third Bullet Remove the close provision.

Sec. 3. Add new Para Take aggressive action to acquire land required to maintain access to the KRPUA from the Knik River bridge area and acquire the lands within the KRPUA scheduled to be conveyed to the Eklutna Native Corporation.

Acquiring these parcels would maintain the cohesiveness of and access to the area.

Actions Common to All Areas Third Para; Change Vehicle use off of existing trails in vegetated areas is prohibited. This does not apply to units or areas designated to allow these activities through the KRPUA Management Plan. to new Para Generally Allowed Uses on State Lands will remain in effect for all areas unless specifically waived for a designated area.

The Generally Allowed Uses provides adequate protection for the land and maintains one base set of standards for users on State owned/controlled lands they may use. The education given users of the KRPUA would then apply to other DNR controlled lands.

Add Para: Any lands acquired by the State of Alaska within the boundaries of the KRPUA must have no covenants more restrictive than the Generally Allowed Uses. This is needed to preclude piecemeal management plans/restrictions on small areas within the area.

SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT AREAS Unit A Lower Knik River Flats I support Alternative 2 for this area with the following changes;

A. I support the ban on recreational shooting for this area. However I stress that a safe alternative area for legitimate recreational shooters must be identified and created within the KRPUA. I feel that the safest shooting area would be on the north side of Maude Road between Mud and Jim Lake. This area would be more accessible to this user group, more easily regulated and with one road access be more readily patrolled and enforced by State Troopers in any type of vehicle.

B. Clarification on the 100 foot buffer for the vegetated areas along Jim Creek is needed. Some of RST 17 comes within this area, I feel the restriction on new trails in this buffer is sufficient.

C. I feel that the creation of a new non-motorized trail from the Pavilion to the flats is a wast of time Unit B Lakes I support Alternative 2 for this area with the following changes;

A. I support the development and maintenance of the Rippy Trail as a multiple, non-motorized and motorized, use access to the upper Knik valley.

In light of the seasonal flooding along the Knik River flats discounting that route as a certainty, another access route is sorely needed for safely reaching users in the upper valley in emergency situations as well as allowing in-holders sure year-around access to their homes and property.

B. The suggested restriction on motorized travel within 300 feet of swan nests should be reconsidered and determined if it is required by any State or Federal statute. As a minimum this should be amended to allow continued use of the established trails per Sec 41.23.200(d) (1) of the statute. We recommend that signs warning users of the proximity of the nests be placed on the trails where they approach active nests. This would allow all users the chance to observe the swans, even the people who cannot travel that far on foot.

C. I support banning recreational shooting within ¼ mile of facilities as long as this rule does not interfere with the establishment of a shooting area somewhere in the unit.

Units C, F, G and H General Upper Knik Valley I support Alternative 2 for these areas with the following changes;

A. Adding Uses in accordance with the Generally Allowed Uses will be allowed

B. I would like to see specific allowance for motorized use on non-vegetated areas be added. The rock flats and gravel moraine in this area make the possible designation of specified trails or routes difficult to identify as well as enforce while travel on them has no ecological impact.

Unit E Upper Friday Alpine I support Alternative 2 for this area with the following changes;

A. Adding Uses in accordance with the Generally Allowed Uses will be allowed

FEES I would not object to the minimum fee structure if the following policies are in place;

A. DNR needs to ensure that ALL of the fees collected are used to maintain the facilities within the KRPUA.

B. Fee structure would allow family season pass holders to use more than one specific vehicle and allow all family members to use individual OHVs within the area.

Many families use this area to recreate, we feel that encouraging family activities is a beneficial use of the area to be made easier, not more expensive.

C. Any fee structure should EVENLY tax all area user groups. I cannot approve of a fee plan that is to support facilities and trail building for all user groups when the fees are paid by a few user groups.

D. Any fee structure needs to consider the diversity of the access means and access points. There are many access points into the area, application of a fee structure would need to specifically address this fact to insure that all users are in fact complying with the fee structure.

E. Users already paying snowmobile/ATV or boat registrations should be exempt as they already pay fees to use public resources.

Comment 116 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 07:19 AM:

The less restrictions put on Knik the better. There are less and less places for which the public can go and have unrestricted fun. I overwhelming lean to less restriction versus any additional restriction.

Comment 117 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 07:58 AM:

DNR has an opportunity to create a model plan to balance user group interests, bring folks together, protect habitat and address community concerns. The proposed heavily biased management actions and alternatives fail miserably in this regard. The alternatives only serve to futher pit user group against user group and residents against users, and will codify destruction of prime habitat for salmon, moose, bear and waterfowl.

The 'sideboards' adopted by DNR are flawed and are not in compliance with several Alaska statutes including the KRPUA statute:

11 AAC 96.020 Generally Allowed Uses state:

o A.1.E. Travel that causes or contributes to water quality degradation, alteration of drainage

systems, significant rutting, ground disturbance, or thermal erosion requires a permit or other written authorization.

o A.5.C. Other allowed uses include those that do not cause or contribute to significant disturbance of vegetation, drainage, or soil stability.

There is no statement in the KRPUA statute overriding section 38. The KRPUA statute did not remove the area from the public domain. Furthermore,

11AAC 96.025 Conditions for Generally Allowed Uses are subject to the following conditions:

(1) activities employing wheeled or tracked vehicles must be conducted in a manner that minimizes surface damage. (2) vehicles must use existing roads and trails whenever possible; (3) activities must be conducted in a manner that minimizes: (A) disturbance of vegetation, soil stability, or drainage systems; (B) changing the character of, polluting, or introducing silt and sediment into streams, lakes, ponds, water, holes, seeps, and marshes; and (C) disturbance of fish and wildlife resources;

Furthermore:

A stated purpose for establishing the KRPUA is protect and maintain migratory waterfowl nesting areas; habitats for moose, Dall sheep, and brown bear; and other fish and wildlife habitat so that traditional public uses of fish and wildlife populations may continue.

During public hearings you stated that you are waiting for science from Fish and Game. When questioned, the director of Division of Wildlife Conservation at Fish and Game said this area is not Fish & Game's responsibility and they will not be commenting. DNR already has science, you just chose not to acknowledge it. You have a preliminary assessment from F&G on the high density breeding ducks based on historic and current waterfowl surveys. You have data on the many anadromous waters and critical Coho rearing areas. You have the numerous studies and documents done the past 25 years recognizing the important habitat. You have access to 100s of photos documenting the extreme level of damage to this habitat, damage that is progressing with each passing year.

Salvage this management process:

1) Adopt ALTERNATIVE 5 for the lakes Unit as developed by the Knik River Watershed Group as shown below:

Alternative 5 Unit B. Lakes (Jim-Swan Wetlands)

Provide for low to moderate use compatible with protection of fish and wildlife habitats. User fees may be imposed.

Rippy Trail will be developed as a single track nonmotorized trail and is subject to rerouting or seasonal closure to avoid Trumpeter Swan nest sites.

The Jim-Swan wetlands will be open to multiple use recreation from August 1 through April 15. Fall use is subject to posted horsepower limits for resource protection and user safety. Snowmachining will be restricted during periods of inadequate snow cover to protect vegetation. The wetlands including waterways will be closed to motorized recreation from April 16 through July 31 to protect wildlife resources, such as migrating, nesting and brood-rearing Trumpeter Swans, loons and ducks, and vegetation. Nonmotorized recreation

will be restricted as needed to protect active loon and Trumpeter Swan nest sites.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game will monitor wildlife resources to evaluate recreational impacts. Facilities that may be developed in this unit include:

Mud Lake (Facilities, use and alteration done via cooperative agreement with Eklutna, Inc.)
" Shoreline restoration and improved small craft launch area. " Canoe concession, wildlife viewing platform, educational kiosk on wetlands, waterfowl, migration " Improved upper parking area to halt erosion into the lake.

Jim Lake " Shoreline restoration and improved small craft launch. " Close access road to lake and develop into a handicapped accessible path to viewing site. " Improve small upper parking area. " Develop upper area campground.

2) Refer to the alternatives proposed by the Butte Area Residents Civic Association for all other units.

3) Of primary importance for all units:

a) DO NOT RESCIND existing regulations until environmental and trail analyses are complete. This is a ridiculous concept that only serves to REWARD users who have been abusing your land and our land, disrespecting the communities, and disrespecting other users for the past several years.

b) All existing trails, with the exception of RS2447 trails, are subject to closure, rerouting or designation, pending environmental analyses and safety considerations.

c) No new trails or extensions (including Rippy 'loop') will be created or expanded until the trails management process is complete.

d) Key habitats, including salmon streams, wetlands and dunes, will be closed until restoration, revegetation, trails management process and environmental analyses are complete.

e) Install public restrooms and bear-proof garbage receptacles in all moderate to high-use parking areas.

f) For safety, prohibit recreational shooting within a ½ mile of all facilities and moderate to high-use areas. To prevent lead deposition into the water, prohibit recreational shooting within ¼ mile of any waterway.

g) Lawful hunting will not be restricted.

Please do not make decisions that affect an area so very important to so many folks based on politics and power. Rather, create a plan that will stand the test of time and political change. Revamp your flawed sideboards, comply with statutes, and read, consider and value comments from ALL user groups. I and supporters of the Knik River Watershed Group are simply asking you to care.

Take steps to protect habitat prior to completion of a plan. Changing a completed plan document will be very difficult. Err on the side of balanced use and habitat protection as required in the statute. Doing so leaves miles and miles and 200,00 acres of ORV opportunity.

Thank you.

Comment 118 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 09:54 AM:

Please consider these comments on the KRPUA preliminary management alternatives.

~GENERAL MANGEMENT ACTIONS ~

Base all management actions & uses on: PROTECTION OF HABITAT, WILDLIFE & WETLANDS - The legislation clearly states this is one of the purposes. (HB307 Section1 part 2)

IMPACT ON RESIDENTS Regulate use to allow residents peace & quiet on their own land.

ENFORCEMENT Please include provisions for immediate on the ground enforcement. The legislation states enforcement provisions should be included in the plan. During hearings all user groups asked for enforcement.

Section 3: APPLY THESE TRAIL EVALUATIONS PROCESSES TO ENTIRE KRPUA. DO NOT EXCLUDE RIPPY TRAIL from this evaluation process. The presented alternatives are poor & do not provide the necessary evaluation. Excluding Rippy Trail takes it out of the planning process.

COMPLETE ALL PLANS & EVALUATION BEFORE ANY NEW TRAILS are constructed

ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

ACCESS BROCHURE should include educational points on proper use such as: Impacts on & consideration for residents & other users; leave no trace ethics; safety etc.

PROHIBIT OFF TRAIL VEHICLE USE THROUGHOUT KRPUA - Unless strict guidelines are set to stay on trail, ORVs will go everywhere. It is easier to enforce if same rules apply everywhere.

PROHIBIT FIREWORKS: Yes. They are illegal, noisy, a fire hazard & create litter. But HOW will you ENFORCE it?

SANITATION & WASTE DISPOSAL FACILITIES -Need to be established at all major access points & maintained regularly

LOWER KNIK FLATS (Unit A) Please CONSIDER BARCOs detailed recommendations.

DO NOT RESCIND States Generally Allowed Usages dealing with rutting from vehicles -Rescinding the regulations disregards residents and habitat: -What will keep motorized vehicles just on the gravel areas? -Boundaries as presented are hard to define, thus to enforce. -Rutting from motorized vehicles is caused by high speeds (More noise for residents). -It sets a bad precedence. -Negative impacts of an activity should not be encouraged -Rutting in vegetated areas next to the river could remove natural flood protection Motorized use should be allowed, but regulated.

SET MOTORIZED USE SPEED LIMITS - To help decrease noise for residents & non-motorized users. At my home, I experience a constant whine & hum from motorized vehicles.

MANAGE AS MULTIPLE USE for both non-motorized & motorized users. Consider separate motorized/non-motorized trails and access points where possible and alternating use days

KNIK RIVER BRIDGE ACCESS AREA should be non-motorized due to noise & access problems. At high water levels there is currently no legal access up the river since the land here is private & Mental Health Trust Land. Making it non-motorized would simplify this problem as well as decrease noise for nearby residents

SULLIVAN ACCESS POINTS - Please consider BARCOs excellent recommendations on new trailhead at the start to SR 2477, & utilization of part of Butte Asset Parcel for community needs

PROHIBIT MOTORIZED USE IN ALL VEGETATED AREAS - For easier enforcement make the rules clear and consistent - motorized users need to stay on trails. No motorized use at all in a 100 foot vegetated buffer along Jim & Bodenbug creeks, is great.

MAN MADE LAKE BARCO alternative. Motorized restrictions are needed

LAKES SECTION Unit B

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS for entire Lakes area

MANAGE as CRITICAL HABITAT FOR FISH, WATERFOWL AND GAME - (HB307 Section 1 part 2 protect & maintain habitat)

SEEK EXPERT HELP Consult with scientific experts on fish, waterfowl, game, wetlands, etc. for management guidelines and evaluation

NO MOTORIZED USE APRIL 15TH TO JULY 15TH - Seasonal closures to protect nesting AND brooding waterfowl. Check with waterfowl experts as to exact nesting & brood raising periods. Loons & other waterfowl need protection too. Not just the swans

SET HORSEPOWER & SPEED LIMITS - during times boats are allowed. Excessive speed damages vegetative habitat disturbs wildlife & is dangerous for users.

NO JET SKIS anywhere in system but especially not in Jim Lake Not compatible with wildlife.

PROHIBIT SHOOTING IN ENTIRE UNIT - except during hunting season. Hikers along the Rippy & other trails need protection too. Prohibit lead shot to prevent lead poisoning for fish & wildlife.

MUD LAKE - Improve boat launch; Repair shoreline erosion; Establish sanitary & waste disposal facilities and maintain them; Consider Education kiosks on wetlands, waterfowl, migration, leave no trace, etc

JIM LAKE - Make non-motorized to protect the common loons that have nested there for many years. No developments right on the lake to protect migratory swans & nesting loons. Restrict access to a handicapped accessible path to the lake. Rehabilitate/restore shoreline damage & Improve canoe launching area. Develop small primitive campground in upper area away from lake. Establish sanitary & waste disposal facilities and maintain them regularly

RIPPY TRAIL

Should be NONMOTORIZED BEYOND JIM LAKE - Enforcement is not available to keep motorized vehicles out of wetlands & springs. This fragile area between the lakes/wetlands and upland tundra contains numerous springs that feed the wetlands. How can you prevent motorized damage?

Motorized users have not shown they can voluntarily stay on the trails. There have been big negative changes from motorized use in the past 5 year: Trail widening, enlarged mud holes, deeper ruts & increased erosion has occurred. The wetland access area (The area just before trail turns & starts to climb to the bluff) has constantly increasing trails. Five years ago there were hardly any trails. Last year they increased dramatically just from spring to fall IF ENFORCEMENT could somehow be GUARANTEED (But, I dont see how) Then could try LIMITED MOTORIZED USE to the BLUFF AREA, NOT BEYOND. This would still leave the problem of preventing motorized access to the wetland area. There is also serious erosion as the trail climbs up to the bluff that would require complete rerouting there. On the other side of the bluff there is a spring area that has become a bog with motorized use.

HAVE SEASONAL SPRING TIME MOTORIZED & HORSE CLOSURE if these uses are allowed. Using wet trails causes erosion & damage ruining the trail for other users. LOOP TRAIL should be NONMOTORIZED ONLY - Encircling the lakes/wetlands area with motorized trails cause habitat & wildlife problems

EVALUATE TRAIL REGULARY; CLOSE TO USE AS NECESSARY TO PROTECT HABITAT & WILDLIFE

UPPER JIM ALPINE Unit D Make non-motorized. Fragile tundra areas are easily damaged by motorized vehicles. Eventually develop hiking trails

FEES - Should be charged at all access points. Try to co-ordinate an annual parking pass with the Mat-Su Borough Pass.

Please give careful consideration to the plans presented by Butte Area Residents Civic Organization (BARCO) & Knik River Watershed Group (KRWG). Make this a strong management plan to protect the area for future use, consider residents, and preserve the habitat & wildlife that make it a special area.

Comment 119 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 10:40 AM:

RE: Perception vs. Fact

It has been said, for example, that an ATV rut to one person equates to "environmental damage" and to another "it's just a bit of mud, so what?" Damage due to human disturbances are not just perspective. You can QUANTIFY the damage being done to the environment. The rutting of an ORV trail, the erosion of a bank through time, the loss of the vegetative mat, or the depth of erosion in a dune can all be measured. Educated management policies can be based on science.

Comment 120 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 10:51 AM:

RE The Knik River PUA will be Managed consistent with all existng statutes, regulations, and policies.

The Knik River PUA must also adhere to the Coastal Management Plan.

Comment 121 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 10:54 AM:

RE: Perception vs. Fact

It has been said, for example, that an ATV rut to one person equates to "environmental damage" and to another "it's just a bit of mud, so what?" Damage due to human disturbances are not perspective. You can quantify the damage being done to the environment. The rutting of an ORV trail, the erosion of a bank through time, the loss of the vegetative mat, or the erosion of a dune can all be measured. Educated management polices can be based on science.

Comment 122 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 10:58 AM:

RE: Unit A. Alternative 2 - To Rescind Regulations

Rescind, v. To revoke, repeal, abolish, or cancel. The DNR cannot justify rescinding any regulations in full, or in part, without demonstrating that these actions will not cause habitat damage.

Comment 123 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 11:00 AM:

My greatest concern for the Knik River Public Use area is that critical habitat endure no additional damage. Canoes, hikers, and even hunters walking through the area do not destroy the habitat. But airboats and ATVs can produce damage that is not repairable so these uses need to be contained within existing trails - and the plan must ensure that. Please do not dilute further the safeguards that were input from public comments and considered in the draft plan.

Jill Parson

Comment 124 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 11:02 AM:

RE: Fees & Gated Access Points

I agree with Alternative 3. Charging user fees will help pay for facilities and resource management. Gated access points will reduce the number of access points into the area. This will have many benefits including less disturbance to the neighboring community and less area for law enforcement to patrol.

Comment 125 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 11:13 AM:

RE: Unit B. Lakes - Alternatives 2,3,4

Rippy Trail should not be exempt from an extensive trail management process before development. An indepth environmental assessment must be completed before developing or expanding any new or old trails. Rippy Trail should be considered for non-motorized designation beyond Upper Jim Creek. No ORV use should be allowed off of existing trails into vegetated areas.

Comment 126 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 11:28 AM:

RE: Alternatives are severely lacking in mitigation measures for wildlife or for the protection of wildlife habitat.

The Jim-Swan wetland complex is an important and sensitive habitat for a wide variety of fish, birds, and wildlife species. Motorized access should be prohibited in the lakes complex. If this is not a viable option, motorized access should be restricted to 5-10 hp. Closing of a waterbody with an active Trumpeter Swan nest will be the the best measure of protection if there are no restrictions placed on motorized access. Spawning fish and other wildlife species are being run over by ORV at Bodenbug Creek, etc... and measures of protections

for these species must be addressed.

Comment 127 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 11:30 AM:

RE: Recreational shooting

Recreational discharge of firearms should be restricted in the entire Knik River PUA to protect human safety.

Comment 128 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 11:35 AM:

RE: Unit A. Rescinding Restriction of highway and off-road vehicle use.

Rescissions of existing regulations regarding generally allowed highway and off-road vehicles uses should not be allowed without studying the environmental impacts of these actions.

Comment 129 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 12:06 PM:

RE: The KRPUA will be managed consistent with all existing statutes, regulations, and policies.

The Coastal Management Plan must be included.

Comment 130 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 12:16 PM:

Alternative management plans for the protection of water quality standards, fish, wildlife, and wildlife habitat are lacking. Not only are measures lacking for the protection of water, fish, and wildlife but measure to rescind regulations have been added. Regarding the only measure for the protection of a wildlife species: If motorized access is not prohibited in the wetlands, use of a waterbody with an active Trumpeter swan nest should be prohibited during the nesting season.

Comment 131 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 12:17 PM:

RE: Fees and Access

Minimize access points into the KRPUA and charge user fees (Alternative 3 fee schedule) to help pay for trail, facility, and resource management.

Comment 132 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 12:21 PM:

RE: Quantify the effects of human disturbances to the KRPUA

It is a fact and not perception that motorized and non-motorized recreational activities are causing damage to certain areas within the KRPUA. Studies can measure the extent and types of damage and help determine the appropriate mitigation measures to be taken. No trail, habitat, or waterway should be grandfathered or exempt from a formal, indepth study.

Comment 133 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. No problem with trail assessing. 2. Any lands sold or reconveyed to KRPUA shall have no new covenants or restrictions. Vehicle use off trail should be allowed in harvested game acquisition with no land damage incurred. 3. Unit A - Alt 1, but shooting restricted if shooting range established in Unit B. Unit C - Alt 1; Unit D, E, F, G, H - all Alt 3. 4. Fee collection - Alt 1 no fees.

Comment 134 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:

BARCO Substitutes for DNR Management Actions 1) DEVELOP MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH PRIME CONSIDERATION HOW ANY PROPOSED ACTION WOULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT RESIDENTS regarding traffic, noise, dust, air quality and personal safety and how

to mitigate such impact. 2) DEVELOP A TIME-SHARE SCHEDULE FOR MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION. Existing commercial airboat tour operators and aircraft should be exempted from the limitation. Existing ATV guided tours may be exempted on a permit basis. During the trapping and hunting seasons, legally licensed hunters and trappers shall be allowed motorized access. This will benefit different users to recreate without conflict, give respite to wildlife, and give residents and quiet users equal time to enjoy their homes and yards without nuisance noise from power boats, personal watercraft and ORVs and high-use traffic in their neighborhoods. 3) SEPARATE MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED ACCESS POINTS: Centralize Motorized Access: a) from RS 2477 (Knik Glacier Trail/Jim Creek Trail) trail head and parking lot on State of Alaska Land. b) Public Access to Upper Knik River from South Knik River to be determined; Private Access for residents only onto motorized trails if their private property adjoins KRPUA is allowed. Multi-Use Access: From Pavilion Parking Lot for access to Jim Creek Fishing on Sexton Trail. Motorized access to terminate in existing DNR parking lot uphill from Jim Creek Fishing area. Non-motorized access for campers, hikers, horses, bikers etc to Jim Creek Fishing and beyond. Non-motorized Access: a) from Knik River/Bodenburg Creek Access to protect fish and waterfowl habitat at Bodenburg Creek; to protect adjoining private lands from ongoing trespass, and to allow residents and visitors the enjoyment of quiet recreational endeavors near our homes. b) from Jim Lake Parking Lot to Rippy Trail and Wetlands c) Allow access for motorized handicapped persons and non-handicapped companion in non-motorized areas by permit. 4) CRITICAL HABITAT AREAS SHOULD BE CREATED to include lakes, wetlands, alpine transition zones and sand dunes, to prevent further destruction. Restoration/revegetation plans should be established and implemented for these areas. The Jim - Swan wetlands area and adjacent Rippy Trail should be made a non-motorized area, with a possible relaxation of restrictions during hunting /trapping seasons if daily enforcement is in place. During these times, motorized use should be limited to designated trails and access points. This area has been specifically recommended for special protection by numerous groups, agencies and studies at least since the 1981 USF&W Knik Arm Wetlands Study. 5) ANY LAND ACQUISITION FOR INCLUSION TO THE KNIK RIVER PUBLIC USE AREA will require a public process regarding cost for management, facilities and law enforcement and available funding. Any land acquisition from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough will require a full public process regarding preferences of local residents for that parcel and proposed management actions to ensure a variety of recreational activities for the benefit of residents, and particularly the Youth of the Community of Butte; and the cost of such a land transaction to the State of Alaska and the income to be derived by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough from the sale of these lands. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough shall not "give away" borough-owned assets until the Community of Butte can be assured that they be managed for the benefit of the community. 6) Establish fines for bailable offenses including the intentional or unintentional contamination of land and waters by lead, automotive fluids and other hazardous materials; cutting life trees; rutting and destroying vegetation; contributing to the erosion of river, lake and stream banks; disturbing or harassing wildlife including waterfowl.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES TO DNR ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL UNITS

Limit off-road vehicles to established and hardened trails. Prohibit snow-machine "water skippers" from operating in Knik River or any of its tributaries. Establish bailable offense for this activity for disturbing the peace of residents at any hour. Oppose rescinding any existing rules or other regulatory action in the entire KRPUA which protect streams, fish and wildlife habitat, etc., or are designed to prevent rutting of trails and disturbing vegetation. Do not allow existing destructive uses to continue or expand. Restrict curb weight to 1,000 lb for

highway and off-road vehicles until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging in all units is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large-vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES BY MANAGEMENT UNIT

UNIT A. Lower Knik Flats INTENT: Change language to read: "The intent is to encourage a wide variety of recreational uses including nonmotorized and motorized uses as described in HB307. DNR recognizes the high value of this area for quality multiple use recreation. DNR shall not manage any unit as a motor park, moto-cross or mudbog venue but provide a high quality experience for responsible ORV travelers and sightseers. The management goal includes to separate nonmotorized from motorized uses by creating specially hardened trails for motorized and equine users to lessen impact on the environment and to create safe conditions for all uses. To further this goal, multiple access points will be created which separate motorized and nonmotorized users and which provide safety and quiet for adjacent property owners. DNR shall mitigate high-use multiple use recreation for the benefit of residents and responsible motorized and quiet users. Mitigation measures to include speed limits, speed bumps, controlled access and a highly visible law enforcement presence. Indestructible sanitation facilities and camping area style trash containers shall be placed as soon as possible to protect the health of the public. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Discharge of Firearms: "Recreational discharge of firearms will be prohibited in this entire unit to protect human safety and to prevent pollution of lead from skeet targets and ammunition into the waters of Knik River Valley. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Rescinding of Regulations including Remedies for well documented current Damage in this unit: 1) No existing regulations will be rescinded. All regulations will be developed in compliance with existing laws and regulations, including but not restricted to 11AAC 96.020 (a)(1)(D)(E), 11 AAC 96.025 (1)(2)(3)(A-C) as well as any and all Alaska Statutes which protect fish, game and waterfowl and its habitat. 2) Repair rutted trails and vegetation in forests, wetlands and lowlands. Harden where appropriate. Repair stream banks. 3) Revegetate Dunes. Dunes protect Butte and Palmer from Knik River changing course. 4) Allow unrestricted vehicle curb weight only for travel on Sexton Trail from Pavilion Parking Lot to DNR Parking Lot on the uplands prior to Jim Creek Flats and on Jim Creek Trail to existing DNR parking lot, or parking lot to be established on uplands in forest prior to approaching the Flats. Both Jim Creek Trail (aka RS2477, Knik Glacier Trail) and Sexton Trail should be hardened with speed bumps added for the safety of the public. 5) Restrict curb weight of highway and off-road vehicles to 1,000 lb curb weight until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging from UNIT A to KNIK GLACIER is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit. 6) Prohibit the use of trees for extricating "winching" vehicles out of mud or water. 7) Recommend and agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3 regarding 100' stream buffer protection on all water ways. NEW Alternative 4 regarding utilization of Mat-Su Borough Pavilion Parcel. In addition to equalize the number of motorized and non-motorized trails on this parcel, Mat-Su Borough shall utilize a large portion this parcel for community recreational purposes, including a community park, BMX park, multi-age playground, soccer fields, volleyball and tennis venues to give young adults and families, "something to do." A public campground should be established there as well. The Pavilion Parking Area was built by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su

Borough. The picnic pavilion at the site was subsequently destroyed by motorized users. The Pavilion Parking Area should be designated access for non-motorized users. Two non-motorized trails should be designated to accommodate different users, such as for hikers, bikers and horses. A separated parking lot on the west side of the "Pavilion" should allow cars to travel the Sexton Trail to Jim Creek. In addition, An ATV trail should be developed and designated to allow ATV access from the "Pavilion" parking lot to Jim Creek. Residents should be allowed planning participation on this Mat-Su Borough parcel. All motorized access to the entire area should be from the trail head for the RS2477 Knik Glacier Trail (aka Jim Creek Trail) on State of Alaska Land to minimize adverse impact to residents from high traffic, noise, dust and air pollution. Sanitary facilities will be developed and may be shared by users of both the Pavilion and RS2477 parking areas. Separate sanitary facilities may be developed for a public camp ground on the Pavilion parcel. NEW Alternative 4 regarding Manmade Lake: "No Motorized use" at Manmade Lake except for parking access for picnics, swimming and other non-motorized activities. The bottom of Manmade Lake should be dredged and cleaned from an accumulation of glass, metal and lead and restored to its original purpose as a community "swimming hole."

UNIT B. Lakes - Unit B should be renamed to read "Lakes and Wetlands." INTENT language should be changed to read: Provide for moderate density quiet use and limited motorized use for all seasons for the protection of water fowl in the summer and moose and sheep in the winter. The area in this unit was recommended as Critical Habitat in previous studies. Designate and manage this area as Critical Habitat. Motor size for boats in this unit and Jim Creek shall be restricted to 3 HP to protect nesting and rearing waterfowl including trumpeter swans in all lakes of the unit. No motorized recreational vehicle use in lakes and wetlands area during the summer. No power boats, including airboats, in lakes and wetlands. Establish snowmachine corridor in the winter. NEW BARCO Alternative 5 regarding Rippy Trail; Rippy Trail to remain designated non-motorized in its entirety. No Loop Trail. Rippy Trail was established by and for non-motorized use by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough in the 1980s. Motorized users have destroyed one salmon stream and several springs feeding the wetlands and lakes and, because of their large numbers, have created sanitary issues. A "Loop Trail" would cut into an established wild life corridor which extends from the Alpine environment west to the Knik River-Matanuska River Delta and connects with the Palmer Hay Flats NEW Alternative 5 for the entire unit: Use of any waterbody with a motorized watercraft is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Approaching within 1500 feet of an active Trumpeter Swan nest on land or water is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Legal hunting is allowed; however, swans gathering on the lakes in preparation of their fall migration may not be approached within 500 feet either on land or on the waters they are gathering in. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Mud Lake. In addition, construction of a boat launch/ramp at Mud Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Jim Lake. In addition, construction of a canoe launch at Jim Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. NEW Alternative 5 to prohibit recreational shooting at Jim Lake in order to protect public safety and preventing disturbance of nesting/rearing waterfowl. Legal hunting is allowed after Swan fall migration.

UNIT C - Upper Knik Flats NEW Alternative 3: No vehicles more than 1000 lbs curb weight until an improved road for access is developed to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids.

UNIT D - Upper Jim Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT E - Upper Friday Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT F - Grasshopper Valley Agree with DNR Alternatives 2, with the exception that no additional trails be developed.

UNIT G - Glacier Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. In Addition: NEW ALTERNATIVE 3 regarding future development: Recommend that the area past the Knik Glacier Lake if that is within the PUA be made a non-motorized area, except for aircraft. At this time no other motorized vehicles can generally access it (except if transported by helicopter or other air transportation). However, as the glacier recedes, motorized access may be possible, with deleterious effects to the wildlife and environment. At present this area is almost pristine, with some aircraft landing sites and virtually no other tracks, litter etc. Taking a non-motorized (except for aircraft) stance at this time, while having no effect on present usage, would protect the area against possible future abuses. As has been seen throughout the accessible PUA, any place an ORV can get, someone will take one, and many will not be cognizant of possible environmental damage.

UNIT H - Metal Creek Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. NEW Alternative 3: Prohibit vehicles to travel through Metal Creek in order to prevent pollution of the waters of Metal Creek and Knik River from automotive fluids while traveling through the water and to prevent abandonment of vehicles in the waterways of the Knik River.

FEES Agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3, Point 1 regarding the collection of fees. In addition, amount of fees charged should be based on cost of management, law enforcement and facilities to be determined as the management plan is developed.

Comment 135 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:

The purpose of this letter is to offer the comments of the Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition (AQRC) on the draft Preliminary Alternatives and Preliminary Management Actions for the Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan. AQRC is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization with approximately 600 members and supporters from throughout Alaska. AQRC seeks a fair and balanced allocation of Alaska's public lands for the non-motorized and motorized recreationist. We believe natural sounds and natural quiet are resources to be protected by land managers of our public lands and that public land users, home owners, communities, businesses, wildlife, visitors and future generations all have the right to quiet rights. Before we comment on the specifics of the draft Preliminary Alternatives and Management Actions, we believe some general comments are in order. Section 41.23.180 of the legislation identifies four purposes, the first three of which are pertinent to this discussion. We read the purpose section as giving equal weight to all sections listed, but we find the proposed alternatives and management actions to be heavily skewed toward just one of the purposes: off-road vehicle motorized recreational opportunities. Opportunities for non-motorized users are virtually non-existent. Secondly, we believe a conflict exists among the purposes (ongoing OHV use, non-motorized use and protection and maintenance of nesting areas and fish and wildlife habitat) unless restrictions are imposed on OHV use. We do not find that the proposed alternatives and management actions adequately resolve these inherent conflicts. We recognize that the proposals call for no new trails and that the possibility of re-routing and closing trails exists. However, we are concerned that without a definition of what constitutes a "trail", it will be impossible to enforce the "no new trail" provisions. We strongly recommend that DNR adopt a definition of "trail" and take the position that "existing trails" are those in existence at the time the legislation was enacted. Otherwise, DNR may be

forced to 'recognize' new trails put in by OHV users between now and when the Management Plan is finally adopted. We assume DNR has aerial photographs which would support this position. Moreover, we believe the suggestion to rescind some of the Generally Allowed Uses to permit continued abuse is simply unconscionable, unless applicable only to flood plain areas without resource values. As to specifics, we find the Preliminary Alternatives for Unit A, Lower Knik Flats, and Unit B, Lakes, to be much too narrow and fail to reflect all purposes of the legislation. Our comments focus on these two areas on the premise that these are the high use areas and most subject to conflict among users and uses. In our opinion, the alternatives do not adequately provide for: "general public recreation"; protection and maintenance of nesting areas and wildlife and fish habitat; and maintenance and enhancement of "non-motorized recreational opportunities". For example, one proposed non-motorized trail in Unit A is a ½ mile section of the Rippy Trail in Unit B (and then only if Alternative 3 is chosen) do not fulfill the above cited purposes of general public recreation or non-motorized recreational opportunities. We strongly support Alternative 3 in Unit A in regards to recreational discharge of firearms if "restriction" means prohibition. We believe this is important for individual safety as well as for the peace and quiet the non-motorized user of the area seeks. In the Lakes Unit we recommend a similar prohibition for the same reasons. We also fail to see how adequate protection for nesting areas and fish and wildlife habitat is provided when OHV use is allowed, in Unit B, to continue on existing trails regardless of the damage already done. In effect, this rewards those who have repeatedly violated the State's Generally Allowed Uses governing OHV use on general state lands. Moreover, we strenuously object to the proposal in Unit A which would rescind protections against significant rutting and ground disturbance by OHVs. Unless DNR can guarantee that such rescission will only be applicable to non-vegetated flood plain areas without resource values, the state has no business promoting the destruction of the lands it owns and manages. The Constitutional requirement that the state's resources be managed on a "sustained yield basis" would appear to be violated unless this pertains solely to lands routinely subjected to the natural forces of the Knik River. Apparently the only area to be protected in Unit A is a 100 foot vegetated buffer along both sides of Jim and Bodenbug creeks. Are these the only vegetated areas in all of Unit A? If not, disturbance of all vegetated area should be prohibited. The Alternatives also need to be expanded to create opportunities for non-motorized "boater" to recreate without being subjected to the sights and sounds of jet skis, air boats and motorboats. We note that BLM prohibits activity within one quarter mile (1320 feet) of Trumpeter Swan nests from May 1 through August and question whether the proposed 300 foot buffer for May through June 15th is adequate "to protect waterfowl nesting areas". No protections for other waterfowl nesting areas are offered, though this is a recognized wetlands area important for many bird species. In regard to the proposed "Preliminary Management Actions", we support the overall management action which will analyze trail impacts to critical fish and wildlife habitat, including wetlands, but oppose exempting the Rippy Trail, proposed loop trail or other trails from this analysis. We strongly recommend, under Actions Common to all Alternatives, that the proposal to allow off-trail use be limited to non-vegetated flood plain areas. Even then, the dust issue affecting residents needs to be considered before authorizing off-trail use. The language would appear to be propose that even vegetated areas could be opened for off-trail use. We are aware that the initial version(s) of this legislation to form a PUA created a motorized OHV "playground" without regard for the other resources of this area. The version which was enacted created a more balanced PUA, one which recognized non-motorized uses as well as the preservation of wildlife and fish habitat. However, we find that the proposals are skewed toward the motorized concerns. We recommend you provide alternatives which include, in a balanced manner, opportunities for both non-motorized and motorized recreation. Such activity needs to have spatial and/or

temporal separation. Key to any management of this area is adequate enforcement. We believe that only through enforcement and restrictions on OHV use can the inherent conflict among the legislative purposes be resolved and all purposes achieved. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Comment 136 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. 1, 2 & 3. Classify 'trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: 'access' roads into KRPUA, 'trail/road' for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational 'areas'. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails. 1&2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc.); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4. DNR's proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisition were not identified, nor was a need or use of such land described.

2. To add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc.

3. 1, 2 & 3. DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the 'unrestricted' access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for 'access' trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail.

4. Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use

recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenbug Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area.

Comment 137 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:

2. Any lands sold or re-conveyed in the KRPUA may not have any covenants or restrictions on motorized access. (eliminate: vehicle use off of existing trails in vegetated areas is prohibited.) Should be same as State Law. 3. Unit A - Alt #1. but restrict shooting only if there is a shooting range in Unit B. Unit B - Alt #2; Unit C - Alt #1; Unit D - Alt #1; Unit E - Alt #1; Unit F - Alt #1; Unit G - Alt 1; Unit H - Alt #1 4. Fees - Alt #1. DNR should buy land by bridge.

Comment 138 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. No problem with trail assessing. 2. Any land sold or reconveyed in the KRPUA may not have any new restrictions or closures. 3. Unit A Alt #1, restricted shooting only if shooting area is allowed in Unit B; Unit C Alt #1; Unit D Alt #1; Units E, F, G, H Alt #1. 4. No fee collection (Alt #4).

Comment 139 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. 4 wheelers are something elderly need to get around there. We need shooting areas near the parking area. Unit D is too far and you can't cross Jim Creek. 3. Gun range Unit B shoot against the hills Maud Lake. Restrict A - & others Alt #1.

Comment 140 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:

2. Any lands sold or reconveyed in the KRPUA may not have any covenants or restrictions on motorized access. (eliminate; vehicle use off of existing trails in vegetated areas is prohibited) Should be same as state laws. 3. Unit A - Alt #1 but restricts shooting only if there is a shooting range in Unit B. Unit B - Alt #2; Unit C - Alt #1; Unit D - Alt #1; Unit E - Alt #1; Unit F Alt #1; Unit G Alt #1; Unit H Alt #1. 4. Fee collection - Alt 1 no fees.

Comment 141 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. No problem with trail assessing. 2. Any land sold or reconveyed in the KRPUA may not have any new restrictions or closures of any kind. 3. Unit A Alt #1, restricted shooting only if shooting area is allowed in Unit B. Unit C Alt #1; Unit D Alt #1; Units E, F, G, H Alt #1. 4. No fee collection (Alt #4).

Comment 142 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Please consider safety and family recreational uses in the Knik River area for those who do not use motorized vehicles and want to hike, fish, ski, or otherwise recreate in peace and safety. It is unnerving when ice skating in the Jim lake area and hearing automatic weapons firing nearby [which has occurred every time I tried to skate there]. On another occasion someone was target shooting at a cardboard target facing out on the lake where we had just come in from skiing - we had skied right through his line of fire! I fear for my safety and that of my dogs whenever I go there [especially in winter]. This is a beautiful area and should not be allowed to be degraded, as it has been. Motorized vehicles should be allowed, but limited to established trails and kept out of sensitive wetland areas. There is room for everyone to enjoy this area if common sense would just prevail!

Comment 143 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 01:04 PM:

Unit D- Upper Jim Alpine: Agree with DNR Alternative 2 regarding trails development. - No

recreational discharge of firearms in entire PUA for public safety. If allowed in areas DNR will make itself liable should someone be shot. - Mark Simpson Unit E- Upper Friday Alpine: Agree with DNR Alternative 2 regarding trails development. - No recreational discharge of firearms in entire PUA for public safety. If allowed in areas DNR will make itself liable should someone be shot. - Mark Simpson Unit F- Grasshopper Valley: Agree with DNR Alternative 2, with the exception that no additional trails be developed. - No recreational discharge of firearms in entire PUA for public safety. If allowed in areas DNR will make itself liable should someone be shot. - Mark Simpson Unit G- Glacier: Agree with DNR Alternative 2 regarding trails development. - No recreational discharge of firearms in entire PUA for public safety. If allowed in areas DNR will make itself liable should someone be shot. - Mark Simpson Unit H- Metal Creek: Agree with DNR Alternative 2 regarding trails development. Recommend bridging for Metal Creek to prohibit vehicles crossing in stream and being abandoned when broken down in the waterway. - No recreational discharge of firearms in entire PUA for public safety. If allowed in areas DNR will make itself liable should someone be shot. - Mark Simpson FEES : Agree with DNR Alternative 3 regarding collection of fees. Amount of fees charged should be determined after PUA is in place and a cost management plan developed over time. Fees are necessary to teach all users respect of the land they are utilizing and have a process for maintenance, enforcement, and upkeep. - Mark Simpson

Comment 144 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 02:10 PM:

The purpose of this public comment is to urge support for DNR's adoption of Alternative 5 as proposed by the Knik River Watershed Group.

The Jim-Swan Wetlands, as part of the KRUPA, is a critically important habitat area for migratory birds. All management actions for the KRUPA should be consistent with sustaining and maintaining the habitat values with priority given to the protection of biological resources over discretionary motorized recreation.

In general, the area should be non-motorized during the time frame of mid-April through the end of July to safeguard wildlife resources such as nesting loons and swans. Airboats have severely degraded the habitat in this area and are an on-going threat to waterfowl.

The focus of the overall management for this area should be to eliminate activities that degrade habitat with priority given to efforts that will protect and restore habitat.

Comment 145 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 04:14 PM:

Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance Protecting your right to GO there. PO Box 4053 Palmer, AK 99645 (907) 222-9983 info@alaskaaccess.org

Brandon McCutcheon State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources 550 W. 7th Ave. Suite 1050 Anchorage, AK 99501-3579

Dear Brandon, We would like to thank you and your staff for the many hours you have dedicated to the development of the proposed management plan for the Knik River Public Use Area (KRPUA). Your attention to the comments of all users of this area is appreciated. The Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance provides the following public comment. We hope that these comments will be helpful as you continue to develop the type of management plan that will benefit most users of this area. We propose that the wording on cover sheet titled Preliminary Management Actions and Actions Common to All Alternatives be changed as noted on the attached page. Our recommended additions are noted in bold italics. We have deleted some of the original wording and noted such in parenthesis in bold print, i.e. (deleted word). Bold italic print within the parenthesis is merely an explanation of why we propose

that the wording be deleted.

We also support the following proposed alternatives. Our recommended additions are noted in bold italics. We have deleted some of the original wording and noted such in parenthesis in bold print, i.e. (deleted word). Bold italic print within the parenthesis is merely an explanation of why we propose that the wording be deleted.

Unit A. Lower Knik Flats Alternative 2 is generally supported with changes as noted below.
Alternative 2

" (Recreational discharge of firearms will be prohibited in the western portion of this Unit to protect human safety. Recreational shooting will be prohibited on all state lands within this unit, west of a line drawn between a point ½ mile easterly of the mouth of Jim Creek, then south to a point at the intersection of Tempra Road and the Knik River Road.) Develop a designated shooting area west of Jim Creek. This is needed to prevent excessive traffic crossing Jim Creek. Otherwise, those who currently shoot in the area, but do not cross the creek would be forced to cross the creek. " This unit is designated as a multiple use recreation area. Specific to this unit, regulations will be developed rescinding, in part, restrictions on highway and off-road vehicle use that causes significant rutting or ground disturbance as described in 11AAC 96.020 (a)(1)(D)(E). Additionally within this unit, conditions for highway and off-road vehicle use will be rescinded as described in 11 AAC 96.025 (1)(2)(3)(A-C)1. Rescissions of existing regulations regarding generally allowed uses do not apply to vegetated stream buffers at Jim and Bodenbug creeks, and non-motorized trail(s) developed/designated in this unit. This is being done to recognize and allow current recreational uses, and their associated impacts, to continue in the majority of this unit. " Motorized use in a 100 foot vegetated buffer along both sides of Jim and Bodenbug creeks must be done in compliance with Generally Allowed Uses as described in 11 AAC 96.020. (will be prohibited in this unit.) Crossings are only allowed at areas permitted by the Office of Habitat Management and Permitting.

" A non-motorized trail will be developed(/designated) to facilitate access and to address user conflicts from Pavilion Parking Area to the Knik River Flats. This trail will be adjudicated and reserved to the DMLW as an ADL easement for non-motorized use. This will be a new trail; not one that is currently being used by motorized vehicles. Use of motorized vehicles on this new trail will be prohibited.

" In conjunction with the Borough parking and sanitation facilities may be developed in the area of Pavilion Parking Area and Bodenbug Creek as land status and access rights are resolved.

" Motorized use on the waters Manmade Lake will be prohibited during ice-free periods.

" Sanitation facilities may be developed at Manmade Lake.

Unit B. Lakes Alternative 2 is generally supported with changes as noted below.

Alternative 2

" Rippy Trail will be developed as a sustainable multiple use trail. A multiple use loop trail may be developed to connect the Rippy Trail with the Knik Glacier Trail. The entire looping trail will be developed to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife habitat and will be developed as a sustainable multiple use trail. " The entire loop trail (including Rippy Trail) will be adjudicated and reserved to the DMLW as an ADL easement as a multiple use loop trail.

Multiple use means both motorized and non-motorized use. " Uses may continue on existing trails or un-vegetated areas, however, no new trails will be developed or expanded until the trail management process for this unit is finished, except for development on the Rippy Trail and the Loop Trail. Use off of existing trails in vegetated areas will be prohibited except as allowed in Generally Allowed Uses in 11 AAC 96.020. Winter use is not restricted anywhere in this area as frozen ground is not subject to damage. " (Approaching within 300 feet of an active Trumpeter Swan nest is prohibited between May 1 and June 15. There has not been reputable documentation that the Trumpeter Swan Population has been threatened. Therefore, there is no need for this rule. Legislation provides for protection of critical wildlife habitat, but does not require establishing a sanctuary where threats do not exist. Nor does this legislation require actions to enhance swan population. However, if there must be a buffer around active Trumpeter Swan nests it should be excluded from any creeks or channels that provide access to open waters and lakes.)

" Facilities may be developed in this unit. Facilities may include: Mud Lake - Improved access road, maintain existing primitive boat launch, and develop sanitary facilities. Jim Lake Develop a parking area that accommodates ten vehicles; develop sanitary facilities; and develop ten primitive campsites; restrict access to improved ATV trail; and, rehabilitate area of existing unimproved launch and develop a small craft launch.

" Recreational shooting will be prohibited within ¼ mile of developed facilities at Mud and Jim lakes in order to protect public safety. A designated shooting area will be developed on the Maud Road extension between Mud and Jim Lakes that will be accessible by any highway vehicle.

Unit C. Upper Knik Flats Alternative 2 is generally supported with changes as noted below. Alternative 2

" New Trails may be developed as determined by the trails management process. Otherwise, existing trails shall be used. Generally Allowed Uses as defined in 11 AAC 96.020 applies to all other areas of this unit.

Unit D. Upper Jim Alpine Alternative 2 is generally supported with changes as noted below. Alternative 2

" New Trails may be developed as determined by the trails management process. Otherwise, existing trails shall be used. Generally Allowed Uses as defined in 11 AAC 96.020 applies to all other areas of this unit.

Unit E. Upper Friday Alpine Alternative 2 is generally supported with changes as noted below. Alternative 2

" New Trails may be developed as determined by the trails management process. Otherwise, existing trails shall be used. Generally Allowed Uses as defined in 11 AAC 96.020 applies to all other areas of this unit. " Access to this unit includes all 17B easements as defined by BLM. Unit F. Grasshopper Valley Alternative 2 is generally supported with changes as noted below. Alternative 2

" Uses may continue on existing trails or un-vegetated areas, however, no new trails will be developed or expanded until the trail management process for this unit is finished. (Use off of existing trails in vegetated areas is prohibited. Generally allowed uses are already applicable to this area, so this sentence is not necessary.)

" Additional Trails may be developed as determined by the trails management process.

Unit G. Glacier Alternative 2 is generally supported with changes as noted below. Alternative 2

" New Trails may be developed as determined by the trails management process.

Unit H. Metal Creek Alternative 2 is generally supported with changes as noted below. Alternative 2

" New Trails may be developed as determined by the trails management process.

Sincerely,

Craig L. Saunders President

Comment 146 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 04:23 PM:

As the owner of an ATV and snowmobile tour business, I am very interested in the development of the management plan for the Knik River Public Use Area. I am on these trails nearly every day Monday through Saturday during the summer months and almost as often during the winter months. I am very concerned with the number of people that want to close down certain areas of the KRPUA. This is an awesome area for residents and visitors from out of state to see and experience much of the wildlife and scenery that Alaska has to offer. I am concerned that these people are trying to close certain areas based on ANTICIPATED concerns rather than documented problems. It is true that, if we were to close down areas to motorized access, we would remove all doubt that there would be negative effects on that area. That is not in keeping with the spirit of the legislation though. If a problem becomes evident, I would be the first to jump up and say that something should be done to solve the problem. I hope that you will take a hard look at the fact that motorized boats, buggies, ATV's, Snowmachines, track rigs, etc have been using this area for many years now and the fish, birds and other wildlife keep on coming back. I have some specific comments on the proposed management plan alternatives that I have listed below. They are in order by unit as you have listed them in your proposed alternatives publication. I appreciate your attention to these comments.

Unit A. Lower Knik Flats I feel that the following changes should be made to Alternative 2 is generally supported with changes as noted below. Alternative 2

" (Recreational discharge of firearms will be prohibited in the western portion of this Unit to protect human safety. Recreational shooting will be prohibited on all state lands within this unit, west of a line drawn between a point ½ mile easterly of the mouth of Jim Creek, then south to a point at the intersection of Tempra Road and the Knik River Road.) I do not feel that this is an effective alternative. Instead, I would like to see wording such as, "Develop a designated shooting area west of Jim Creek." This is needed to prevent excessive traffic crossing Jim Creek. Otherwise, those who currently shoot in the area, but do not cross the creek would be forced to cross the creek, which would put unnecessary increased effects on Jim Creek. " Motorized use in a 100 foot vegetated buffer along both sides of Jim and Bodenbug creeks must be allowed in compliance with Generally Allowed Uses as described in 11 AAC 96.020. (Strike the words "will be prohibited in this unit.") Crossings are only allowed at areas permitted by the Office of Habitat Management and Permitting. " A non-motorized trail will be developed(strike the word"/designated" as there should be no current motorized trail that would be made non motorized just to suit the needs of those who

do not want to share existing roads and trails with motorized users.) to facilitate access and to address user conflicts from Pavilion Parking Area to the Knik River Flats. This trail will be adjudicated and reserved to the DMLW as an ADL easement for non-motorized use. (Add the words, "This will be a new trail; not one that is currently being used by motorized vehicles.") Use of motorized vehicles on this new trail will be prohibited.

" In conjunction with the Borough parking and sanitation facilities may be developed in the area of Pavilion Parking Area and Bodenbug Creek as land status and access rights are resolved.

" Motorized use on the waters Manmade Lake will be prohibited during ice-free periods.

" Sanitation facilities may be developed at Manmade Lake.

Unit B. Lakes This is probably the area that I have the greatest concerns about. I am mostly in favor of alternative 2 in the Unit with the exception as noted in the Jim Lake area. I offer the following comments for deletions and additions:

" The entire loop trail (including Rippy Trail) will be adjudicated and reserved to the DMLW as an ADL easement as a multiple use loop trail. (Clarification needs to be in place to clearly define what the words "multiple use" means. Add words such as, "Multiple use means both motorized and non-motorized use.") " Uses may continue on existing trails or un-vegetated areas, however, no new trails will be developed or expanded until the trail management process for this unit is finished, except for development on the Rippy Trail and the Loop Trail. Use off of existing trails in vegetated areas will be prohibited (add the words, "except as allowed in Genbearally Allowed Uses in 11 AAC 96.020. Winter use is not restricted any where in this area as frozen ground is not subject to damage.") " (Delete the words, "Approaching within 300 feet of an active Trumpeter Swan nest is prohibited between May 1 and June 15." There has not been reputable documentation that the Trumpeter Swan Population in this area has been threatened. Therefore, there is no need for this rule. Legislation provides for protection of critical wildlife habitat, but does not require establishing a sanctuary where threats do not exist. Nor does this legislation require actions to enhance swan population. However, if there must be a buffer around active Trumpeter Swan nests it should be excluded from any creeks or channels that provide access to open waters and lakes. This would allow continued access to areas and lakes beyond a nest that may be in a channel or creek shore.)

" (See notes in the Jim Lake section of this unit as noted below) Facilities may be developed in this unit. Facilities may include: Mud Lake - Improved access road, maintain existing primitive boat launch, and develop sanitary facilities. (I am more in favor of alternative 3 in regards to Jim Lake, which states:) Jim Lake Develop a parking area that accommodates ten vehicles; develop sanitary facilities; and develop ten primitive campsites; restrict access to improved ATV trail; and, rehabilitate area of existing unimproved launch and develop a small craft launch.

" Recreational shooting will be prohibited within ¼ mile of developed facilities at Mud and Jim lakes in order to protect public safety. (Please add the following wording to this subject: "A designated shooting area will be developed on the Maud Road extension between Mud and Jim Lakes that will be accessible by any highway vehicle.")

Unit C. Upper Knik Flats Alternative 2 is my preferred plan in this unit with changes as noted:

" (Add,"New") Trails may be developed as determined by the trails management process.

(Add words such as, "Otherwise, existing trails shall be used. Generally Allowed Uses as defined in 11 AAC 96.020 applies to all other areas of this unit.")

Unit D. Upper Jim Alpine Alternative 2 is my preferred plan in this unit with similar changes as I noted in Unit C, above:

" (Add,"New") Trails may be developed as determined by the trails management process. (Add words such as, "Otherwise, existing trails shall be used. Generally Allowed Uses as defined in 11 AAC 96.020 applies to all other areas of this unit.")

Unit E. Upper Friday Alpine Alternative 2 is my preferred plan in this unit with similar changes as I noted in Unit D, above:

" (Add,"New") Trails may be developed as determined by the trails management process. (Add words such as, "Otherwise, existing trails shall be used. Generally Allowed Uses as defined in 11 AAC 96.020 applies to all other areas of this unit.") (Also add a new bullet point such as, "Access to this unit includes all 17B easements as defined by BLM.") Unit F. Grasshopper Valley Alternative 2 is my preferred alternative in this unit with changes as noted:

" Uses may continue on existing trails or un-vegetated areas, however, no new trails will be developed or expanded until the trail management process for this unit is finished. (Delete the words, "Use off of existing trails in vegetated areas is prohibited." Generally allowed uses are already applicable to this area, so this sentence is not necessary.)

Unit G. Glacier Alternative 2 is my preferred plan with one small change as noted: " (Add, "New") Trails may be developed as determined by the trails management process.

Unit H. Metal Creek Alternative 2 is my preferred plan with one small change as noted: " (Add, "New") Trails may be developed as determined by the trails management process.

Thank you for all the time you have dedicated to the development of this plan and to the many hours you have spent listening to comments. Sincerely, Craig Saunders

Comment 147 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 04:57 PM:

Public Comment Form

Please feel free to use this form to provide comments on the Knik River Public Use Area.

Comments on Management Action: 1. 2. & 3. Classify ' trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: access roads into KRPUA, trail/road for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational areas. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails.

1.& 2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and

map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4.DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisitions were not identified, nor was a need or use for such land described.

Comments on Actions Common to All Alternatives: to add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc. Comments on Preliminary Alternatives 1, 2, 3: DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the unrestricted access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for access trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail..

Other Comments: Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenburg Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area..

Submitted by: First Name _____ Last Name: _____
Email: _____ Title/Agency: _____
Mailing Address: _____ Phone: _____

Comment 148 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 05:04 PM:

Public Comment Form

Please feel free to use this form to provide comments on the Knik River Public Use Area.

Comments on Management Action: 1. 2. & 3. Classify ' trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: access roads into KRPUA, trail/road for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational areas. Identify

seasonal use only ORV trails.

1.& 2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4.DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisitions were not identified, nor was a need or use for such land described.

Comments on Actions Common to All Alternatives: to add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc. Comments on Preliminary Alternatives 1, 2, 3: DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the unrestricted access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for access trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail..

Other Comments: Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenburg Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area..

Submitted by: First Name _____ Last Name: _____

Email: _____ Title/Agency: _____
Mailing Address: _____ Phone: _____

Comment 149 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 05:05 PM:

Public Comment Form

Please feel free to use this form to provide comments on the Knik River Public Use Area.

Comments on Management Action: 1. 2. & 3. Classify ' trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: access roads into KRPUA, trail/road for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational areas. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails.

1.& 2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4.DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisitions were not identified, nor was a need or use for such land described.

Comments on Actions Common to All Alternatives: to add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc. Comments on Preliminary Alternatives 1, 2, 3: DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the unrestricted access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for access trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the

KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail..

Other Comments: Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenburg Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area..

Submitted by: First Name _____ Last Name: _____
Email: _____ Title/Agency: _____
Mailing Address: _____ Phone: _____

Comment 150 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 05:06 PM:

Public Comment Form

Please feel free to use this form to provide comments on the Knik River Public Use Area.

Comments on Management Action: 1. 2. & 3. Classify ' trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: access roads into KRPUA, trail/road for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational areas. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails.

1.& 2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4.DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisitions were not identified, nor was a need or use for such land described.

Comments on Actions Common to All Alternatives: to add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and

trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc. Comments on Preliminary Alternatives 1, 2, 3: DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the unrestricted access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for access trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail..

Other Comments: Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenbug Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area..

Submitted by: First Name _____ Last Name: _____
Email: _____ Title/Agency: _____
Mailing Address: _____ Phone: _____

Comment 151 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 08:23 PM:

Re: Habitat and Access concerns.

I would like to take issue with your assessment in Planning Update #2 -Issues - that, "Access to the KRPUA and impacts to habitat were issues that drew less public comment." when you said that "In general, the majority of comments received on issues were directed at unlawful or undesirable activities, discharge of firearms, and fees...."

Please realize that people are not only concerned with the illegal dumping, burning and reckless shooting incidents because they are issues of public safety and health, but most implied that these activities are indeed harmful to habitat. They were sure that the Planning Team would see the connection of how unlawful and undesirable activities impact habitat and open access.

Butte Area Residents Civic Organization asked two people, one a user of the area, but not a member, as well a member of BARCO to research the public comments and conduct an overview coding to get an idea how many people did in fact mention concern regarding habitat and destructive behavior by ATVs and other All-Terrain Vehicles.

The results: 20% of all scoping comments showed concern about habitat and environment; and 25% of all scoping comments expressed concern about the destructive effects of ORV and trucks These concerns are not reflected in your proposed alternatives.

I strongly oppose any alternative which would rescind regulations. This action would legitimize and exacerbate the long-time ongoing destruction of habitat and trails.

The wetlands and lakes supporting waterfowl and other wildlife should no longer be accessible for airboaters.

Thank you.

Comment 152 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 08:38 PM:

Dear Planning Team,

ORV and 4x4 touring and sightseeing on appropriate terrain would be an attractive alternative. It would be appreciated not only by quiet users, but also by those motorized users and handicapped people, who currently feel disenfranchised by the ongoing chaos and are seeking a safe outdoors experience. These people do not appreciate rutted trail and eroded dunes and stream banks.

Please, do not consider rescinding any regulations, but plan and manage in the intent of HB 307. Work closely with other state agencies so they can assist you with the responsibilities of statutes they are charged with.

The Knik River Public Use Area cannot continue as a moto-cross and mudbog venue. An excellent alternative for such activities would be to establish two or three private gravel pits scattered about Anchorage and Mat-Su. The only requirement is that they be located away from homes so that dust and noise does not interfere with community activities. Such a venue would not destroy habitat or harrass wildlife, but could easily simulate the riding experiences in our precious dunes, wetlands, lakes and streams by piping in water for mud. Beetle-killed trees, over-age cottonwoods and large boulders would make for a great terrain and could simulate the experience of conquering stream and bog crossings; concrete pillars and well-casing would substitute for life trees to help winch vehicles out of the mud. It is expected that some trucks might get stuck and abandoned in the pits forever, but that might prove to be an advantage for being able to shape and play in a constantly changing terrain.

To add reality, I would recommend to extricate some shot-up "no shooting" and other information signs from the Knik River - Bodenbug Creek Access along the Old Glenn and place them at the entrance of these pits. A larger pit of 40-80 acres in size might also accommodate paintball and rifle shooting venues and an area could be set aside for sanctioned vehicle burning and accompanying automatic weapons discharge. There should be no limit as to how many tanks of gasoline could be placed into any vehicle destined for burning to allow truly thumping explosions.

However, these venues could be divided from the moto-cross and mudbogs by a simulated highway embankment which could then be used for tiny tikes' fourwheeler "highmarking" activities on one side and hand gun target practice on the other.

For those 4wheelers and ATVs who feel too challenged by the terrain within the gravel pit venue, I would suggest that the pit accommodate these adventurers by banking the pits and topping them with a trail all around. Adding non-motorized signage will ensure that this will be one of the most popular and high-use features. It's bound to be a very successful enterprise.

The Knik River Valley is indeed to valuable for such activities as mudboggging and motocross. Please, use the alternatives as proposed by the Butte Area Residents Civic Organization to bring order to the chaos.

Brit Lively

Comment 153 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 08:43 PM:

These comments are in regards to the Knik River Public Use Area - Preliminary Mgmt Actions & Alternatives, specific to the Jim/Swan Lakes area of the management area. Im a forty five year Alaskan who has lived in the Mat-Su Valley for over 25 years. Ive watched as both the capabilities and number of off-road vehicle (ORV) have increased dramatically in recent years. Twenty five years ago there really werent wheeled vehicles available that could carry a person across the typical Alaskan bog (wetland). No so today local ORV dealers sell thousands of machines a year (in many cases paid for with PFD money).

With high horsepower to weight ratios and four spinning paddle-track tires modern ORV can easily gouge their way across wetlands, leaving scars that literally take decades to heal. And these are public lands, public wetlands land the Department of Natural Resources is chartered to manage. State statute 11AAC 96.025. addresses conditions for generally allowed uses in a commonsense way - (1) requiring ORV users to minimize surface damage, (2) requiring ORV users to use existing trails, (3) requiring ORV users to minimize (A) disturbing vegetation, soil stability, or drainage systems, (B) changing the character of, polluting, or introducing silt and sediment into streams, lakes, ponds, water holes, seeps, and marshes, and (C) disturbing fish and wildlife resources. The statute goes on to require those that damage public lands are also responsible for restoration.

I appreciate the public access to State lands aspects of State law. Furthermore, ORVs can be used in many places with minimal disruption to State resources. This argument isnt about using ORVs for legitimate access its about using them in a clearly illegal manner (reference 11 AAC 96.025) to destroy sensitive wetlands.

Try this thought experiment DNR is approached by a commercial ORV tour operator for a permit to outfit and lead ORV tours with main activities focused on pioneering routes across untracked wetlands in the Jim/Swan Lakes area. Would DNR grant this permit? I pretty sure they would not. Yet DNR, by ignoring a situation they are fully aware of, is allowing this very activity (minus the commercial operator).

I fully endorse what is called Alternative 5 as proposed by the Knik River Watershed Group. Their intelligently crafted and fair proposal presents a commonsense approach to managing the critical habitat in the Jim/Swan Lakes area. Their proposal would put sensible restrictions on barely 5% of the Knik River Management Area.

By not including Alternative 5 in the list of preliminary alternatives it certainly appears that DNR is bowing to pressure from the ORV lobby.

Once more, here is Alternative 5 and the rest of the talking points I'm endorsing:

Unit B. Lakes (Jim-Swan Wetlands)

Provide for low to moderate use compatible with protection of fish and wildlife habitats. User fees may be imposed.

Rippy Trail will be developed as a single track nonmotorized trail and is subject to rerouting or seasonal closure to avoid Trumpeter Swan nest sites.

The Jim-Swan wetlands will be open to multiple use recreation from August 1 through April 15. Fall use is subject to posted horsepower limits for resource protection and user safety. Snowmachining will be restricted during periods of inadequate snow cover to protect vegetation. The wetlands including waterways will be closed to motorized recreation from April 16 through July 31 to protect wildlife resources, such as migrating, nesting and brood-rearing Trumpeter Swans, loons and ducks, and vegetation. Nonmotorized recreation will be restricted as needed to protect active loon and Trumpeter Swan nest sites.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game will monitor wildlife resources to evaluate recreational impacts. Facilities that may be developed in this unit include:

Mud Lake (Facilities, use and alteration done via cooperative agreement with Eklutna, Inc.) " Shoreline restoration and improved small craft launch area. " Canoe concession, wildlife viewing platform, educational kiosk on wetlands, waterfowl, migration " Improved upper parking area to halt erosion into the lake.

Jim Lake " Shoreline restoration and improved small craft launch. " Close access road to lake and develop into a handicapped accessible path to viewing site. " Improve small upper parking area. " Develop upper area campground.

ALL units:

Do not rescind existing regulations. Existing trails, with the exception of RS2447 trails, are subject to closure, rerouting or designation, pending environmental analyses and safety considerations.

No new trails will be created or expanded until the trails management process is complete.

Key habitats, including salmon streams, wetlands and dunes, will be closed until restoration, revegetation, trails management process and environmental analyses are complete.

Install public restrooms and bear-proof garbage receptacles in all moderate to high-use parking areas.

For safety, prohibit recreational shooting within a ½ mile of all facilities and moderate to high-use areas. To prevent lead deposition into the water, prohibit recreational shooting within ¼ mile of any waterway.

Lawful hunting will not be restricted.

Finally:

The 2nd stated purpose for establishing the KRPUA is protect and maintain migratory waterfowl nesting areas; habitats for moose, Dall sheep, and brown bear; and other fish and wildlife habitat so that traditional public uses of fish and wildlife populations may continue.

The Jim-Swan Wetlands is in danger. Under present management, airboats are degrading the area and leave few places for Trumpeter Swans and other waterfowl to safely raise their broods. Airboat and PWC disturbance increases nest failure, separates broods, exposes young birds to predation, and reduces time for feeding and resting (Korschgen, Dahlgren/USFWS. 1992). Reports indicate that airboat use kills emergent vegetation, erodes shorelines, creates permanent open canals, and alters hydrology.

In January, DNR received many comments from nonmotorized users and groups who specifically asked that the Rippy Trail and the Jim-Swan Wetlands be a nonmotorized area, especially during the spring and summer because of the sensitive nature of the habitat and wildlife. This entire area makes up only 5% of the entire KRPUA, the vast majority of which will be motorized. DNR is mandated to enhance nonmotorized recreation as well as motorized recreation.

However, in Management Actions, DNR states that Rippy Trail will be developed into multiuse and a connecting loop trail to the Knik Glacier trail will be built and that this action is exempt from the normal planning process. The connecting loop will encircle the wetlands, damage sensitive vegetation, and disturb wetland wildlife. You may think that the hundreds of harmful disruptive trails that already occur in the KRPUA might be enough to satisfy everyone but apparently not enough for DNR. They want to take a beautiful woodland trail adjacent to the wetlands, near a swan nesting area, and with access points onto the wetlands, a trail where sheep drop down to the flats in the winter, a trail that crosses several springs and a salmon stream, a trail of which the majority was once a single track hiking trail and turn it into multiuse with a new connecting trail near the wetlands without an adequate planning process!

Comment 154 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 09:28 PM:

Thank you for allowing me to comment on your Knik River Public Use Area Proposed management plan. I live near the access to Unit B. I use the Lakes area during all seasons of the year. I value it for it's beauty, it's ready access, it's wildlife viewing opportunities, and as a place that I can hike, bike and ski in. Currently I enjoy hiking, skiing and wildlife watching in this area. I envision myself boating more, either by small jet boat or canoe if the area becomes less lawless. I'm going to limit my comments to UNIT B, as this is the unit that I know best.

In general, I lean towards supporting the actions in Alternative 3.

Motorized use of the Rippy Trail should end at Upper Jim Creek. No new trails should be developed until a trail management process is finished, including expanding the Rippy. It should be managed so as not to disturb any migrating or nesting waterfowl (swans, geese, loons, mergansers) from April 15 June 15. Approaching migrating (temporary resting and feeding), or nesting waterfowl within 300 ft should be prohibited. Mud Lake Facilities, here I support parts of many of the alternatives, I propose the following management and development: The Mud Lake boat launch should be improved for small motorized and non motorized access. Mud Lake should be managed for non-motorized and motorized users. Mud Lake provides access to Jim Creek sport fisheries. A viewing platform should be built to encourage viewing of sheep, moose and waterfowl. Educational kiosks would be good, once you are relatively assured they wont be destroyed. Improved parking.

Jim Lake development I support Alternative 4. Small amount of parking, (most in upper parking area). Restrict access to foot trail in the lower area (adjacent to the lake and near the unimproved boat launch). This is a very unique and fragile salmon spawning habitat. Rehab unimproved boat launch area, with bank habitat restoration. Provide non-motorized launch. Jim Lake is small and should be managed for non motorized boats and float tubes.

Recreational Shooting Recreational shooting should be prohibited in the entire Lakes Unit in order to protect public safety and to protect wildlife. Current management makes me nervous for my safety and discourages me from using the area more often. I dont like the

noise caused by and the trash left behind by recreational shooters. I image that the noise also disturbs wildlife, and lead shot in our lakes is harmful to waterfowl.

Comment 155 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 09:31 PM:

I fully support the Knik River Watershed Group's alternative 5. Any plan or user group that advocates any use or form or recreation that allows for further destruction of the watershed should be disgarded, no matter how much pressure you receive. You must do what is right for the watershed. Please remember different user groups have varying degress of impacts. There will have to be some restrictions. It is not a new concept; it has happened and continues to happen in many places in the lower 48. Let's not make the same mistakes they did. It is better to be proactive. Below is alternative 5.

Unit B. Lakes (Jim-Swan Wetlands)

Provide for low to moderate use compatible with protection of fish and wildlife habitats. User fees may be imposed.

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Jim Lake Shoreline restoration and improved small craft launch. Close access road to lake and develop into a handicapped accessible path to viewing site. Improve small upper parking area. Develop upper area campground.

ALL units:

Do not rescind existing regulations. Existing trails, with the exception of RS2447 trails, are subject to closure, rerouting or designation, pending environmental analyses and safety considerations.

No new trails will be created or expanded until the trails management process is complete.

Key habitats, including salmon streams, wetlands and dunes, will be closed until restoration, revegetation, trails management process and environmental analyses are complete.

Install public restrooms and bear-proof garbage receptacles in all moderate to high-use parking areas.

For safety, prohibit recreational shooting within a ½ mile of all facilities and moderate to high-use areas. To prevent lead deposition into the water, prohibit recreational shooting within ¼ mile of any waterway.

Lawful hunting will not be restricted.

Comment 156 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 09:53 PM:

Alternative number one is the only option we can agree with. We do not want to see the area developed with things that will make it cost money to go there. We have enough of that now. If facilities are built and no one is there 24 hours a day they will just be trashed anyway. The history of the pavillion shows that. A simple roof cannot even be protected. There are enough highly regulated pay as you go places, we don't need another one. The only thing we would like to see is a little regulation on where to shoot, but NEVER stop it. Purchasing the private land that is on the east side of the Old Glenn at the Knik River Bridge would also secure continuing access at that point. Simply having an enforcement presence to take care of those who break the laws already in place ie, drinking and driving, drinking and shooting, littering, etc., is enough change to make the place safer for all. Non enforcement of existing laws are the real problem. Everything negative that goes on in this area are things that are already against the law! Sincerely, Rod and Cathy Herrin

Comment 157 of 238 - received on 05/03/2007 at 10:33 PM:

Public Comment Form Knik River Public Use Area.

Comments on Management Actions:

Exempting Rippy Trail from the process addressing 'impacts to critical fish and wildlife habitat, including wetlands' is unbelievably short sighted, putting the cart before the horse, and a blatant concession to one user group's agenda. DNR has received many documents attesting to the value of the Jim/Swan Wetlands and the integral, adjacent Uplands. The habitat is extremely important for an incredible variety of wildlife ' from fish to Dall sheep. In my first meeting with the Planning Team, I provided documents attesting to this and even requested that F&G review moose data for the area before leaping to unstudied development plans. Proposing to eliminate the last vestige of non-motorized wildlife corridor around Jim/Swan Wetlands is a travesty that escapes words for this long time Alaskan. For years my family has thoroughly enjoyed the area for its incredibly rich diversity. We enjoy motor sports in the Knik Watershed, as well, but never considered assaulting this trail in such a manner. It lies too close, is too confined, and penetrates areas clearly not compatible with motor vehicle traffic and is in addition easily reached via water. DNR has received enough data to be aware that this trail was a logging road and extending only to the middle of Section 22. I have even provided you with a map showing same. In 1984-85, MSB received a grant (No.9120) for an Equestrian group to brush the trail. Pat Owen, whom worked at MSB cataloging trails at the time, has allowed that the trail could scarcely be found at that time. ATV's have since pushed the trail on through springs feeding wetlands and, indeed, right onto wetlands and into unusually rich wildlife habitat. DNR has photos and documents supporting all this beyond a doubt and yet chooses a most simplistic path, blatantly biased towards a group which has run a fear based, and at times untruthful, campaign - which has apparently captured the imagination of someone at DNR, as well. No amount of debate has seen any of the 'Planning Team' waver from the 'sideboards' alluded to as last resort to real answers. (A list of hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of publicly funded studies, many signed by DNR and F&G, which have yet to be acknowledged by the KRPUA process will be listed again and added to below in 'other comments'.) Comments on Actions Common to All

Alternatives:

Problematic is the statement 'This does not apply to units or areas designated to allow these activities through the KRPUA management plan.' Such activities may well be illegal under superceding laws, greatly depending on how those 'units or areas will further be defined....'. Lead shot deposition into the waters and military convoys practicing stream crossing in salmon habitat and during migration are also not mentioned. Are duck blinds to be considered in the '14 days' rule? Many have rotted into the wetlands over the years.

Comments on Preliminary Alternatives:

'Rescinding' regulations restricting off-road rutting and ground disturbance in Unit A directly bordering the wetlands thereby legalizing incursions into valued habitat by all manner of motor vehicles in order to 'recognize and allow current recreational uses and their associated impacts..' while DNR has admitted `sacrificial management' (Bob Loeffler) through decades, is simply not acceptable. This is a blatant attempt to legalize the Swan Lake mess and opens the door to other such incursions into documented waterfowl habitat. Your page is blank under Alternative 3 for this discussion, i.e. no `alternative'- no hint of concern for wetland laws or science.

Under Unit B, Lakes: All science, history, past planning efforts, concerns of quiet users has been dropped for the `wishes' of the motorized contingency to encircle the wetlands via Rippy Trail. Further, DNR has bought into this idea, adopting these `wishes' from a contingency not even familiar with the single track that still remains. What in the world ever happened to the proven idea of wildlife corridors being left here and there to aid sustainability? Where is Alaska Department of Fish and Game?

Alternatives 3 and 4 were very effectively shot out of the water at the Butte hearing, in public testimony, by Lt. Tory Oleck of DPS by this direct quote for which I received permission, 'No, it is not practical to arrest ATV's in streams.' DNR is suggesting that asking ATV's to turn around at Upper Jim Creek is a plausible `alternative'. Bridged or not, enforcement is not remotely possible at that locale (assuming an enforcement force is even available and can reach the area) - `pioneering' ATVers will not be deterred by signage. In fact, the habitat division of the Palmer DNR post has been providing me with `No ATV's in Streams' signs for years to post at the head of Rippy Trail, a reachable control point, to absolutely no avail. I have been in the unfortunate situation of sending you ongoing photo documentation of the steady degradation of an incredibly rich and fragile salmon stream, springs feeding the wetlands, and the `end' points of the trail destroying more of wetland destinations. This is completely unacceptable. It is only common sense, supported by much data; ATV's do not belong everywhere and as a long time outdoorsman and Alaskan, I am more than weary of watching them march uncontrollably through the absolute finest of habitats (of which Jim/Swan, beyond the shadow of a doubt, qualifies!).

Also totally missing from the alternatives is consideration for public safety and habitat/wildlife protection on the abused waterways of the wetlands. Once again, science and hard current evidence has been tossed out, as if the user numbers in the KRPUA were the same as 40 years ago. The KRPUA is easily accessible to 300.000 people.

One can no longer allow their children to play safely at the sand dunes or in the waters at Jim Cr. due to the plethora of unrecoverable dangerous objects and chemicals integrated into the environment. The dunes are being denuded at an alarming rate. Has DNR looked at the turn of the Knik River channel and floodplain at this locale on the map? Is the current channel

where the river will remain?

Unit C. Upper Knik Flats:

It must be recognized that, although many of the trails in this area, such as the Friday Cr. Trail, have excellent sustainable sections, many of them turn back into the Jim/Swan Wetlands creating unacceptable damages. Therefore, this unit needs most of the same considerations applied as mentioned for the 'Lakes' unit B.

Other Comments:

A workable management plan must be enforceable. DPS has pointed the way and has asked for the 'tools' in numerous public forums. Presentations will be forthcoming. A preview: Limiting motor access to one point at the Knik Glacier Trail could make enforcement, the prime concern cited by all parties, a far more doable job. This would also save DNR from all the 'adjudicating' tasks assigned to every other access point. It is a common misconception that we can not exact far better control over the 'bad apples' at access points, even without the dreaded 'gate' word. Imagine if enforcement can see that trash or stolen auto being towed, driven in or left behind from an access that enables the possibility. Commissioner Monegan and Lt. Oleck have both asked for appropriate 'tools'. Effective ATV registration is a worthy related topic, too. It is past time to talk about these ideas and incorporate them into proposed alternatives, or better yet into necessary 'management actions'.

The proposed management actions and current set of alternatives are not solutions that can result in a significant improvement in enforcement.

In conclusion:

It is patently obvious that DNR has not duly considered the myriad science, studies, documentation or varied user concerns in the presentation of this heavily biased release of 'Preliminary Management Actions and Actions Common to all Alternatives' accompanied by a set of 'alternatives' that scarcely qualify to being termed such.

The announcement from the planning team that 'few concerns were voiced about the environment' in the first round of public comments is an issue to be taken directly to task. Here are the qualifications of one independent reviewer from which DNR will be receiving data: '...PhD in cultural anthropology and post doctoral work in public policy analysis. My expertise is qualitative research -- I have worked on U.S. Justice research studies and worked as a professional coder for university research projects and for market research firms. I also have a book published, which utilized quantitative social history methodology and interview data.' Further, Clark Cox, in my first meeting with the planning team assured me that 'science would be considered and that decisions would not be based solely on numbers'. As of this time, there are little to no indications that this is the case, and quiet recreational use considerations are completely absent.

Such a biased, pedestrian presentation by the planning team at this important juncture of this time-limited process (I suggest another year in planning) has set the stage and inspired many of us to ardently seek advice to help steer the process in a thoughtful, responsible, and fair direction. To that end, DNR will now be receiving a concise legal analysis (courtesy of Alaska Center for the Environment) that speaks directly to the issues and concerns many of us have tried in vain to debate with the department. DNR supervisors above the planning team have even fallen back on undocumented, vague comments of 'sideboards' handed mysteriously down from somewhere above along with obvious misunderstanding of the

legislative intent. DNR has stated that F&G and MSB are on the planning team as a mere 'courtesy'. New and open direction is imperative. Clearly, DNR remains stuck on the first draft intent of HB 307 and is not recognizing the changes to the bill as it evolved.

The legal analysis stands to remedy.

Alternatives;

As for considered alternatives, those now proposed by Knik River Watershed Group's Alternative 5 at http://knikriver.org/jim_swan.doc and those proposed by Butte Area Residents Civic Organization at <http://www.buttealaska.org/> (Hot Topics link) are worthy of and are prime examples of what DNR could have included to present a balanced representative spectrum of management actions and alternatives at this stage of the process. These alternatives have my endorsement.

The economic benefit of having some intact wildlife habitat and areas suitable for quiet use in the KRPUA is a topic of utmost consideration that has yet to see the light of day in this process!

The current message DNR is broadcasting loud and clear is 'Abuse it and it is yours' (a Cecily Fritz, KRWG Chair. quote). Handing over public property to favor one user group with little regard for all else is clearly wrong. Steps must be taken to stop ongoing damages and to rectify those incurred over many years of 'sacrificial', i.e., no management. DNR's 'current level of use' mantra is not acceptable in the abused Knik Watershed.

Resources;

It is a very small task to recognize the 'sensitive' areas in the PUA and to do what is legally and morally required. In fact DNR, as well as F&G, has signed many of the documents listed below 'you and others have already done this part of the job' to ignore all of these documents further is just not going to be possible. By example, take a look at the Cook Inlet Spill Prevention and Response mapping listed below and you will find the boundaries of the Jim/Swan wetlands already encircled and listed as a sensitive waterfowl area.

Here is a list, with some new ones added DNR will be receiving in hard copy, as well as ones that have already been recommended to you, but unutilized. DNR will also soon be receiving more trails information from a KRWG/USFWS grant. This list is not to be considered as all-inclusive 'citizens should not have to go to such lengths to do what DNR and F&G employees are charged with! I further request that all previous testimonies, photos, documents, studies, digital media, etc. that I have previously turned in be forwarded to this round of public comment for inclusion. Sadly, there yet appears any sign of them in DNR considerations.

DNR has an opportunity to do a sustainable long-range plan in the in the Knik River Watershed with opportunities for all user groups, which is precisely what the Knik River Watershed Group asked for in Rep. Stoltze's office at the birth of this legislative process. Instead 'War' (Charlie Huggins in the Frontiersman 7/24/05) was declared and an irrational fear campaign launched!

May more education lead to solutions:

Jim Creek Area Stream Banks and Hydrologic Observational Survey ' William Rice, USFWS Hydrologist

Baseline Water Bird Surveys, Alaska Coastal Grant No. 701815G340 submitted to USFWS Region 7 administered by Palmer SWCD

Biological Impacts of Off-Road Vehicles in Alaska: a Literature Review by Loomis and Liebermann 5/16/2006

Research Summary, What's the Economic Value of Alaska's Healthy Ecosystems? Institute of Social and Economic Research UAA

Knik Arm Wetlands Study - 1981. (Alaska Biological Research for USF&W) Proposed the Jim-Swan area be an Area Meriting Special Attention noting high density use by ducks, year-round moose concentrations and intensive black bear use. 'Long term plans, however, will have to include temporal and spatial zoning practices which will reduce conflicts between recreational user groups as well as between recreational users and wildlife.' (This study covers wildlife diversity/importance as well as ATV damages and concern regarding power boat use, even at that time. Further, a map is included showing definitively the extent of off road vehicle use on Rippy Tr.)

SouthCentral Recreation Action Plan - 1984. (Alaska Departments of Natural Resources and Fish and Game for Governor Bill Sheffield). Identified Jim/Swan wetlands as 'critical importance for habitat' and wrote a senate bill establishing Jim/Swan Lakes State Recreation Area.

Susitna Area Plan - 1985. (DNR, F&G) 'The Jim-Swan lakes area will be managed to provide a variety of recreation, including hunting and fishing. Because of its high value for these uses, its proximity to large population centers and its vulnerability to overuse and environmental degradation, the Jim-Swan area should be designated by the legislature as a State Recreation Area.'

Resource Assessment of the Knik Glacier Area - 1993. (USDA/SCS, Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District, Mat-Su Resource Conservation & Development, Inc). 'The area supports healthy populations of moose, Dall sheep and black bear. Other large animals inhabiting the Knik River drainage include mountain goats, wolves, coyotes, and brown bears. Wetlands in the Jim-Swan Lake area are important habitat for spawning salmon, winter forage for moose, and as a staging and breeding area for waterfowl. The south facing slopes on the northern side of the valley are important lambing areas for Dall sheep.'

Ecological Review of the Lake George National Natural Landmark - 1996 [The Landmark contains sections of Knik River/Jim-Swan region] (Alaska Natural Heritage Program, US Dept of Interior, NPS, Alaska Natural Landmark Program). The program was established to identify, recognize and encourage the preservation of the best remaining examples of the geological and biological features composing the Nation's natural history. 'Human use levels need to be evaluated if the NNL's ecological stability is to be maintained'.

Cook Inlet mapping - 2002. (Coast Guard, Cook Inlet Spill Prevention and Response, Inc, Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, NOAA, DNR, F&G) Jim-Swan is sensitive as a waterfowl concentration area and receives priority protection during oil spill planning and response.

Aerial Swan Survey Data 1998-2004. (William A. Quirk, Biologist) 'For the early arriving and late migrating trumpeter swans, the lakes in the Jim Creek area have a significant advantage over other lakes in the Upper Cook Inlet Region.' [Refers to comparative earliest ice out/latest freeze up.]

Cooperative Management Agreement - 2003 draft. (Requested by Butte and South Knik River Community Councils). 'For the Purpose of Managing Public Lands for Multiple Uses in the Jim Creek ' Swan Lake ' Knik River Area' Asset Management Plan for Borough Owned Land in the Butte Area-2004 Draft.(Land Design North) Designate `Jim and Mud Lake Primitive Area'work with DNR to designate the area as a Special Use Area for summer nonmotorized use"

BLM Draft Ring of Fire RMP/EIS - 2005. Proposes the Knik River Special Recreation Management Area to provide additional 'protection of resources, specifically wildlife and fisheries'.

Butte Area Asset Management Plan 2006

Submitted by: R. Howard Palmer, Alaska

Founding Member, Knik River Watershed Group Friends and Neighbors (FANS) of Butte Residents, member Valley Mtn. Bikers and Hikers, member Past member MSB Trails Committee, Mat-Su Trails Council

Knik Watershed Advocate for Two Decades Alaskan since 1961

Comment 158 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 12:31 AM:

History of Trails - traditional use.

I heard about the myth of Fifty Years (?) of motorized recreation here in Knik River Valley, a myth that many residents can debunk very easily. Just ask. I can give you names of people and how they used the trails prior to the arrival of the threewheelers. We have documentation how, even though initially logging trails, these trails and trail heads were later enhanced for quiet recreation. A number of these people still live in the valley and are hoping that your agency will enhance and protect what they have built - and what they have lost.

There is a difference between motorized use (such as for logging, mining, hunting and fishing) and motorized recreation of the kind which has made this beautiful Valley primarily a motocross and mudbog place. All of the non-motorized trails that existed before the 1970s and new ones that were created in the early eighties were almost exclusively used for non-motorized recreation until the number of people with threewheelers and fourwheeler increased in numbers to the point where their sheer numbers have displaced those seeking quiet recreation.

Many trails that I know of in the Knik River Valley were used for quiet recreation until the mid-late seventies. While the trails I've used were started initially as logging roads in the thirties and forties, some of them through the seventies, once they were no longer used by logging equipment, it was a haven for riding horses, mushing dogs and just plain hiking. There were not many people living here and encountering an occasional three wheeler or dirt bike was no big deal. The Sexton Trail to Jim Creek was pretty rough. In the winter, you'd see dog sled tracks on most trails.

Maud-Plumley, Morgan Horse Trail, Envy/Sexton and Rippy Trails were built in partnership with an equestrian association and the Mat-Su Borough for non-motor purposes in the early eighties.. The equestrian organization donated equipment and labor. The Pavilion Parking Lot and the Morgan Horse Trail Parking Lot were built for the same purpose, non-motorized recreation so people would have a place to park, and have picnics while in the outdoors close to Jim Creek and the Flats.

It didn't take long for the structures associated with these trail and trail head ventures to get vandalized and destroyed. The first to go was the foot bridge over McRoberts Creek on the Maud-Plumley trail. It was not built for fourwheelers and ended up in the creek, its nails injuring a horse that was crossing the creek. The Morgan Horese Trail parking lot pavilion was vandalized. The "Pavilion" at Jim Creek parking lot was next. Neither the State of Alaska nor the Mat-Su Borough made any effort to protect these areas for their intended uses. All the efforts of so many people to create something nice for people to enjoy this beautiful area went to waste. The nice picnic pavilion at the Jim Creek Parking Lot was used for target practice for years before the Borough took it down.

Next thing that was destroyed by motorized recreation was in the mid-nineties near the beginning of Rippy Trail by Jim Lake. People don't realize that the salmon come up all the way onto the mountain side. Dept of Fish and Game still shows in their inventory of anadromous streams this little creek as salmon bearing, even though salmon can't get up into it anymore for the fourwheeler tracks blocking their way. Next thing that was destroyed was one of the many springs which come out of the mountain side and feed the wetlands and the lakes. If these springs go, so will our water here in Butte.

Next thing that was destroyed are the dunes. Trees were cut and their roots were exposed from ATVs running circles around them; motorized recreation made the dunes an elevated sand bar. Pretty soon these dunes they will not be able to stop the wind from blowing them into the Valley. The dunes and the trees and brush on them are supposed to protect the Valley from the glacier silt and the Knik River changing its course.

Jim-Swan Lake Canoe trail was dedicated by the Borough in the mid-eighties and is still being advertised as such, no matter that canoes and kayaks have to worry about getting out of the way of powerboats racing up or down Jim Creek and the lakes.

It is time for the State of Alaska and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to start protecting the resources which are being destroyed in the name of "recreation." I encourage these agencies to develop trails in areas which are sustainable and which will allow people on fourwheelers to enjoy the full spectrum of scenic splendor we are surrounded with.

I am opposed to any rescission of rules in order to accommodate increased motorized destruction through the majority of Lower Knik River Flats. How will DNR prevent the increased heavy motorized use from damaging wetlands and contaminating streams upriver? How will DNR protect residents and quiet users from increased traffic, rowdy behavior, noise and dust? Rescinding rules is not an option.

I am asking that the State of Alaska, as part of their management plan, restore the damage that has been done to the trails, the wetlands and its waters, the forests and the dunes. I am asking that the State of Alaska agencies, such as Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Environmental Conservation and Department of Public Safety work together to enhance and restore the habitat so that all reasonable recreational activities, whether motorized or quiet, can continue for generations to come.

The State of Alaska should close the gate to destructive recreation and embrace those reasonable users - whether motorized or quiet - who treat the area with respect. These are the users who would NEVER ask that rules be rescinded to accommodate their wanton waste of resources who belong to all Alaskans. These are the users who will support the efforts of our agencies to "develop, conserve and enhance natural resources for present and future Alaskans."

Thank you for your consideration.

Comment 159 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 12:41 AM:

Butte Area Residents Civic Organization (BARCO) SUBSTITUTES TO DNR ALTERNATIVES
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Butte Area Residents Civic Organization (BARCO) Alternatives as presented below are based on the priorities submitted to DNR during the scoping period. DNR neglected to incorporate these priorities in their proposed Management Plan Alternatives.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES offer a solution to combat and mitigate the loss quality of life for residents and responsible recreationists of all persuasions and the well documented deterioration of wildlife habitat. They will allow multi-use recreation without conflict and will open the door to new economic opportunities based on the world-class scenery of the Knik River Valley and the Community of Buttes proximity to Alaskas population center and its visitors.

We encourage residents, responsible motorized and quiet users, as well as those users who have been disenfranchised from recreating in our beautiful area, to choose the BARCO ALTERNATIVES so that our community and the wildlife in Knik River Valley can grow and prosper in peace and give the damaged environment the opportunity to recover.

MANAGEMENT PLAN BARCO Substitutes for DNR Management Actions

1) DEVELOP MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH PRIME CONSIDERATION HOW ANY PROPOSED ACTION WOULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT RESIDENTS regarding traffic, noise, dust, air quality and personal safety and how to mitigate such impact.

2) DEVELOP A TIME-SHARE SCHEDULE FOR MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION. Existing commercial airboat tour operators and aircraft should be exempted from the limitation. Existing ATV guided tours may be exempted on a permit basis. During the trapping and hunting seasons, legally licensed hunters and trappers shall be allowed motorized access. This will benefit different users to recreate without conflict, give respite to wildlife, and give residents and quiet users equal time to enjoy their homes and yards without nuisance noise from power boats, personal watercraft and ORVs and high-use traffic in their neighborhoods.

3) SEPARATE MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED ACCESS POINTS:

Centralize Motorized Access: a) from RS 2477 (Knik Glacier Trail/Jim Creek Trail) trail head and parking lot on State of Alaska Land. b) Public Access to Upper Knik River from South Knik River to be determined; Private Access for residents only onto motorized trails if their private property adjoins KRPUA is allowed.

Multi-Use Access: From Pavilion Parking Lot for access to Jim Creek Fishing on Sexton Trail. Motorized access to terminate in existing DNR parking lot uphill from Jim Creek Fishing area. Non-motorized access for campers, hikers, horses, bikers etc to Jim Creek Fishing and beyond.

Non-motorized Access: a) from Knik River/Bodenburg Creek Access to protect fish and waterfowl habitat at Bodenburg Creek; to protect adjoining private lands from ongoing trespass, and to allow residents and visitors the enjoyment of quiet recreational endeavors

near our homes. b) from Jim Lake Parking Lot to Rippy Trail and Wetlands

c) Allow access for motorized handicapped persons and non-handicapped companion in non-motorized areas by permit.

4) CRITICAL HABITAT AREAS SHOULD BE CREATED to include lakes, wetlands, alpine transition zones and sand dunes, to prevent further destruction. Restoration/revegetation plans should be established and implemented for these areas. The Jim Swan wetlands area and adjacent Rippy Trail should be made a non-motorized area, with a possible relaxation of restrictions during hunting /trapping seasons if daily enforcement is in place. During these times, motorized use should be limited to designated trails and access points. This area has been specifically recommended for special protection by numerous groups, agencies and studies at least since the 1981 USF&W Knik Arm Wetlands Study.

5) ANY LAND ACQUISITION FOR INCLUSION TO THE KNIK RIVER PUBLIC USE AREA will require a public process regarding cost for management, facilities and law enforcement and available funding. Any land acquisition from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough will require a full public process regarding preferences of local residents for that parcel and proposed management actions to ensure a variety of recreational activities for the benefit of residents, and particularly the Youth of the Community of Butte; the cost of such a land transaction to the State of Alaska and the income to be derived by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough from the sale of these lands. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough shall not give away borough-owned assets until the Community of Butte can be assured that they be managed for the benefit of the community .

6) Establish fines for bailable offenses including the intentional or unintentional contamination of land and waters by lead, automotive fluids and other hazardous materials; cutting life trees; rutting and destroying vegetation; contributing to the erosion of river, lake and stream banks; disturbing or harassing wildlife including waterfowl.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES TO DNR ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL UNITS

BARCO: Limit off-road vehicles to established and hardened trails. Prohibit snow-machine water skippers from operating in Knik River or any of its tributaries. Establish bailable offense for this activity for disturbing the peace of residents at any hour.

Oppose rescinding any existing rules or other regulatory action in the entire KRPUA which provide exemptions from existing statutes or regulations that protect streams, fish and wildlife habitat, etc., or are designed to prevent rutting of trails and disturbing vegetation. Do not allow existing destructive uses to continue or expand.

Restrict curb weight to 1,000 lb for highway and off-road vehicles to 1,000 lb until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging in all units is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large-vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES BY MANAGEMENT UNIT

UNIT A. Lower Knik Flats - Page 1 of 8

INTENT: Change language to read: The intent is to encourage a wide variety of recreational uses including nonmotorized and motorized uses as described in HB307. DNR recognizes the high value of this area for quality multiple use recreation. DNR shall not manage any unit

as a motor park, moto-cross or mudbog venue but provide a high quality experience for responsible ORV travelers and sightseers. The management goal includes to separate nonmotorized from motorized uses by creating specially hardened trails for motorized and equine users to lessen impact on the environment and to create safe conditions for all uses. To further this goal, multiple access points will be created which separate motorized and nonmotorized users and which provide safety and quiet for adjacent property owners. DNR shall mitigate high-use multiple use recreation for the benefit of residents and responsible motorized and quiet users. Mitigation measures to include speed limits, speed bumps, controlled access and a highly visible law enforcement presence.

Indestructible sanitation facilities and camping area style trash containers shall be placed as soon as possible to protect the health of the public.

BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Discharge of Firearms: Recreational discharge of firearms will be prohibited in this entire unit to protect human safety and to prevent pollution of lead from skeet targets and ammunition into the waters of Knik River Valley.

BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Rescinding of Regulations including Remedies for well documented current Damage in this unit:

- 1) No existing regulations will be rescinded. All regulations will be developed in compliance with existing laws and regulations, including but not restricted to 11AAC 96.020 (a)(1)(D)(E), 11 AAC 96.025 (1)(2)(3)(A-C) as well as any and all Alaska Statutes which protect fish, game and waterfowl and its habitat.
- 2) Repair rutted trails and vegetation in forests, wetlands and lowlands. Harden where appropriate. Repair stream banks.
- 3) Revegetate Dunes. Dunes protect Butte and Palmer from Knik River changing course.
- 4) Allow unrestricted vehicle curb weight only for travel on Sexton Trail from Pavilion Parking Lot to DNR Parking Lot on the uplands prior to Jim Creek Flats and on Jim Creek Trail to existing DNR parking lot, or parking lot to be established on uplands in forest prior to approaching the Flats. Both Jim Creek Trail (aka RS2477, Knik Glacier Trail) and Sexton Trail should be hardened with speed bumps added for the safety of the public.
- 5) Restrict curb weight of highway and off-road vehicles to 1,000 lb curb weight until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging from UNIT A to KNIK GLACIER is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit.
- 6) Prohibit the use of trees for extricating winching vehicles out of mud or water.
- 7) Recommend and agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3 regarding 100 stream buffer protection on all water ways.

NEW Alternative 4 regarding utilization of Mat-Su Borough Pavilion Parcel. In addition to equalize the number of motorized and non-motorized trails on this parcel, Mat-Su Borough shall utilize a large portion this parcel for community recreational purposes, including a community park, BMX park, multi-age playground, soccer fields, volleyball and tennis venues to give young adults and families, something to do.

A public campground should be established there as well. The Pavilion Parking Area was built by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough. The picnic pavilion at the site was subsequently destroyed by motorized users. The Pavilion Parking Area should be designated access for non-motorized users. Two non-motorized trails should be designated to accommodate different users, such as for hikers, bikers and horses. A separated parking lot on the west side of the Pavilion should allow cars to travel the Sexton Trail to Jim Creek. In addition, An ATV trail should be developed and designated to allow ATV access from the Pavilion parking lot to Jim Creek.

Residents should be allowed planning participation on this Mat-Su Borough parcel.

All motorized access to the entire area should be from the trail head for the RS2477 Knik Glacier Trail (aka Jim Creek Trail) on State of Alaska Land to minimize adverse impact to residents from high traffic, noise, dust and air pollution. Sanitary facilities will be developed and may be shared by users of both the Pavilion and RS2477 parking areas. Separate sanitary facilities may be developed for a public camp ground on the Pavilion parcel.

NEW Alternative 4 regarding Manmade Lake: No Motorized use at Manmade Lake except for parking access for picnics, swimming and other non-motorized activities. The bottom of Manmade Lake should be dredged and cleaned from an accumulation of glass, metal and lead and restored to its original purpose as a community swimming hole.

UNIT B. Lakes Unit B should be renamed to read Lakes and Wetlands.

INTENT language should be changed to read: Provide for moderate density quiet use and limited motorized use for all seasons for the protection of water fowl in the summer and moose and sheep in the winter. The area in this unit was recommended as Critical Habitat in previous studies. Designate and manage this area as Critical Habitat. Motor size for boats in this unit and Jim Creek shall be restricted to 3 HP to protect nesting and rearing waterfowl including trumpeter swans in all lakes of the unit. No motorized recreational vehicle use in lakes and wetlands area during the summer. No power boats, including airboats, in lakes and wetlands. Establish snowmachine corridor in the winter.

NEW BARCO Alternative 5. Rippy Trail to remain designated non-motorized in its entirety. No Loop Trail.

Rippy Trail was established by and for non-motorized use by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough in the 1980s. Motorized users have destroyed one salmon stream and several springs feeding the wetlands and lakes and, because of their large numbers, have created sanitary issues. A Loop Trail would cut into an established wild life corridor which extends from the Alpine environment west to the Knik River-Matanuska River Delta and connects with the Palmer Hay Flats

NEW Alternative 5 for the entire unit: Use of any waterbody with a motorized watercraft is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Approaching within 1500 feet of an active Trumpeter Swan nest on land or water is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Legal hunting is allowed; however, swans gathering on the lakes in preparation of their fall migration may not be approached within 500 feet either on land or on the waters they are gathering in.

Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Mud Lake. In addition, construction of a boat launch/ramp at Mud Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP.

Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Jim Lake. In addition, construction of a canoe launch at Jim Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. NEW Alternative 5 to prohibit recreational shooting at Jim Lake in order to protect public safety and preventing disturbance of nesting/rearing waterfowl. Legal hunting is allowed after Swan fall migration.

UNIT C - Upper Knik Flats

NEW Alternative 3: No vehicles more than 1000 lbs curb weight until an improved road for access is developed to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids.

UNIT D - Upper Jim Alpine

Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT E - Upper Friday Alpine

Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT F - Grasshopper Valley

Agree with DNR Alternatives 2, with the exception that no additional trails be developed.

UNIT G Glacier

Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. In Addition:

NEW ALTERNATIVE 3 regarding future development: Recommend that the area past the Knik Glacier Lake if that is within the PUA be made a non-motorized area, except for aircraft. At this time no other motorized vehicles can generally access it (except if transported by helicopter or other air transportation). However, as the glacier recedes, motorized access may be possible, with deleterious effects to the wildlife and environment. At present this area is almost pristine, with some aircraft landing sites and virtually no other tracks, litter etc. Taking a non-motorized (except for aircraft) stance at this time, while having no effect on present usage, would protect the area against possible future abuses. As has been seen throughout the accessible PUA, any place an ORV can get, someone will take one, and many will not be cognizant of possible environmental damage.

UNIT H - Metal Creek

Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

NEW Alternative 3: Prohibit vehicles to travel through Metal Creek in order to prevent pollution of the waters of Metal Creek and Knik River from automotive fluids while traveling through the water and to prevent abandonment of vehicles in the waterways of the Knik River.

FEES

Agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3, Point 1 regarding the collection of fees. In addition, amount of fees charged should be based on cost of management, law enforcement and facilities to be determined as the management plan is developed..

A hard copy of the above will be presented to you as well.

Comment 160 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 06:16 AM:

Your alternatives do not do enough to protect the Jim-Swan Wetlands. Please adopt the management alternative prepared by the Knik River Watershed Group for the Lakes Unit B. It is alternative 5 and restricts the use of ATV and airboat activity to months when ducks, swans, loons and grebes are not staging, breeding and nesting. The Rippy trail should be nonmotorized like it was originally intended. It is very close to the wetlands and has good salmon streams. There are Dall sheep that have lambs each spring on the cliffs above the lakes. I have seen the sheep come down very close to the trail in the winter time. This place is special for all the wildlife and should be a quiet place for viewing, hiking and canoeing. There are lots of other places for the four wheelers and airboaters to go - they don't need to bother this place too.

I like to hunt and hike. I kayak and canoe in the lakes there every year. I am very upset by the destruction and damage caused by four-wheelers in the Jim-Swan area and have to hold on to alders on the side of the stream when airboats come through to keep from being tipped over by the boat wakes. This can not be good for the shoreline or for all the ducks trying to raise their young. You need to take better care of this area and set it aside as critical habitat.

Thank you,

Paul Fritz

Comment 161 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 07:34 AM:

For the Knik River Public Use Area- a modified version of Alternative 5 best serves the residents, non-mechanized public users of the area and will preserve the area's habitat. The following changes should be adopted:

Non-motorized watercraft ONLY during all nesting periods for waterfowl, up to and including the migration stage;

Do not construct ANY new trails or expand existing ones until all the plans for habitat preservation AND restoration are complete;

Construct any public facilities with public restrooms and bear-proof trash containers;

Close the Rippy Trail and ALL critical wetland areas to motorized use;

Limit target shooting ONLY to a safe, designated area OR if this is not possible, ban target shooting all together;

Retain all current laws to protect and prevent habitat damage.

Comment 162 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 08:10 AM:

Comments on Management Action: 1. 2. & 3. Classify ' trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: access roads into KRPUA, trail/road for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational areas. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails.

1.& 2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews,

fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4.DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisitions were not identified, nor was a need or use for such land described.

Comments on Actions Common to All Alternatives: to add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc. Comments on Preliminary Alternatives 1, 2, 3: DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the unrestricted access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for access trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail..

Other Comments: Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenbug Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area..

Comment 163 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 08:11 AM:

We generally support the PRELIMINARY MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AND ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES as set out in the Alternatives document. There are some suggested specific changes described below but see these actions as a good start to reining in the extreme behavior we all want to stop.

Management Actions

First Para

We submit that the inclusion of close in Through this process, trails may be developed, designated, re-routed, or closed by the Department. is against the intent and letter of the statute (per Sec 41.23.200(d) (1)). This direction in the statute applies to the whole of the KRPUA, and is applicable to all established sub-units. While we are looking forward to working with the Management team to improve trails we will not support closing any existing trail. If it is deemed that a specific trail is causing a problem, repairing or slight rerouting of the trail can and should be the remedial action.

Sec. 3. Second Bullet

Add significantly between trails and impacting.

This would put this management action in line with the Generally Allowed Uses.

Sec. 3. Third Bullet

Again, remove the close provision.

Sec. 3. Add new Para

Take aggressive action to acquire land required to maintain access to the KRPUA from the Knik River bridge area and acquire the lands within the KRPUA scheduled to be conveyed to the Eklutna Native Corporation.

Acquiring these parcels would maintain the cohesiveness of and access to the area.

Actions Common to All Areas

Third Para;

Change Vehicle use off of existing trails in vegetated areas is prohibited. This does not apply to units or areas designated to allow these activities through the KRPUA Management Plan. to new Para Generally Allowed Uses on State Lands will remain in effect for all areas unless specifically waived for a designated area.

The Generally Allowed Uses provides adequate protection for the land and maintains one base set of standards for users on State owned/controlled lands they may use. The education given users of the KRPUA would then apply to other DNR controlled lands.

Add Para: Any lands acquired by the State of Alaska within the boundaries of the KRPUA must have no covenants more restrictive than the Generally Allowed Uses. This is needed to preclude piecemeal management plans/restrictions on small areas within the area.

SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT AREAS

Unit A Lower Knik River Flats

We support Alternative 2 for this area with the following changes;

A. We support the ban on recreational shooting for this area. However we stress that a safe alternative area for legitimate recreational shooters must be identified and created within the KRPUA. We feel that the safest shooting area would be on the north side of Maude Road between Mud and Jim Lake. This area would be more accessible to this user group, more easily regulated and with one road access be more readily patrolled and enforced by State Troopers in any type of vehicle.

B. Clarification on the 100 foot buffer for the vegetated areas along Jim Creek is needed. Some of RST 17 comes within this area, we feel the restriction on new trails in this buffer is sufficient.

C. We feel that the creation of a new non-motorized trail from the Pavilion to the flats is within the scope of the KRPUA objectives. We do strongly recommend that it be placed between the existing motorized RST 17 and Envy trail to keep motorized and non-motorized users semi-isolated from each other and keep signage costs down.

Unit B Lakes

We support Alternative 2 for this area with the following changes;

A. We enthusiastically support the development and maintenance of the Rippy Trail as a multiple, non-motorized and motorized, use access to the upper Knik valley.

In light of the seasonal flooding along the Knik River flats discounting that route as a certainty, another access route is sorely needed for safely reaching users in the upper valley in emergency situations as well as allowing in-holders sure year-around access to their homes and property.

B. The suggested restriction on motorized travel within 300 feet of swan nests should be reconsidered and determined if it is required by any State or Federal statute. As a minimum this should be amended to allow continued use of the established trails per Sec 41.23.200(d) (1) of the statute. We recommend that signs warning users of the proximity of the nests be placed on the trails where they approach active nests. This would allow all users the chance to observe the swans, even the people who cannot travel that far on foot.

C. We support banning recreational shooting within ¼ mile of facilities as long as this rule does not interfere with the establishment of a shooting area between the lakes as suggested before.

Units C, F, G and H General Upper Knik Valley

We support Alternative 2 for these areas with the following changes;

A. Adding Uses in accordance with the Generally Allowed Uses will be allowed

B. We would like to see specific allowance for motorized use on non-vegetated areas be added. The rock flats and gravel moraine in this area make the possible designation of specified trails or routes difficult to identify as well as enforce while travel on them has no ecological impact.

Unit E Upper Friday Alpine

We support Alternative 2 for this area with the following changes;

A. Adding Uses in accordance with the Generally Allowed Uses will be allowed

FEES

We would not object to the minimum fee structure if the following policies are in place;

A. DNR needs to ensure that all of the fees collected are used to maintain the facilities within the KRPUA.

B. Fee structure would allow family season pass holders to use more than one specific vehicle and allow all family members to use individual OHVs within the area.

Many families use this area to recreate, we feel that encouraging family activities is a beneficial use of the area to be made easier, not more expensive.

C. Any fee structure should evenly tax all area user groups.

We cannot approve of a fee plan that is to support facilities and trail building for all user groups when the fees are paid by a few user groups.

D. Any fee structure needs to consider the diversity of the access means and access points. There are many access points into the area, application of a fee structure would need to specifically address this fact to insure that all users are in fact complying with the fee structure.

E. Users already paying snowmobile/ATV or boat registrations should be exempt as they already pay fees to use public resources.

Comment 164 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 08:21 AM:

Comments on Management Action: 1. 2. & 3. Classify ' trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: access roads into KRPUA, trail/road for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational areas. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails.

1.& 2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4.DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisitions were

not identified, nor was a need or use for such land described.

Comments on Actions Common to All Alternatives: to add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc. Comments on Preliminary Alternatives 1, 2, 3: DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the unrestricted access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for access trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail..

Other Comments: Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenbug Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area..

Comment 165 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 08:42 AM:

In general, I support Alternative 2 for the KRPUA. Designated trails and uses are critical as well as sanitary facilities. Not mentioned in the alternatives are enforcement. I strongly support the charging of fees as listed in Alternative 2 so that resources are available to properly manage and enforce provisions of this plan.

Comment 166 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 09:08 AM:

I support Alternative 1. And ONLY Alternative 1 as currently presented. The Knik Valley area does not need any significant additional restrictions. It does not need any new development in the name of improving it. What it does need is enforcement of existing regulations and laws that are commonly ignored. Weekend parties centering around drug use and underage drinking come to mind immediately. As does disposal of stolen cars and unlawful dumping, drunken driving and use of firearms while intoxicated. Giving money designated for the Public Use Area to the State Troopers to fund occasional overtime patrols within the community of Butte will have no impact on these problems. Law enforcement presence is needed in the areas where the violations and crimes are being committed. OFF of the road system.

Responsible use of motorized vehicles is not a problem in the Knik Vally. Responsible use of fire arms is not a problem in the Knik Vally. Underage drinking, vandalism unlawful dumping

and other various criminal activities are. Restricting the rights of the majority of the areas user who are law abiding and responsible is not an acceptable way to deal with the remainder who will simply ignore any new regulations they way they are ignoring the existing laws that they are breaking.

I, my family and my friends have been spending time in Knik Valley for the last twenty five years and longer. These activities include, but are not limited to hunting and fishing, camping and picnics, school field trips, tours for visitors from the lower 48, hiking and exploring the hills and canyons around and beyond the valley, boating and canoing the lakes and creeks. In virtually all instances motorized travel has been involved within the valley In virtually all instances a firearm was present. In NO instance has any irresponsible action been involved.

This area was initially opening by gold exploration and homesteading. Motorized vehicles and firearms have been a part of the use of this area as long as either have existing in Alaska. There is no justification to change that. The number of people who claim to use the valley without motorized access are a tiny minority and are only visiting a tiny section of the area. Few of them have ever even seen the largest parts of the valley or the hidden jewels tucked away in the further reaches.

What there is justification for, is a change in how law enforcement views Knik Valley. It should not be treated as a no mans land where calls to the dispatcher are ignored or put off for hours (I have personally experienced exactly this response). It should not be treated as an area where crimes do not matter until they intrude upon the road system. The Public Use Area should not be viewed as a source of funds to be spend on road bound patrols, occurring only when it is convenient and having no impact on actions withing the Public Use Area.

A true and sustained law enforcement presence in the area from the trailheads to Friday Creek will quickly solve the overwhelming majority of the problems in this area. This is where the overwhelming majority of the crime and violations are being committed by the unsavory minority of the users of the valley. Enforce the existing laws and regulations as we have all been requesting for years and the problems will be solved.

If that requires limiting access and user fees to support enforcement activities, then so be it. Beyond the drunken car thieves and their companions few if any will object to this for this particular area.

Mark...

Comment 167 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 10:26 AM:

UPON READING KNIK RIVER PUBLIC USE AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN BELIEVE ALTERNATIVE NUMBER ONE (1) WOULD BEST SUIT USAGE... HAVE LIVED HERE IN BUTTE AREA, KNIK RIVER AREA FOR LAST 37 YEARS... SEEN THE GOOD AND THE BAD HAPPEN... WE NEED THE AREA FOR PUBLIC MULTI USE, JUST ENFORCE LAWS AND REGULATIONS THAT ALL READY ARE IN EFFECT... CANT TEACH SOME FOLKS COMMON SENSE, BUT YOU CAN JAIL AND FINE THE ONES THAT DONT USE IT.... THANKS CHRIS G FOWLER....

Comment 168 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 10:59 AM:

The DNR must improve safety conditions and protect important fish and wildlife habitat in this area.

Thank you.

Comment 169 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 11:29 AM:

I would like to be put on record as supporting Proposal #1. I use the Knik area regularly in both the summer and winter months and do not want of loose motorized access. I understand the need to better police the area and address safety issues from unregulated shooting but would like the impact to reasonable motorized and non-motorized travel be minimal.

Comment 170 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 11:36 AM:

!315 Hillcrest Drive Anchorage, AK 99503 (907) 258-7261
May 4, 2007

Mr. Brandon McCutcheon, Plan Project Manager ADNR 550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1050
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Mr. McCutcheon

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Knik River Public Use Area Plan. Im particularly interested in the Jim-Swan area because of its exceptional importance to fish and wildlife; its proximity to Anchorage, Palmer, and Wasilla; and its beauty. None of your proposed management options adequately protect this valuable fish and wildlife habitat, which is why I support much of what is in the Knik River Watershed Groups Alternative Five.

Its bad enough to permit ORVs, ATVs, airboats, jet boats, jet skis, and other mechanized recreational vehicles and water craft along the main channels of the Knik River. But allowing the public to ride and drive roughshod over wetlands and through spawning beds of anadromous fish streams is unacceptable.

While ADNRs plans to improve access to Jim-Swan may be well-intentioned, the fact is that improving access without simultaneously imposing meaningful and enforceable restrictions is a recipe for disaster. The damage already visited upon the area by vehicular traffic of all types is, for all intents and purposes, permanent. . Already, hundreds of acres of high value habitat have been impaired, degraded, or destroyed. Call it what you like, but the fact is that this isnt recreation; its destruction, pure and simple

The Mat-Sus population is exploding. There is no other natural area like Jim-Swan so close to Palmer and Wasilla. If you think Jim-Swan is important to local residents now, think what it could mean 30 or 40 years from now. Is it ADNRs position that to mollify motorized recreationists now, its okay to turn the Jim-Swan into a permanent mud-hole with minimal value for fish and wildlife forever? Or will ADNR show some vision, leadership, and courage and manage this area so that it can provide pleasure and fish and wildlife viewing opportunities for future generations of Alaskans?

Think what Point Kinkaid would be like today if the entire place was open to ORV use. But its not. As a result, its a welcome refuge in an urban wasteland, the pride of Anchorage, teaming with walkers, skiers, mountain bikers, and equestrians. And the bikers, dirt-bikers, and snowmachiners are happy as pigs in you-know-what with their scorched earth, deafening motocross area. With the Knik River Public Use Area, Im asking ADNR to do the opposite really, permit the trashing of the lions share if you feel you must, but please, please, protect the Jim-Swan, a small but critical to wildlife part of the Knik River Public Use Area so that Alaskans without ATVs and the like can enjoy it without having to worry about getting run over or wade through acres of mud-wallow.

All I'm really asking is that ADNR impose a management scheme that restricts access to areas that are appropriate to that use. We all know that there will always be people who will try to take their machines everywhere. The question is what to do about it? I believe that the answer lies in public education, balance, and enforcement. That's why I support in general the Knik River Watershed Groups Alternative Five. My only objection to Alternative Five is that there should be no motorized access to the Jim-Swan wetlands, except in winter when snow-cover and ice conditions are sufficient to protect them from damage.

I know that some will argue that it is unfair to take away motorized recreationists' access to areas they are already using---and trashing. But the question should be: What right does any user group have to destroy a common, public resource? None. Furthermore, motorized recreationists currently enjoy virtually unlimited access to nearly every drainage in the Mat-Su Borough, and on the Glenn, Parks, Richardson, and Denali highways. And everywhere, the results are the same. Trash. Litter. Abandoned, burnt out vehicles. Vandalism. Busted vegetation. Trail proliferation. Mud wallows. Habitat damage and loss. While I appreciate the efforts of many recreational vehicle users to respect the land, operate responsibly, and clean up after their brethren, that doesn't address the real issue, which is what can the land bear? In the case of wetlands, the answer is: Almost nothing.

The question with the Jim-Swan Wetlands is really whether ADNR is going to live up to its mandate to manage Alaska's lands and waters responsibly or is it going to preside over their destruction? I am hoping that ADNR opts for responsible management. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. Sincerely,

Mike Macy

Comment 171 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 12:24 PM:

Public Comment Form

Please feel free to use this form to provide comments on the Knik River Public Use Area.

Comments on Management Action: 1. 2. & 3. Classify 'trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: access roads into KRPUA, trail/road for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational areas. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails.

1.& 2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4. DNR's proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle

access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisitions were not identified, nor was a need or use for such land described.

Comments on Actions Common to All Alternatives: to add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc. Comments on Preliminary Alternatives 1, 2, 3: DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the unrestricted access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for access trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail..

Other Comments: Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenburg Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area..

Submitted by: Cynthia Allen

Comment 172 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 12:42 PM:

1) DEVELOP MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH PRIME CONSIDERATION HOW ANY PROPOSED ACTION WOULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT RESIDENTS regarding traffic, noise, dust, air quality and personal safety and how to mitigate such impact.
2) DEVELOP A TIME-SHARE SCHEDULE FOR MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION. Existing commercial airboat tour operators and aircraft should be exempted from the limitation. Existing ATV guided tours may be exempted on a permit basis. During the trapping and hunting seasons, legally licensed hunters and trappers shall be allowed motorized access. This will benefit different users to recreate without conflict, give respite to wildlife, and give residents and quiet users equal time to enjoy their homes and yards without nuisance noise from power boats, personal watercraft and ORVs and high-use traffic in their neighborhoods.

3) SEPARATE MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED ACCESS POINTS:

Centralize Motorized Access: a) from RS 2477 (Knik Glacier Trail/Jim Creek Trail) trail head and parking lot on State of Alaska Land. b) Public Access to Upper Knik River from South Knik River to be determined; Private Access for residents only onto motorized trails if their private property adjoins KRPUA is allowed.

Multi-Use Access: From Pavilion Parking Lot for access to Jim Creek Fishing on Sexton Trail. Motorized access to terminate in existing DNR parking lot uphill from Jim Creek Fishing area. Non-motorized access for campers, hikers, horses, bikers etc to Jim Creek Fishing and beyond.

Non-motorized Access: a) from Knik River/Bodenburg Creek Access to protect fish and waterfowl habitat at Bodenburg Creek; to protect adjoining private lands from ongoing trespass, and to allow residents and visitors the enjoyment of quiet recreational endeavors near our homes. b) from Jim Lake Parking Lot to Rippy Trail and Wetlands

c) Allow access for motorized handicapped persons and non-handicapped companion in non-motorized areas by permit.

4) CRITICAL HABITAT AREAS SHOULD BE CREATED to include lakes, wetlands, alpine transition zones and sand dunes, to prevent further destruction. Restoration/revegetation plans should be established and implemented for these areas. The Jim Swan wetlands area and adjacent Rippy Trail should be made a non-motorized area, with a possible relaxation of restrictions during hunting /trapping seasons if daily enforcement is in place. During these times, motorized use should be limited to designated trails and access points. This area has been specifically recommended for special protection by numerous groups, agencies and studies at least since the 1981 USF&W Knik Arm Wetlands Study.

5) ANY LAND ACQUISITION FOR INCLUSION TO THE KNIK RIVER PUBLIC USE AREA will require a public process regarding cost for management, facilities and law enforcement and available funding. Any land acquisition from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough will require a full public process regarding preferences of local residents for that parcel and proposed management actions to ensure a variety of recreational activities for the benefit of residents, and particularly the Youth of the Community of Butte; and the cost of such a land transaction to the State of Alaska and the income to be derived by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough from the sale of these lands. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough shall not give away borough-owned assets until the Community of Butte can be assured that they be managed for the benefit of the community .

6) Establish fines for bailable offenses including the intentional or unintentional contamination of land and waters by lead, automotive fluids and other hazardous materials; cutting life trees; rutting and destroying vegetation; contributing to the erosion of river, lake and stream banks; disturbing or harassing wildlife including waterfowl.

7) DNR needs to review the legislative history and language in the legislation (request an Attorney General Opinion) -- no intent in the legislation to "grandfather" in motorized uses where such uses would destroy critical habitat. The legislation requires restoration of degraded areas: DNR's plans do not contain any planning for restoration.

ALTERNATIVES TO DNR ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL UNITS

Limit off-road vehicles to established and hardened trails. Prohibit snow-machine water skippers from operating in Knik River or any of its tributaries. Establish bailable offense for

this activity for disturbing the peace of residents at any hour.

Oppose rescinding any existing rules or other regulatory action in the entire KRPUA which protect streams, fish and wildlife habitat, etc., or are designed to prevent rutting of trails and disturbing vegetation. Do not allow existing destructive uses to continue or expand.

Restrict curb weight to 1,000 lb for highway and off-road vehicles until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging in all units is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large-vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit.

ALTERNATIVES BY MANAGEMENT UNIT

UNIT A. Lower Knik Flats

INTENT: Change language to read: The intent is to encourage a wide variety of recreational uses including nonmotorized and motorized uses as described in HB307. DNR recognizes the high value of this area for quality multiple use recreation. DNR shall not manage any unit as a motor park, moto-cross or mudbog venue but provide a high quality experience for responsible ORV travelers and sightseers. The management goal includes to separate nonmotorized from motorized uses by creating specially hardened trails for motorized and equine users to lessen impact on the environment and to create safe conditions for all uses. To further this goal, multiple access points will be created which separate motorized and nonmotorized users and which provide safety and quiet for adjacent property owners. DNR shall mitigate high-use multiple use recreation for the benefit of residents and responsible motorized and quiet users. Mitigation measures to include speed limits, speed bumps, controlled access and a highly visible law enforcement presence.

Indestructible sanitation facilities and camping area style trash containers shall be placed as soon as possible to protect the health of the public.

BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Discharge of Firearms: Recreational discharge of firearms will be prohibited in this entire unit to protect human safety and to prevent pollution of lead from skeet targets and ammunition into the waters of Knik River Valley.

BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Rescinding of Regulations including Remedies for well documented current Damage in this unit:

- 1) No existing regulations will be rescinded. All regulations will be developed in compliance with existing laws and regulations, including but not restricted to 11AAC 96.020 (a)(1)(D)(E), 11 AAC 96.025 (1)(2)(3)(A-C) as well as any and all Alaska Statutes which protect fish, game and waterfowl and its habitat.
- 2) Repair rutted trails and vegetation in forests, wetlands and lowlands. Harden where appropriate. Repair stream banks.
- 3) Revegetate Dunes. Dunes protect Butte and Palmer from Knik River changing course.
- 4) Allow unrestricted vehicle curb weight only for travel on Sexton Trail from Pavilion Parking Lot to DNR Parking Lot on the uplands prior to Jim Creek Flats and on Jim Creek Trail to existing DNR parking lot, or parking lot to be established on uplands in forest prior to approaching the Flats. Both Jim Creek Trail (aka RS2477, Knik Glacier Trail) and Sexton Trail should be hardened with speed bumps added for the safety of the public.

5) Restrict curb weight of highway and off-road vehicles to 1,000 lb curb weight until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging from UNIT A to KNIK GLACIER is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit.

6) Prohibit the use of trees for extricating winching vehicles out of mud or water.

7) Recommend and agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3 regarding 100 stream buffer protection on all water ways.

NEW Alternative 4 regarding utilization of Mat-Su Borough Pavilion Parcel. In addition to equalize the number of motorized and non-motorized trails on this parcel, Mat-Su Borough shall utilize a large portion this parcel for community recreational purposes, including a community park, BMX park, multi-age playground, soccer fields, volleyball and tennis venues to give young adults and families, something to do.

A public campground should be established there as well. The Pavilion Parking Area was built by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough. The picnic pavilion at the site was subsequently destroyed by motorized users. The Pavilion Parking Area should be designated access for non-motorized users. Two non-motorized trails should be designated to accommodate different users, such as for hikers, bikers and horses. A separated parking lot on the west side of the Pavilion should allow cars to travel the Sexton Trail to Jim Creek. In addition, An ATV trail should be developed and designated to allow ATV access from the Pavilion parking lot to Jim Creek.

Residents should be allowed planning participation on this Mat-Su Borough parcel.

All motorized access to the entire area should be from the trail head for the RS2477 Knik Glacier Trail (aka Jim Creek Trail) on State of Alaska Land to minimize adverse impact to residents from high traffic, noise, dust and air pollution. Sanitary facilities will be developed and may be shared by users of both the Pavilion and RS2477 parking areas. Separate sanitary facilities may be developed for a public camp ground on the Pavilion parcel.

NEW Alternative 4 regarding Manmade Lake: No Motorized use at Manmade Lake except for parking access for picnics, swimming and other non-motorized activities. The bottom of Manmade Lake should be dredged and cleaned from an accumulation of glass, metal and lead and restored to its original purpose as a community swimming hole.

UNIT B. Lakes Unit B should be renamed to read Lakes and Wetlands.

INTENT language should be changed to read: Provide for moderate density quiet use and limited motorized use for all seasons for the protection of water fowl in the summer and moose and sheep in the winter. The area in this unit was recommended as Critical Habitat in previous studies. Designate and manage this area as Critical Habitat. Motor size for boats in this unit and Jim Creek shall be restricted to 3 HP to protect nesting and rearing waterfowl including trumpeter swans in all lakes of the unit. No motorized recreational vehicle use in lakes and wetlands area during the summer. No power boats, including airboats, in lakes and wetlands. Establish snowmachine corridor in the winter.

NEW BARCO Alternative 5 regarding Rippy Trail; . Rippy Trail to remain designated non-motorized in its entirety. No Loop Trail.

Rippy Trail was established by and for non-motorized use by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough in the 1980s. Motorized users have destroyed one salmon stream and several springs feeding the wetlands and lakes and, because of their large numbers, have created sanitary issues. A Loop Trail would cut into an established wild life corridor which extends from the Alpine environment west to the Knik River-Matanuska River Delta and connects with the Palmer Hay Flats

NEW Alternative 5 for the entire unit: Use of any waterbody with a motorized watercraft is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Approaching within 1500 feet of an active Trumpeter Swan nest on land or water is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Legal hunting is allowed; however, swans gathering on the lakes in preparation of their fall migration may not be approached within 500 feet either on land or on the waters they are gathering in.

Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Mud Lake. In addition, construction of a boat launch/ramp at Mud Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. Priority to establish restrooms and trash containers. Have trash containers with small openings to preclude use as household trash disposal units.

Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Jim Lake. In addition, construction of a canoe launch at Jim Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP.

NEW Alternative 5 to prohibit recreational shooting at Jim Lake in order to protect public safety and preventing disturbance of nesting/rearing waterfowl. Legal hunting is allowed after Swan fall migration.

UNIT C - Upper Knik Flats

NEW Alternative 3: No vehicles more than 1000 lbs curb weight until an improved road for access is developed to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids.

UNIT D - Upper Jim Alpine

Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT E - Upper Friday Alpine

Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT F - Grasshopper Valley

Agree with DNR Alternatives 2, with the exception that no additional trails be developed.

UNIT G Glacier

Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. In Addition:

NEW ALTERNATIVE 3 regarding future development: Recommend that the area past the Knik Glacier Lake if that is within the PUA be made a non-motorized area, except for aircraft. At this time no other motorized vehicles can generally access it (except if transported by helicopter or other air transportation). However, as the glacier recedes, motorized access may be possible, with deleterious effects to the wildlife and environment. At present this area is almost pristine, with some aircraft landing sites and virtually no other tracks, litter etc. Taking a non-motorized (except for aircraft) stance at this time, while having no effect on

present usage, would protect the area against possible future abuses. As has been seen throughout the accessible PUA, any place an ORV can get, someone will take one, and many will not be cognizant of possible environmental damage.

UNIT H - Metal Creek

Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

NEW Alternative 3: Prohibit vehicles to travel through Metal Creek in order to prevent pollution of the waters of Metal Creek and Knik River from automotive fluids while traveling through the water and to prevent abandonment of vehicles in the waterways of the Knik River.

FEES

Agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3, Point 1 regarding the collection of fees. In addition, amount of fees charged should be based on cost of management, law enforcement and facilities to be determined as the management plan is developed..

Comment 173 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 12:56 PM:

I believe it would be a mistake to close this area to responsible motorized users. The rugged nature of the area prevents law enforcement from easily monitoring its use. Forbidding law abiding users, who are the most likely to observe and report illegal activity, from the area will only make the problem worse as the ones causing the problems will have free run. I have spent alot of time myself in trying to keep the area clean of trash and debris which is mostly contained to the trailhead/sanddune area where the weekend parties happen. On another aspect, the natural beauty and sheer size of the area is the main attraction for myself and others. Properly used Motor vehicles have little if no impact on the beauty of the area, and are the only possible way for many people to access the far reaches of the area. It is not fair to deny access to responsible users who have enjoyed the openness of this area for many, many, years. Lets concentrate on the illegal activities and not discriminate against the legitimate users. Thank you, Jonathan Ward-Anchorage.

Comment 174 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

SECTION 1 Introduction: The Butte Community Council (BCC) is sanctioned by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough as a way for exchanging information between the public and the Borough and for keeping residents informed about any significant actions in their community. All board members of the BCC have been chosen by public elections to represent the residents of the Butte Community Council Area. The BCC has been, and is presently, intensely involved with the creation, management and planning of the KRPUA. We hope that since the BCC represents many users of the Knik River Public Use Area, and has, over several years collected valuable information about the desires (related to the use of public lands in our area) of Alaskans and others, that the planning team will seriously consider our recommendations about the upcoming planning and management of the KRPUA.

SECTION 2 Past historical actions of the BCC that are relevant to the planning and management of the KRPUA.. The BCC has been actively engaged in acquiring information from the citizens of the Butte area and users of the Knik River area for many years. We have passed several resolutions in the past 14 years that state our desires to retain public use of the nearby State, Borough and BLM lands. Copy's of these resolutions are included in this report for your information. Since they state our desires for continued motorized as well as non motorized uses, and the fact that our resolutions have been created at public meetings by voting processes open to all, we think that they are an important source of information and should be included as relevant information as well as the "alternatives" method for the

planning and management process. The 5 resolutions passed by the BCC are listed here: - BCC Resolution No. 93-01, Dec 15, 1993. A resolution supporting continued public access and traditional multiple use of the Knik Glacier / Knik River Valley. - BCC Resolution April 13th, 1993. a resolution supporting an application for an RS2477 Right of Way Knik Glacier public trail. - BCC Resolution June 9th, 2004 proclaiming our right to traditional use of public lands. - BCC Resolution No. 2005-5 June 8th, 2005 supporting House Bill No. 307 and Senate Bill No. 197 "An Act Creating the Knik River Public Use Area". - BCC Resolution No. 2005-10, July 13th, 2005. This resolution approves the circulation of a petition supporting House Bill 307 and Senate Bill No. 197. Petition: The BCC has also acquired over 3,000 signatures on a petition that states our desires to retain traditional uses (including multiple uses and motorized uses) for the Knik River recreation area. The petition is included in this report for your use. This petition 'has not' been closely edited and there are probably some errors.

SECTION 3 Alternatives: The BCC believes that the following alternatives are best. Unit A. Lower Knik Flats. Alternative 2 with the following changes---(add) Prohibition of "recreational shooting" will not affect legal hunting. (add) Develop a designated shooting area near the sand dunes and the Jim Creek crossing. The non-motorized trail mentioned should be a newly constructed trail and not created from the Sexton, Envy, or any of the other main motorized trails that are presently being used for access to the Knik River flats. (add) Allow electric motors in "Man-Made Lake" during ice free periods. Unit B. Lakes. Alternative 2. (add) - The "loop trail will be multiple use including motorized vehicles". No restrictions (such as - snow cover and/or snow depth) due to the typical warm Chinook winds that occur in this area that removes or greatly reduces snow cover. Many winters go by without a large accumulation of snow cover, thereby precluding any use of ATV's or snow machines for trapping and / or recreational access during the winter months if there are snow cover requirements. Eliminate the swan restrictions or change the wording. Unit C. Upper Knik Flats. Alternative 2. Unit D. Upper Jim Alpine. Alternative 2. Unit E. Upper Friday Alpine. Alternative 2. Unit F. Grasshopper. Alternative 2. A motorized trail should be developed into the main Grasshopper Valley along the Knik Glacier. The only present access to the valley is by aircraft or horse. This would greatly improve overall access to the KRPUA in an area that, at present, is "underused". This would be consistent with the House Bill 307 Sec 41.23.200 (d) 2--- "enhance off road motor vehicle options and opportunities in the Knik River public Use Area and provide for increased use of the Knik River public Use Area". Unit G. Glacier. Alternative 2. Unit H. Metal Creek. Alternative 2. Fees. Possibly an annual fee (card) not to exceed \$10.00 a year for the use of constructed facilities such as a controlled parking area or sanitation facilities. We do not approve of daily user fees for access to the lands included in the KRPUA. There should be a discount and / or free card for veterans and seniors.

SECTION 4 Misc. Comments: Please keep in mind that there are no credible reports that we are aware of, that state any significant habitat damage or problems with wildlife populations that have been caused by off road motorized use. There has been a lot of talk about the trumpeter swans. We think that because the swans are not endangered, the swan population is at an all time high, and the Knik River Valley area is not a significant swan nesting area, that the 300 foot rule is not necessary! We believe that the wording should be changed in order to eliminate unreasonable restrictions on motorized boat use in the moving waterways of the KRPUA. We attempted to include the phrase "keep existing trails open", to be included in House Bill 307. We still believe that the major trails should be kept open. We believe that a bridge and crossing permit should be issued for Jim Creek on the upper Rippy

trail near the mouth of the Jim Creek Canyon. We want to retain "traditional" uses in the KRPUA. We believe that the use of ATV's (4 wheelers) and other similar off road vehicles are traditional. The State of Alaska Statutes state that any use that has become "popular" is considered to be "traditional". Alaska Statute Sec 38.04.200 (2). We believe that users should 'not' be confined strictly to the main trail in vegetated areas. We are not advocating making new trails anywhere but we should be able to get off of the trail for camping, fishing, to haul a moose, and many other reasons. Creating new permanent trails is one thing, but a 'temporary' 5 foot trail is now allowed under the generally allowed uses, and makes sense for the above mentioned reasons. Some new wording is probably necessary for getting off of the trail for camping, etc. Maybe a corridor or "buffer zone" would be appropriate? We believe that the "Rippy Loop Trail" should be developed for the following reasons: (1) For continued year round access to the private property parcels and mining claims that occur in the Knik River valley as well as all the other previously mentioned uses. (2) This would provide an alternate trail for access to the Friday creek area in case of Lake George or other flooding in the main Knik River channel or access problems caused by a major change in the current active main channel of the Knik River. (3) This trail would expand access to the presently relatively unused portion of the KRPUA along the mountains between the upper Rippy trail and Friday Creek. This would be consistent with the House Bill 307 that states--- Sec 41.23.200 (d) 2 "enhance off road motor vehicle options and opportunities and increased use of the public use area". (4) Providing a trail on "high ground" along the base of the mountains would eliminate the need for off road users to attempt to cross the wetlands in order to complete the "loop trail" to Friday Creek. There have been complaints about ATV traffic in the "swamps". The loop trail on high ground should eliminate that problem. This would comply with the wording in House Bill 307 Sec. 41.23.190 (d) "protect wetlands".

SUMMARY: We think that the planning team has done an excellent job so far. We like the generally allowed uses that have been in place for years and we hope that they will be kept in place for the KRPUA as much as possible. We generally agree with the section on Management Actions and Actions common to all alternatives. Please help us keep our motorized trails and other traditional uses.

Comment 175 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the KRPUA draft plan alternatives and management actions. Audubon Alaska is the state office of the National Audubon Society, a leading national conservation organization with more than 400,000 members and 500 chapters across the country. We believe that the creation of the KRPUA and this planning process represent a tremendous opportunity to protect in perpetuity outstanding fish and wildlife resources within an hour's drive of half the population of Alaska. We are well aware of the multiple use mandate of the Department, not only for the KRPUA, but also for state lands in general. We believe that there are management options, however, that can provide for existing recreational uses while protecting the fish, wildlife, and other natural resources that make the KRPUA such a special place for people to use and enjoy. We also believe the Department has ample authority in Title 38, associated regulations, and the KRPUA legislation (Sec. 41.23.180(2); Sec. 41.23.190(d)) to regulate existing uses. As discussed in our letter of January 4, 2007, submitted during the plan scoping process, Audubon Alaska is particularly concerned with the Jim-Swan Wetlands complex-the "Lakes/Unit B." This represents only about 10,000 acres or less than 5% of the total area of the KRPUA. In 2006, the Alaska IBA Technical Committee identified this area as an Important Bird Area (IBA) as part of a global project, coordinated by BirdLife International, to identify a network of significant areas for birds. This designation recognized the statewide significance of the

Jim-Swan Wetlands, primarily based on its well-documented use by migrating and breeding Trumpeter Swans. National recognition of top-tier status (global significance) for this area is expected this year. While it is true that Trumpeter Swan populations have risen substantially in recent years, it was not that long ago that this species was all but extinct. In 1930, only small isolated remnant populations existed in Yellowstone, Canada, and in the Copper River Delta of Alaska. After being declared a "threatened" species, the population eventually rebounded due to concerted management efforts (Alberta Sustainable Resources Development 1992). Obviously, continued habitat protection is necessary to maintain current populations of this magnificent bird (Conant et al.2007). In addition to Trumpeter Swans, the area also supports notable populations of breeding waterfowl, raptors and land birds, including birds generally uncommon in Southcentral Alaska, such as American Kestrel, Hammond's Flycatcher, and Song Sparrow. We remain extremely concerned that the alternatives presented in the most recent draft would not provide adequate protection of the fish and wildlife resources of the Wetlands complex. In particular, the options would continue to permit ATV use in or adjacent to swan and waterfowl nesting and staging areas, allowing increased vegetative damage, erosion, sedimentation and alterations in drainage. The current use of airboats in this area has caused and will continue to cause direct destruction of wetlands vegetation and has altered drainages. Furthermore, any use of motorized vehicles in the area, particularly airboats, causes severe disturbances to birds (Henson & Grant 1991; Korschgen & Dahlgren 1992). Again, of particular concern to us is the impact of unregulated airboat use during swan migration, nesting, and rearing periods, when birds are especially vulnerable. There are distinct periods of time that are particularly critical to swans and other waterfowl of the Jim-Swan Wetlands. Large numbers of migrating swans and other waterfowl arrive in early April and take advantage of the early open water in the area through April and May. Migrating birds often build up in numbers at this stopover site until lakes farther north are open and provide more open-water foraging habitat. Locally breeding birds begin nesting in the first week of May, with hatching of young in early to mid-June. Swans and other waterfowl go through a molt when adult birds are flightless from late June to late July (males molt somewhat earlier than females). It is also during this time that cygnets (young swans) have left the nest but are still flightless and particularly vulnerable if separated from adults. Swans are relatively slow to mature and young birds do not fledge (become capable of flight) until mid September (Alberta Sustainable Resources Development 1992). Any disturbance that inhibits foraging and development could delay maturation and prevent their departure prior to freeze up. In September and October, unusually large numbers of migrating swans and other waterfowl utilize the Wetlands, usually leaving the area with the onset of freeze-up in late October. To fully protect breeding and migratory swans, all motorized uses in and adjacent to the Wetlands should be prohibited from early April through late October. However, with other uses, such as hunting, occurring in the area during the period, this may not be practical or feasible. At a minimum, swan nesting and post-nesting foraging areas should be closed to airboat and ATV use from early April through July to protect spring migrant aggregations, nesting birds, very young birds, and flightless molting birds (Henson & Grant 1991). If we can provide additional information, please let us know. We look forward to reviewing the next draft of the KRPUA plan.

Comment 176 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. 1, 2 & 3. Classify 'trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: 'access' roads into KRPUA, 'trail/road' for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational 'areas'. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails. 1&2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for

developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc.); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4. DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisition were not identified, nor was a need or use of such land described.

2. To add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc.

3. 1, 2 & 3. DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the 'unrestricted' access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for 'access' trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail.

4. Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenbug Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area.

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1) DEVELOP MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH PRIME CONSIDERATION HOW ANY PROPOSED ACTION WOULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT RESIDENTS regarding traffic, noise, dust, air quality and personal safety and how to mitigate such impact. 2) DEVELOP A

TIME-SHARE SCHEDULE FOR MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION. Existing commercial airboat tour operators and aircraft should be exempted from the limitation. Existing ATV guided tours may be exempted on a permit basis. During the trapping and hunting seasons, legally licensed hunters and trappers shall be allowed motorized access. This will benefit different users to recreate without conflict, give respite to wildlife, and give residents and quiet users equal time to enjoy their homes and yards without nuisance noise from power boats, personal watercraft and ORVs and high-use traffic in their neighborhoods. 3) SEPARATE MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED ACCESS POINTS: Centralize Motorized Access: a) from RS 2477 (Knik Glacier Trail/Jim Creek Trail) trail head and parking lot on State of Alaska Land. b) Public Access to Upper Knik River from South Knik River to be determined; Private Access for residents only onto motorized trails if their private property adjoins KRPUA is allowed. Multi-Use Access: From Pavilion Parking Lot for access to Jim Creek Fishing on Sexton Trail. Motorized access to terminate in existing DNR parking lot uphill from Jim Creek Fishing area. Non-motorized access for campers, hikers, horses, bikers etc to Jim Creek Fishing and beyond. Non-motorized Access: a) from Knik River/Bodenburg Creek Access to protect fish and waterfowl habitat at Bodenburg Creek; to protect adjoining private lands from ongoing trespass, and to allow residents and visitors the enjoyment of quiet recreational endeavors near our homes. b) from Jim Lake Parking Lot to Rippy Trail and Wetlands c) Allow access for motorized handicapped persons and non-handicapped companion in non-motorized areas by permit. 4) CRITICAL HABITAT AREAS SHOULD BE CREATED to include lakes, wetlands, alpine transition zones and sand dunes, to prevent further destruction. Restoration/revegetation plans should be established and implemented for these areas. The Jim - Swan wetlands area and adjacent Rippy Trail should be made a non-motorized area, with a possible relaxation of restrictions during hunting /trapping seasons if daily enforcement is in place. During these times, motorized use should be limited to designated trails and access points. This area has been specifically recommended for special protection by numerous groups, agencies and studies at least since the 1981 USF&W Knik Arm Wetlands Study. 5) ANY LAND ACQUISITION FOR INCLUSION TO THE KNIK RIVER PUBLIC USE AREA will require a public process regarding cost for management, facilities and law enforcement and available funding. Any land acquisition from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough will require a full public process regarding preferences of local residents for that parcel and proposed management actions to ensure a variety of recreational activities for the benefit of residents, and particularly the Youth of the Community of Butte; and the cost of such a land transaction to the State of Alaska and the income to be derived by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough from the sale of these lands. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough shall not "give away" borough-owned assets until the Community of Butte can be assured that they be managed for the benefit of the community. 6) Establish fines for bailable offenses including the intentional or unintentional contamination of land and waters by lead, automotive fluids and other hazardous materials; cutting life trees; rutting and destroying vegetation; contributing to the erosion of river, lake and stream banks; disturbing or harassing wildlife including waterfowl. 7) Have DNR request an Attorney General Legal Opinion to clarify the following: legislative intent -- whether the legislature intended the PUA to have "grandfathered" uses regardless of negative impact on habitat, fish and wildlife. Specifically, whether the legislation has placed a priority on motorized over other uses. 8) Set clear priorities of restoration of damaged habitat -- this should be a priority in the management plan. Set a timeline for restoration in specific areas with a goals and objectives quantified for each habitat restoration area.

ALTERNATIVES TO DNR ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL UNITS

Limit off-road vehicles to established and hardened trails. Prohibit snow-machine "water

skippers" from operating in Knik River or any of its tributaries. Establish bailable offense for this activity for disturbing the peace of residents at any hour. Oppose rescinding any existing rules or other regulatory action in the entire KRPUA which protect streams, fish and wildlife habitat, etc., or are designed to prevent rutting of trails and disturbing vegetation. Do not allow existing destructive uses to continue or expand. Restrict curb weight to 1,000 lb for highway and off-road vehicles until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging in all units is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large-vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit.

ALTERNATIVES BY MANAGEMENT UNIT

UNIT A. Lower Knik Flats INTENT: Change language to read: "The intent is to encourage a wide variety of recreational uses including nonmotorized and motorized uses as described in HB307. DNR recognizes the high value of this area for quality multiple use recreation. DNR shall not manage any unit as a motor park, moto-cross or mudbog venue but provide a high quality experience for responsible ORV travelers and sightseers. The management goal includes to separate nonmotorized from motorized uses by creating specially hardened trails for motorized and equine users to lessen impact on the environment and to create safe conditions for all uses. To further this goal, multiple access points will be created which separate motorized and nonmotorized users and which provide safety and quiet for adjacent property owners. DNR shall mitigate high-use multiple use recreation for the benefit of residents and responsible motorized and quiet users. Mitigation measures to include speed limits, speed bumps, controlled access and a highly visible law enforcement presence. Indestructible sanitation facilities and camping area style trash containers shall be placed as soon as possible to protect the health of the public. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Discharge of Firearms: "Recreational discharge of firearms will be prohibited in this entire unit to protect human safety and to prevent pollution of lead from skeet targets and ammunition into the waters of Knik River Valley. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Rescinding of Regulations including Remedies for well documented current Damage in this unit: 1) No existing regulations will be rescinded. All regulations will be developed in compliance with existing laws and regulations, including but not restricted to 11AAC 96.020 (a)(1)(D)(E), 11 AAC 96.025 (1)(2)(3)(A-C) as well as any and all Alaska Statutes which protect fish, game and waterfowl and its habitat. 2) Repair rutted trails and vegetation in forests, wetlands and lowlands. Harden where appropriate. Repair stream banks. 3) Revegetate Dunes. Dunes protect Butte and Palmer from Knik River changing course. 4) Allow unrestricted vehicle curb weight only for travel on Sexton Trail from Pavilion Parking Lot to DNR Parking Lot on the uplands prior to Jim Creek Flats and on Jim Creek Trail to existing DNR parking lot, or parking lot to be established on uplands in forest prior to approaching the Flats. Both Jim Creek Trail (aka RS2477, Knik Glacier Trail) and Sexton Trail should be hardened with speed bumps added for the safety of the public. 5) Restrict curb weight of highway and off-road vehicles to 1,000 lb curb weight until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging from UNIT A to KNIK GLACIER is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit. 6) Prohibit the use of trees for extricating "winching" vehicles out of mud or water. 7) Recommend and agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3 regarding 100' stream buffer protection on all water ways. NEW Alternative 4 regarding utilization of Mat-Su Borough Pavilion Parcel. In addition to equalize

the number of motorized and non-motorized trails on this parcel, Mat-Su Borough shall utilize a large portion this parcel for community recreational purposes, including a community park, BMX park, multi-age playground, soccer fields, volleyball and tennis venues to give young adults and families, "something to do." A public campground should be established there as well. The Pavilion Parking Area was built by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough. The picnic pavilion at the site was subsequently destroyed by motorized users. The Pavilion Parking Area should be designated access for non-motorized users. Two non-motorized trails should be designated to accommodate different users, such as for hikers, bikers and horses. A separated parking lot on the west side of the "Pavilion" should allow cars to travel the Sexton Trail to Jim Creek. In addition, An ATV trail should be developed and designated to allow ATV access from the "Pavilion" parking lot to Jim Creek. Residents should be allowed planning participation on this Mat-Su Borough parcel. All motorized access to the entire area should be from the trail head for the RS2477 Knik Glacier Trail (aka Jim Creek Trail) on State of Alaska Land to minimize adverse impact to residents from high traffic, noise, dust and air pollution. Sanitary facilities will be developed and may be shared by users of both the Pavilion and RS2477 parking areas. Separate sanitary facilities may be developed for a public camp ground on the Pavilion parcel. NEW Alternative 4 regarding Manmade Lake: "No Motorized use" at Manmade Lake except for parking access for picnics, swimming and other non-motorized activities. The bottom of Manmade Lake should be dredged and cleaned from an accumulation of glass, metal and lead and restored to its original purpose as a community "swimming hole."

UNIT B. Lakes - Unit B should be renamed to read "Lakes and Wetlands." INTENT language should be changed to read: Provide for moderate density quiet use and limited motorized use for all seasons for the protection of water fowl in the summer and moose and sheep in the winter. The area in this unit was recommended as Critical Habitat in previous studies. Designate and manage this area as Critical Habitat. Motor size for boats in this unit and Jim Creek shall be restricted to 3 HP to protect nesting and rearing waterfowl including trumpeter swans in all lakes of the unit. No motorized recreational vehicle use in lakes and wetlands area during the summer. No power boats, including airboats, in lakes and wetlands. Establish snowmachine corridor in the winter. NEW Alternative 5 regarding Rippy Trail; Rippy Trail to remain designated non-motorized in its entirety. No Loop Trail. Finding that the type of vegetation and terrain will not support motorized uses without destroying habitat. Rippy Trail was established by and for non-motorized use by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough in the 1980s. Motorized users have destroyed one salmon stream and several springs feeding the wetlands and lakes and, because of their large numbers, have created sanitary issues. A "Loop Trail" would cut into an established wild life corridor which extends from the Alpine environment west to the Knik River-Matanuska River Delta and connects with the Palmer Hay Flats NEW Alternative 5 for the entire unit: Use of any waterbody with a motorized watercraft is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Approaching within 1500 feet of an active Trumpeter Swan nest on land or water is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Legal hunting is allowed; however, swans gathering on the lakes in preparation of their fall migration may not be approached within 500 feet either on land or on the waters they are gathering in. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Mud Lake. In addition, construction of a boat launch/ramp at Mud Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Jim Lake. In addition, construction of a canoe launch at Jim Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. NEW Alternative 5 to prohibit recreational shooting at Jim Lake in order to protect public safety and preventing disturbance of nesting/rearing waterfowl. Legal hunting is allowed after Swan fall migration.

UNIT C - Upper Knik Flats NEW Alternative 3: No vehicles more than 1000 lbs curb weight until an improved road for access is developed to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids.

UNIT D - Upper Jim Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT E - Upper Friday Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT F - Grasshopper Valley Agree with DNR Alternatives 2, with the exception that no additional trails be developed.

UNIT G - Glacier Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. In Addition: NEW ALTERNATIVE 3 regarding future development: Recommend that the area past the Knik Glacier Lake if that is within the PUA be made a non-motorized area, except for aircraft. At this time no other motorized vehicles can generally access it (except if transported by helicopter or other air transportation). However, as the glacier recedes, motorized access may be possible, with deleterious effects to the wildlife and environment. At present this area is almost pristine, with some aircraft landing sites and virtually no other tracks, litter etc. Taking a non-motorized (except for aircraft) stance at this time, while having no effect on present usage, would protect the area against possible future abuses. As has been seen throughout the accessible PUA, any place an ORV can get, someone will take one, and many will not be cognizant of possible environmental damage.

UNIT H - Metal Creek Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. NEW Alternative 3: Prohibit vehicles to travel through Metal Creek in order to prevent pollution of the waters of Metal Creek and Knik River from automotive fluids while traveling through the water and to prevent abandonment of vehicles in the waterways of the Knik River.

FEES Agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3, Point 1 regarding the collection of fees. In addition, amount of fees charged should be based on cost of management, law enforcement and facilities to be determined as the management plan is developed. Prioritize getting restrooms and garbage containers. Garbage containers should have a small opening so that household trash cannot be dumped in it. Immediately: containers at Jim Lake, Mud Lake, Pavillion.

Comment 178 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Attached, please find a sketch of my proposed management plan for Units A (Lower Knik Flats) and B (Lakes) of the Knik River Public Use Area. Please consider it as part of my public comment. Before I go into the explanation of the attachment, please extend my thanks to Dave Griffin for taking time to meet with me this past week. His insights were very helpful in interpreting the proposed alternatives for the KRPUA, and in developing these ideas. Let me first inform you that I am a resident of the Butte and frequently visit the Area, mostly these two Units. Personally, I enjoy fishing, hunting, viewing wildlife, canoeing and bike riding in these areas. It is also essential to be able to four-wheel in this area when hunting, as with most places. I do not ride four-wheelers or dirt bikes, etc. for recreation, nor do I shoot guns very often for recreation, though I think these activities should continue to be permitted in some locations. Other people I know like to snowmachine and horseback ride in these areas, and they should be allowed to continue to do so, as well. In general this area is a diamond in the rough and provides great opportunities for all different types of activities, and there is plenty of room to allow for them all. A key to making them all enjoyable for current

and future generations is to definitively separate the uses that are not compatible. I don't want to see a lot of regulations, but I think just a few simple lines drawn on a map could go a long way. I think the key to developing this plan further is to address what I consider the 3 main issues: 1. Gun Safety - obviously this is the biggest problem and everyone's biggest complaint. It is rapidly becoming dangerous or at least unpleasant to visit the western part of the area, and I agree that the best way to ensure the safety of all area users is to designate separate locations for the different uses. Most of the recreational shooting occurs in Units A and B, and the proposed alternatives address the issue adequately in Unit A, though I think a middle ground should be found between Alt 2 and 3. Alt 3 goes too far in eliminating all rec shooting from the unit. This would push rec shooting too far east (past private lands) to be practical, and it is doubtful that the regulation would then be obeyed. In the end it would probably be a major enforcement issue. Alt 2 puts the limit at ½ mile past Jim Creek. This might seem like an improvement on the current condition, but I recommend the distance be increased to at least 1 mile. I realize this might be unpopular with a lot of recreational shooters who have used this area for years, but there is no doubt that more and more people are using this area and a larger percentage of them are young teenagers without much experience with firearms. Also, the physics of a bullet shot from most guns including small caliber hand guns are such that they will definitely travel further than ½ mile and sometimes, more than a mile. In fact the ½ mile distance could be worse than no separation, because it would give both fishermen and recreational shooters a false sense of safety because at that distance they could not see each other. Additionally rec shooting should be kept separate by a 1 mile distance from the area, where off-road vehicle use is unrestricted. Setting the "demarcation line" at 1 mile east of Jim Creek could satisfy this separation. This would allow fishing at the mouth of Jim Creek, which has the potential to be one of the best silver salmon fishing experiences in the state, to be a little more relaxing without the sound of guns firing nearby. I was surprised to see that the gun safety issue is not addressed the same way in Unit B (Lakes), where I think there is also much recreational shooting and more risk to other users of the area because there is not as much open space like there is along the river making it difficult to see people on the lakes and trails less than a ¼ mile away. Perhaps it is the Departments impression that this area is not heavily used, and does not have a gun safety issues. I think it is already an issue and have often seen people shooting here when I go back to the Jim Lake area on my bike. They do not see me usually until I am almost next to the lake, however. Other people I know have told me that they have heard bullets whizzing past their head while hiking or biking back on the Rippy Trail, and are discouraged from returning. Maybe everyone's been scared off. In the future, I think the conflicts here will only increase as the area between Maud Road and Plumley becomes more heavily populated, which it probably will do in the next 5-10 years. Currently there are several small subdivisions under construction in this area and last year a subdivision plat for a 140+ single family unit subdivision was approved by the Borough. This will likely increase the number of people who seek out the Lakes Unit for all types of recreational activities. Most of these people will probably be going at least as far a Jim Lake, especially if it gets developed with a campground and improved boat launch. I think this would be a good idea for Jim Lake (though not Mud Lake), but the increase in usage would conflict with recreational shooting. I recommend extending the same 1-mile line north from Unit A and prohibiting recreational shooting west of this line, and keeping the restrictions in place 1 mile from Jim Lake. This would not only protect the campground, but would also protect users of Mud and Jim Lakes and the canoe trail. The 1/4 mile distance suggested in the alternatives is not enough separation to provide an enjoyable camping experience - that's what is used for roadways, where people are merely momentarily passing by. 2. Sanitation - Illegal dumping/littering has been occurring in the Lower Knik Flats area on a grand scale, and by that I mean the stuff

being dumped is big. As you know there are cars, refrigerators, furniture, and anything else that is a pain to take to the dump and fun to shoot down in this area. This is mostly an enforcement issue, I think, and one that is closely related to the recreational shooting since most people bring this stuff down here for target practice. If rec shooting is restricted to areas where it is difficult or impossible to get a truck, then this problem should slowly abate. The other issue, which is only briefly mentioned in the Alternatives are public restrooms and other facilities. At a minimum there needs to be some type of facility at the Pavilion parking area. Since this area gets the most use and also has a lot of RVs it would make sense to go all out and put in a septic system and a well. The facilities should include flush toilets, showers, cold water and maybe even an RV dump station. I would also put campsites next to this area back away from the parking lot, maybe even a few walk in sites closer to Jim Creek. In unit B, I think the facilities should be limited to the Jim Lake campsite and simply consist of a pit privy and maybe a well.

3. Environmental Impacts - While these plan alternatives have taken on some of the environmental concerns I've heard at the public meetings, they don't include any mention of what I consider to be the most notorious, which is the destruction of vegetation and subsequent soil erosion caused by off-road vehicles. Riding along the gravel banks of the river is not a problem and this does not contribute significantly to erosion in my opinion. The problem is primarily occurring in the area between the pavilion parking lot and Jim Creek, which have turned into sand dunes over the past ten years. Traditionally these areas have been vegetated. I think this would be a golden opportunity wasted if the plan doesn't provide more protection. In fact, the plan only lists one alternative for this issue and off-road vehicle use in this area, which includes rescinding the rules which are meant to protect the environment from them. Essentially, this is not a new alternative, but just formalizes the existing lack of regulations. I know the four wheeling clubs are lobbying hard for this, but there must be another alternative that is not so blatantly lopsided. If a more reasonable alternative is not developed and adopted, I wouldn't be surprised to see this backfire on the four wheel clubs, when the state gets sued for failing to consider other alternatives during the public process. It sounds as if either the state doesn't understand or recognize the environmental impacts to fish and wildlife caused by destruction of vegetation and soil erosion in this area (which I doubt) or they have written it off as unrecoverable (which it is not). I think that an effort should be made to restore vegetation in this area, especially along Jim Creek. A 100' buffer is not enough, because people won't respect it, nor will they respect the designated crossing of Jim Creek when four wheeling is allowed unabated on both sides of the creek. A smaller area than the whole of Unit A, though, would be reasonable, where people could ride their 4-wheelers without worrying about vegetation or erosion. The best location would be close to the pavilion parking lot so that riders don't have to cross much terrain on designated motorized trails and have the opportunity to stray. This could be designed as a 4-wheel park with jumps and a track, if DNR wanted to attract riders to a concentrated area. Perhaps this would best be handled by the MSB as a public park. In summary, keeping incompatible uses such as recreational shooting and 4-wheeling separate is essential and an alternative should be developed that accomplishes this objective. This would be possible if the "rescission" didn't apply adjacent to the recreational shooting area, so that riders would be restricted to the gravel bars and banks, where visibility is good or the designated motorized trail, which will be familiar to shooters and can be avoided. Four-wheeling could be further restricted in the "sand dunes" to a point 1 mile west of Jim Creek by not rescinding the environmental protection rules. This would accomplish the separation of recreational 4-wheeling and gun use, and also provide a separation between Jim Creek and the eroded area. Additionally this might provide salmon fishermen at the mouth of Jim Creek a more pleasant experience. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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- I am concerned about the plans that one large tour operator is currently proposing that would bring approximately 1500 to 3000 visitors into the Knik River Public Use Area. Large commercial operators should be limited in the numbers of people that they bring into the KRPUA so that they do not overburden the area. Frankly, there is so much wide open space in Alaska that these large tour operators can access that it doesn't seem reasonable that they should operate in an area that would be easily overused by a very large increase in visitors. - The KRPUA should be managed in a way that individual Alaskans are not displaced due to too many visiting clients of large tour operators. - A suggestion would be to limit these operators to the south side of the river. This area is not accessible to most other modes of access, so it would not be in competition with most individual Alaskans recreating in the KRPUA. - If permits are issued for land use, they should be limited to small portions with careful attention to make sure that permit holders are well aware that the land is public land and that anyone is allowed to pass through that area. These tour operators should be required to provide adequate sanitation facilities for their guests. - Another big concern is that the Lakes Unit as described in your preliminary management plan will simply not sustain a huge number of people that large tour operators could bring into this unit. I support open access to this unit, but it needs to be limited in numbers so as not to overburden the land and these waterways. - My main concern here is that I do not want to see large tour operators bring so many people into the KRPUA that overburdens the land or waterways by creating excessive trash, human waste, and damage. Another concern would be that, after a time of these large tour operators using the area, they may feel that individual Alaskans or smaller tour companies would be the blame for overuse and try to restrict the ones that this area was originally set up for. - Another concern is that the BLM currently owns a corridor along the south side of the Knik River that provides important access to the KRPUA all the way up to Lake George. I have been told by BLM that they are interested in getting rid of the land as it is such a small area for them to have to continue to manage. I feel that DNR should pursue acquiring this land from the BLM and keep it as the access corridor that it was originally designated for back in 1952.

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the alternatives prior to drafting the management plan for the Knik River Public Use Area. In general, our members are complacent with Alternatives 1 or 2 as proposed. Alternatives 3 and 4 have some restrictions that are not considered acceptable. We are pleased with the work you've done and most members feel that you'll adopt some form of Alternative 2.

Actions Common to All Alternatives We do have a serious concern over one statement in the "Actions Common to all Alternatives". In the third bullet point: "Vehicle use off of existing trails in vegetated areas is prohibited", we question the need and/or intent of this restriction. As written, this would apply to all areas and would be construed as more restrictive than the state's Generally Allowed Uses statute. The Generally Allowed Uses statute already protects the vegetation. We don't see the need to further restrict users to trails regardless if damage will occur. Simply driving over a grassy area, even on the gravel bars would be prohibited per this restriction. We don't believe that to be your intent. This restriction should be removed from the management actions.

Shooting We find it difficult support a ban on shooting, particularly if a suitable alternative in the area is not available to those who wish to shoot. However, we understands DNR's obligation to manage for the safety of the public. Only DNR approved targets should be used. Littering laws need to be enforced. Cleanup, including cartridge casing and shell casings

needs to be enforced. Regardless, shooting issues need to be dealt with separately from access issues. Motorized use should not depend on the outcome of any shooting closures. In the Maude Road, Lakes Area we don't see the justification for restricting shooting within proximity of trails or camp sites. In fact, shooters should be encouraged to use the Maude road area, being the most accessible safe shooting area available. Shooters should be able to camp and drive a highway vehicle to the shooting area. This area is easily policed by highway vehicles. On the river flats, users want to be steered to an area deemed to be safe for shooting.

User Fees Any fee structure should evenly tax all user groups. If user fees are imposed, DNR needs to ensure 100% of the monies are returned to the area. Fees would need to allow families to use multiple vehicles and multiple family members under one pass. Land owners in the public use area, including future Land owners shouldn't be required to pay a fee to reach their properties. Any fee structure needs to consider the diversity of the access means and access points. Users already paying snowmobile/ATV or boat registrations have serious objections to paying yet another fee to use public resources their fees already support.

Private Land in the PUA The most suitable land for launching a boat is private land currently for sale. This same land adjacent to the Old Glenn Bridge is also a major entry point for other means of access. Serious effort needs to be made for the state to acquire this land and make it a part of the PUA.

Swans If DNR is required to protect specifically Trumpeter Swans, distance restrictions should be reasonable and exclude channels and trails from any distance restrictions. This would ensure the restrictions would not have an unintended consequence of blocking access.

In General Based on the public testimony and our experience with how the resource handles the volumes of activities we can make several recommendations for management. - Law enforcement needs a presence in the area. Periodic visits from the Troopers have already had a positive effect. - DNR needs to address the illegal dumping, littering and most of all, the abandoned car problem. This is not a motorized user issue. In fact, all legal users of the area suffer from this. - The motorized user community is 100% behind the State's policy for "Generally Allowed Uses on State Land". There are already trails to nearly any geographic destination in the area. Some trails should be hardened so that people can recreate in the area without needing to "braid" trails in order to reach common destinations. Some trails should be left in an unimproved state to provide the challenge sought by some users. - Education is very important. For instance, if a poll were taken of Knik River area users, most would not know the existing laws. Education should be provided additionally for etiquette and safety issues. The existing user organizations would be happy to provide assistance with any education and safety training. - Work with the Alaska Boating Association, the State Boating Safety Office and the US Coast Guard to establish a training program based on the more forgiving nature of this area to train boaters on safety and education issues. Training should consider the rich diversity of the waters in the area. Effective boating safety training includes river, stream, lake and marsh issues. - Parking and access to the area could become an issue in the future. We'd like to see DNR secure official parking lots and access trails at Sullivan Road, the Old Glenn Highway Bridge and several other existing access points including those reached by Maude and Plumley Roads.

Done right, we believe the above items will achieve our goal of implementing a plan to maximize the benefit of this resource for the people currently using and those who would like

to use it in the future.

Comment 181 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. Identifying and inventorying existing trails without defining trails: A congo line of vehicles driven through the woods makes a trail. Better criteria for trails needs to be established: access, soil, vegetation, saturation, etc. 2. A trail inventory should include an inventory of damaged terrain, an inventory of terrain suitable for vehicle trails and; a similar allocation of land and resources provided for non-motorized use, per sub unit. 3. Many user defined trails appear overnight without proper design. A non-motorized trail can be bi-sected by a newly created motor-trail. This has created a serious hazard at night or on blind turns. 4. Throughout the plan, reference is made to trail use, user developed trails and historical trails. None of these criteria mentions a) engineering & soil specifications, b) mapped trails & signs, c) trail maintenance, d) trail suitability, e) method for developing "new user trails". Attached see new "user-created trail".

Comment 182 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. The state does not have a "preferred alternative". Although this appears on the KRPUA Management Plan Information Sheet, there is certain partiality for either allowing continued, increasing, unrestricted motor use, or to eliminate any existing motor vehicle restrictions, to correct any user conflicts. 4. The attached item is located on the DNR KRPUA Public comment and public response website, this was posted May 1, 2007 well before the motor groups were given title to the KRPUA. There are no sites mentioned or listed, exclusive of www.atv.org, where differing alternatives or solicitations were available for public review. DNR is essentially "just advertising" for motor users support, but not specifically preferring the group.

Comment 183 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. Public is encouraged to comment . . . Solicitation of comments from the general public on how to manage public land should disregard comments made by individuals who have difficulty managing private property. (See attached example.) 2. All alternatives presently proposed make no mention of designating motor use areas or limiting access to certain size vehicles, and most egregious, no consideration was made for future off-road capacity. 3. The use of large, heavy trucks eventually flattens out the terrain which had a 30 year history being used for dirt bikes, motocross bikes and ATVs. Large vehicles operating on bike trails destroys "multi-use" opportunity. 4. Please observe attached photo of truck blocking use of trail, eroding trail, and flattening the terrain. Also note vehicle to left (Hummer) which is a portent of what motor trails must accommodate, as per KRPUA alternatives 1, 2 or 3; mine will travel that at 50 mph.

Comment 184 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. "State must manage lands . . ." The state is seeking proposals from the public, after a "scoping" period concluded the public's interest and concerns. Who actually is managing the land, or what? Public opinion, rather than facts or existing land use policies, are guiding the KRPUA planning process. 4. Rather than scoping the public or polling user groups, DNR should determine who, ultimately 'is' responsible for land management in KRPUA. If the public is responsible, then what purpose does DNR serve? If however, DNR seeks to manage the area, for sustained and perpetual recreation, there should be well supported, reliable information used to develop land use policies. In particular, recreational land use in KRPUA should be cohesive with other land use policies such as mirroring US Forest Service methodology. The use of the public in creating that document is available for review in text of

36 CFR. (Read the preamble.)

Comment 185 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. Management plan makes no reference to motoring up streams, in creeks or lakes. Designations of creeks, streams, lakes and ponds as "user defined" and historical use is causing conflicts with user defined motor craft and recreation. 2. Designate non-motorized waterways, mark & identify crossings, "seasonal access only", keep it maintained. Define the speed, horsepower, type of motor craft for water uses. Plan must address trail and bank damage being caused by extrications. 3. Motoring through rivers & streams was not adequately described. No historical need was shown for motoring into creeks or streams during scoping period. Vehicles stuck in water are "abandoned" for all intents and purposes. 4. Trail damage occurring while "extricating" a vehicle should be prohibited. Only approved tow trucks should perform certain water/land recoveries that could create a hazard to others or damage to public property (see attached).

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BARCO Substitutes for DNR Management Actions 1) DEVELOP MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH PRIME CONSIDERATION HOW ANY PROPOSED ACTION WOULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT RESIDENTS regarding traffic, noise, dust, air quality and personal safety and how to mitigate such impact. 2) DEVELOP A TIME-SHARE SCHEDULE FOR MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION. Existing commercial airboat tour operators and aircraft should be exempted from the limitation. Existing ATV guided tours may be exempted on a permit basis. During the trapping and hunting seasons, legally licensed hunters and trappers shall be allowed motorized access. This will benefit different users to recreate without conflict, give respite to wildlife, and give residents and quiet users equal time to enjoy their homes and yards without nuisance noise from power boats, personal watercraft and ORVs and high-use traffic in their neighborhoods. 3) SEPARATE MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED ACCESS POINTS: Centralize Motorized Access: a) from RS 2477 (Knik Glacier Trail/Jim Creek Trail) trail head and parking lot on State of Alaska Land. b) Public Access to Upper Knik River from South Knik River to be determined; Private Access for residents only onto motorized trails if their private property adjoins KRPUA is allowed. Multi-Use Access: From Pavilion Parking Lot for access to Jim Creek Fishing on Sexton Trail. Motorized access to terminate in existing DNR parking lot uphill from Jim Creek Fishing area. Non-motorized access for campers, hikers, horses, bikers etc to Jim Creek Fishing and beyond. Non-motorized Access: a) from Knik River/Bodenburg Creek Access to protect fish and waterfowl habitat at Bodenburg Creek; to protect adjoining private lands from ongoing trespass, and to allow residents and visitors the enjoyment of quiet recreational endeavors near our homes. b) from Jim Lake Parking Lot to Rippy Trail and Wetlands c) Allow access for motorized handicapped persons and non-handicapped companion in non-motorized areas by permit. 4) CRITICAL HABITAT AREAS SHOULD BE CREATED to include lakes, wetlands, alpine transition zones and sand dunes, to prevent further destruction. Restoration/revegetation plans should be established and implemented for these areas. The Jim - Swan wetlands area and adjacent Rippy Trail should be made a non-motorized area, with a possible relaxation of restrictions during hunting /trapping seasons if daily enforcement is in place. During these times, motorized use should be limited to designated trails and access points. This area has been specifically recommended for special protection by numerous groups, agencies and studies at least since the 1981 USF&W Knik Arm Wetlands Study. 5) ANY LAND ACQUISITION FOR INCLUSION TO THE KNIK RIVER PUBLIC USE AREA will require a public process regarding cost for management, facilities and law enforcement and available funding. Any land acquisition from

the Matanuska-Susitna Borough will require a full public process regarding preferences of local residents for that parcel and proposed management actions to ensure a variety of recreational activities for the benefit of residents, and particularly the Youth of the Community of Butte; and the cost of such a land transaction to the State of Alaska and the income to be derived by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough from the sale of these lands. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough shall not "give away" borough-owned assets until the Community of Butte can be assured that they be managed for the benefit of the community.

6) Establish fines for bailable offenses including the intentional or unintentional contamination of land and waters by lead, automotive fluids and other hazardous materials; cutting life trees; rutting and destroying vegetation; contributing to the erosion of river, lake and stream banks; disturbing or harassing wildlife including waterfowl.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES TO DNR ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL UNITS

Limit off-road vehicles to established and hardened trails. Prohibit snow-machine "water skippers" from operating in Knik River or any of its tributaries. Establish bailable offense for this activity for disturbing the peace of residents at any hour. Oppose rescinding any existing rules or other regulatory action in the entire KRPUA which protect streams, fish and wildlife habitat, etc., or are designed to prevent rutting of trails and disturbing vegetation. Do not allow existing destructive uses to continue or expand. Restrict curb weight to 1,000 lb for highway and off-road vehicles until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging in all units is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large-vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES BY MANAGEMENT UNIT

UNIT A. Lower Knik Flats INTENT: Change language to read: "The intent is to encourage a wide variety of recreational uses including nonmotorized and motorized uses as described in HB307. DNR recognizes the high value of this area for quality multiple use recreation. DNR shall not manage any unit as a motor park, moto-cross or mudbog venue but provide a high quality experience for responsible ORV travelers and sightseers. The management goal includes to separate nonmotorized from motorized uses by creating specially hardened trails for motorized and equine users to lessen impact on the environment and to create safe conditions for all uses. To further this goal, multiple access points will be created which separate motorized and nonmotorized users and which provide safety and quiet for adjacent property owners. DNR shall mitigate high-use multiple use recreation for the benefit of residents and responsible motorized and quiet users. Mitigation measures to include speed limits, speed bumps, controlled access and a highly visible law enforcement presence. Indestructible sanitation facilities and camping area style trash containers shall be placed as soon as possible to protect the health of the public. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Discharge of Firearms: "Recreational discharge of firearms will be prohibited in this entire unit to protect human safety and to prevent pollution of lead from skeet targets and ammunition into the waters of Knik River Valley. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Rescinding of Regulations including Remedies for well documented current Damage in this unit: 1) No existing regulations will be rescinded. All regulations will be developed in compliance with existing laws and regulations, including but not restricted to 11AAC 96.020 (a)(1)(D)(E), 11 AAC 96.025 (1)(2)(3)(A-C) as well as any and all Alaska Statutes which protect fish, game and waterfowl and its habitat. 2) Repair rutted trails and vegetation in forests, wetlands and lowlands. Harden where appropriate. Repair stream banks. 3) Revegetate Dunes. Dunes protect Butte and Palmer from Knik River changing course. 4) Allow unrestricted vehicle curb

weight only for travel on Sexton Trail from Pavilion Parking Lot to DNR Parking Lot on the uplands prior to Jim Creek Flats and on Jim Creek Trail to existing DNR parking lot, or parking lot to be established on uplands in forest prior to approaching the Flats. Both Jim Creek Trail (aka RS2477, Knik Glacier Trail) and Sexton Trail should be hardened with speed bumps added for the safety of the public. 5) Restrict curb weight of highway and off-road vehicles to 1,000 lb curb weight until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging from UNIT A to KNIK GLACIER is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit. 6) Prohibit the use of trees for extricating "winching" vehicles out of mud or water. 7) Recommend and agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3 regarding 100' stream buffer protection on all water ways. NEW Alternative 4 regarding utilization of Mat-Su Borough Pavilion Parcel. In addition to equalize the number of motorized and non-motorized trails on this parcel, Mat-Su Borough shall utilize a large portion this parcel for community recreational purposes, including a community park, BMX park, multi-age playground, soccer fields, volleyball and tennis venues to give young adults and families, "something to do." A public campground should be established there as well. The Pavilion Parking Area was built by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough. The picnic pavilion at the site was subsequently destroyed by motorized users. The Pavilion Parking Area should be designated access for non-motorized users. Two non-motorized trails should be designated to accommodate different users, such as for hikers, bikers and horses. A separated parking lot on the west side of the "Pavilion" should allow cars to travel the Sexton Trail to Jim Creek. [In addition, An ATV trail should be developed and designated to allow ATV access from the "Pavilion" parking lot to Jim Creek.] - or make one motorized access from Maud Road - return pavilion to non motorized use. Residents should be allowed planning participation on this Mat-Su Borough parcel. All motorized access to the entire area should be from the trail head for the RS2477 Knik Glacier Trail (aka Jim Creek Trail) on State of Alaska Land to minimize adverse impact to residents from high traffic, noise, dust and air pollution. Sanitary facilities will be developed and may be shared by users of both the Pavilion and RS2477 parking areas. Separate sanitary facilities may be developed for a public camp ground on the Pavilion parcel. NEW Alternative 4 regarding Manmade Lake: "No Motorized use" at Manmade Lake except for parking access for picnics, swimming and other non-motorized activities. The bottom of Manmade Lake should be dredged and cleaned from an accumulation of glass, metal and lead and restored to its original purpose as a community "swimming hole."

UNIT B. Lakes - Unit B should be renamed to read "Lakes and Wetlands." INTENT language should be changed to read: Provide for moderate density quiet use and limited motorized use for all seasons for the protection of water fowl in the summer and moose and sheep in the winter. The area in this unit was recommended as Critical Habitat in previous studies. Designate and manage this area as Critical Habitat. Motor size for boats in this unit and Jim Creek shall be restricted to 3 HP to protect nesting and rearing waterfowl including trumpeter swans in all lakes of the unit. No motorized recreational vehicle use in lakes and wetlands area during the summer. No power boats, including airboats, in lakes and wetlands. Establish snowmachine corridor in the winter. NEW BARCO Alternative 5 regarding Rippy Trail; Rippy Trail to remain designated non-motorized in its entirety. No Loop Trail. Rippy Trail was established by and for non-motorized use by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough in the 1980s. Motorized users have destroyed one salmon stream and several springs feeding the wetlands and lakes and, because of their large numbers, have created sanitary issues. A "Loop Trail" would cut into an established wild life corridor which extends

from the Alpine environment west to the Knik River-Matanuska River Delta and connects with the Palmer Hay Flats NEW Alternative 5 for the entire unit: Use of any waterbody with a motorized watercraft is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Approaching within 1500 feet of an active Trumpeter Swan nest on land or water is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Legal hunting is allowed; however, swans gathering on the lakes in preparation of their fall migration may not be approached within 500 feet either on land or on the waters they are gathering in. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Mud Lake. In addition, construction of a boat launch/ramp at Mud Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Jim Lake. In addition, construction of a canoe launch at Jim Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. NEW Alternative 5 to prohibit recreational shooting at Jim Lake in order to protect public safety and preventing disturbance of nesting/rearing waterfowl. Legal hunting is allowed after Swan fall migration.

UNIT C - Upper Knik Flats NEW Alternative 3: No vehicles more than 1000 lbs curb weight until an improved road for access is developed to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids.

UNIT D - Upper Jim Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT E - Upper Friday Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT F - Grasshopper Valley Agree with DNR Alternatives 2, with the exception that no additional trails be developed.

UNIT G - Glacier Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. In Addition: NEW ALTERNATIVE 3 regarding future development: Recommend that the area past the Knik Glacier Lake if that is within the PUA be made a non-motorized area, except for aircraft. At this time no other motorized vehicles can generally access it (except if transported by helicopter or other air transportation). However, as the glacier recedes, motorized access may be possible, with deleterious effects to the wildlife and environment. At present this area is almost pristine, with some aircraft landing sites and virtually no other tracks, litter etc. Taking a non-motorized (except for aircraft) stance at this time, while having no effect on present usage, would protect the area against possible future abuses. As has been seen throughout the accessible PUA, any place an ORV can get, someone will take one, and many will not be cognizant of possible environmental damage.

UNIT H - Metal Creek Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. NEW Alternative 3: Prohibit vehicles to travel through Metal Creek in order to prevent pollution of the waters of Metal Creek and Knik River from automotive fluids while traveling through the water and to prevent abandonment of vehicles in the waterways of the Knik River.

FEES Agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3, Point 1 regarding the collection of fees. In addition, amount of fees charged should be based on cost of management, law enforcement and facilities to be determined as the management plan is developed.

Comment 187 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

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UNIT B. Lakes - Unit B should be renamed to read "Lakes and Wetlands." INTENT language should be changed to read: Provide for moderate density quiet use and limited motorized use for all seasons for the protection of water fowl in the summer and moose and sheep in the winter. The area in this unit was recommended as Critical Habitat in previous studies. Designate and manage this area as Critical Habitat. Motor size for boats in this unit and Jim Creek shall be restricted to 3 HP to protect nesting and rearing waterfowl including trumpeter swans in all lakes of the unit. No motorized recreational vehicle use in lakes and wetlands area during the summer. No power boats, including airboats, in lakes and wetlands. Establish snowmachine corridor in the winter. NEW BARCO Alternative 5 regarding Rippy Trail; Rippy Trail to remain designated non-motorized in its entirety. No Loop Trail. Rippy Trail was established by and for non-motorized use by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough in the 1980s. Motorized users have destroyed one salmon stream and several springs feeding the wetlands and lakes and, because of their large numbers, have created sanitary issues. A "Loop Trail" would cut into an established wild life corridor which extends from the Alpine environment west to the Knik River-Matanuska River Delta and connects with the Palmer Hay Flats NEW Alternative 5 for the entire unit: Use of any waterbody with a motorized watercraft is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Approaching within 1500 feet of an active Trumpeter Swan nest on land or water is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Legal hunting is allowed; however, swans gathering on the lakes in preparation of their fall migration may not be approached within 500 feet either on land or on the waters they are gathering in. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Mud Lake. In addition, construction of a boat launch/ramp at Mud Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Jim Lake. In addition, construction of a canoe launch at Jim Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. NEW Alternative 5 to prohibit recreational shooting at Jim Lake in order to protect public safety and preventing disturbance of nesting/rearing waterfowl. Legal hunting is allowed after Swan fall migration.

UNIT C - Upper Knik Flats NEW Alternative 3: No vehicles more than 1000 lbs curb weight until an improved road for access is developed to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids.

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BARCO ALTERNATIVES BY MANAGEMENT UNIT

UNIT A. Lower Knik Flats INTENT: Change language to read: "The intent is to encourage a wide variety of recreational uses including nonmotorized and motorized uses as described in HB307. DNR recognizes the high value of this area for quality multiple use recreation. DNR shall not manage any unit as a motor park, moto-cross or mudbog venue but provide a high quality experience for responsible ORV travelers and sightseers. The management goal

includes to separate nonmotorized from motorized uses by creating specially hardened trails for motorized and equine users to lessen impact on the environment and to create safe conditions for all uses. To further this goal, multiple access points will be created which separate motorized and nonmotorized users and which provide safety and quiet for adjacent property owners. DNR shall mitigate high-use multiple use recreation for the benefit of residents and responsible motorized and quiet users. Mitigation measures to include speed limits, speed bumps, controlled access and a highly visible law enforcement presence. Indestructible sanitation facilities and camping area style trash containers shall be placed as soon as possible to protect the health of the public. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Discharge of Firearms: "Recreational discharge of firearms will be prohibited in this entire unit to protect human safety and to prevent pollution of lead from skeet targets and ammunition into the waters of Knik River Valley. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Rescinding of Regulations including Remedies for well documented current Damage in this unit: 1) No existing regulations will be rescinded. All regulations will be developed in compliance with existing laws and regulations, including but not restricted to 11AAC 96.020 (a)(1)(D)(E), 11 AAC 96.025 (1)(2)(3)(A-C) as well as any and all Alaska Statutes which protect fish, game and waterfowl and its habitat. 2) Repair rutted trails and vegetation in forests, wetlands and lowlands. Harden where appropriate. Repair stream banks. 3) Revegetate Dunes. Dunes protect Butte and Palmer from Knik River changing course. 4) Allow unrestricted vehicle curb weight only for travel on Sexton Trail from Pavilion Parking Lot to DNR Parking Lot on the uplands prior to Jim Creek Flats and on Jim Creek Trail to existing DNR parking lot, or parking lot to be established on uplands in forest prior to approaching the Flats. Both Jim Creek Trail (aka RS2477, Knik Glacier Trail) and Sexton Trail should be hardened with speed bumps added for the safety of the public. 5) Restrict curb weight of highway and off-road vehicles to 1,000 lb curb weight until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging from UNIT A to KNIK GLACIER is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit. 6) Prohibit the use of trees for extricating "winching" vehicles out of mud or water. 7) Recommend and agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3 regarding 100' stream buffer protection on all water ways. NEW Alternative 4 regarding utilization of Mat-Su Borough Pavilion Parcel. In addition to equalize the number of motorized and non-motorized trails on this parcel, Mat-Su Borough shall utilize a large portion this parcel for community recreational purposes, including a community park, BMX park, multi-age playground, soccer fields, volleyball and tennis venues to give young adults and families, "something to do." A public campground should be established there as well. The Pavilion Parking Area was built by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough. The picnic pavilion at the site was subsequently destroyed by motorized users. The Pavilion Parking Area should be designated access for non-motorized users. Two non-motorized trails should be designated to accommodate different users, such as for hikers, bikers and horses. A separated parking lot on the west side of the "Pavilion" should allow cars to travel the Sexton Trail to Jim Creek. In addition, An ATV trail should be developed and designated to allow ATV access from the "Pavilion" parking lot to Jim Creek. Residents should be allowed planning participation on this Mat-Su Borough parcel. All motorized access to the entire area should be from the trail head for the RS2477 Knik Glacier Trail (aka Jim Creek Trail) on State of Alaska Land to minimize adverse impact to residents from high traffic, noise, dust and air pollution. Sanitary facilities will be developed and may be shared by users of both the Pavilion and RS2477 parking areas. Separate sanitary facilities may be developed for a public camp ground on the Pavilion parcel. NEW Alternative 4 regarding Manmade Lake: "No Motorized use" at Manmade Lake except for

parking access for picnics, swimming and other non-motorized activities. The bottom of Manmade Lake should be dredged and cleaned from an accumulation of glass, metal and lead and restored to its original purpose as a community "swimming hole."

UNIT B. Lakes - Unit B should be renamed to read "Lakes and Wetlands." INTENT language should be changed to read: Provide for moderate density quiet use and limited motorized use for all seasons for the protection of water fowl in the summer and moose and sheep in the winter. The area in this unit was recommended as Critical Habitat in previous studies. Designate and manage this area as Critical Habitat. Motor size for boats in this unit and Jim Creek shall be restricted to 3 HP to protect nesting and rearing waterfowl including trumpeter swans in all lakes of the unit. No motorized recreational vehicle use in lakes and wetlands area during the summer. No power boats, including airboats, in lakes and wetlands. Establish snowmachine corridor in the winter. NEW BARCO Alternative 5 regarding Rippy Trail; Rippy Trail to remain designated non-motorized in its entirety. No Loop Trail. Rippy Trail was established by and for non-motorized use by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough in the 1980s. Motorized users have destroyed one salmon stream and several springs feeding the wetlands and lakes and, because of their large numbers, have created sanitary issues. A "Loop Trail" would cut into an established wild life corridor which extends from the Alpine environment west to the Knik River-Matanuska River Delta and connects with the Palmer Hay Flats NEW Alternative 5 for the entire unit: Use of any waterbody with a motorized watercraft is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Approaching within 1500 feet of an active Trumpeter Swan nest on land or water is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Legal hunting is allowed; however, swans gathering on the lakes in preparation of their fall migration may not be approached within 500 feet either on land or on the waters they are gathering in. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Mud Lake. In addition, construction of a boat launch/ramp at Mud Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Jim Lake. In addition, construction of a canoe launch at Jim Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. NEW Alternative 5 to prohibit recreational shooting at Jim Lake in order to protect public safety and preventing disturbance of nesting/rearing waterfowl. Legal hunting is allowed after Swan fall migration.

UNIT C - Upper Knik Flats NEW Alternative 3: No vehicles more than 1000 lbs curb weight until an improved road for access is developed to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids.

UNIT D - Upper Jim Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT E - Upper Friday Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT F - Grasshopper Valley Agree with DNR Alternatives 2, with the exception that no additional trails be developed.

UNIT G - Glacier Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. In Addition: NEW ALTERNATIVE 3 regarding future development: Recommend that the area past the Knik Glacier Lake if that is within the PUA be made a non-motorized area, except for aircraft. At this time no other motorized vehicles can generally access it (except if transported by helicopter or other air transportation). However, as the glacier recedes, motorized access may be possible, with deleterious effects to the wildlife and environment. At present this area is almost pristine, with some aircraft landing sites and virtually no other tracks, litter etc. Taking a non-motorized (except for aircraft) stance at this time, while having no effect on

present usage, would protect the area against possible future abuses. As has been seen throughout the accessible PUA, any place an ORV can get, someone will take one, and many will not be cognizant of possible environmental damage.

UNIT H - Metal Creek Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. NEW Alternative 3: Prohibit vehicles to travel through Metal Creek in order to prevent pollution of the waters of Metal Creek and Knik River from automotive fluids while traveling through the water and to prevent abandonment of vehicles in the waterways of the Knik River.

FEES Agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3, Point 1 regarding the collection of fees. In addition, amount of fees charged should be based on cost of management, law enforcement and facilities to be determined as the management plan is developed.

Comment 190 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

The following are my comments on the Knik River Public Use Area Plan's Preliminary Alternatives and Management Actions. Although I moved from Anchorage to Kenny Lake three years ago and it's no longer very easy for me to visit the Jim-Swan Lakes area, I stopped going there long ago in any case. Soon after I moved from the lower 48 to Anchorage in the spring of 1977, I started visiting the area in the spring to enjoy the swans, other waterfowl, songbirds, and general beauty and quiet of the area. But it wasn't long before the area became popular with motorized recreationists, and I no longer enjoyed being there because of the noise and other impacts and stopped making my annual trips. Since then, of course, things have gotten far worse. The failure to manage this beautiful and valuable area has been a disgrace. And as I suggested, the impacts have been not just from wild shooting, dumping cars and other trash, shooting at and burning those vehicles and other junk, and general lawlessness. The damage done to fish and wildlife habitat, vegetation and soils generally, air and water quality, the area's scenic beauty, and natural quiet and the opportunity to hear and enjoy natural sounds, as well as the loss of its wild character, all due to unregulated motorized recreation, has been nearly as shameful. The creation of the Knik River PUA has created the best opportunity for decades to finally take this area in hand and restore much of its natural richness and beauty. Unfortunately, none of the alternatives proposed by DNR to date come close to accomplishing this goal. Consequently, I support -as far as it goes- the Knik River Watershed Group's Alternative 5. But it doesn't do nearly enough. While it seeks to protect some of the very most valuable fish and wildlife habitat, and only about 5% of the total PUA, and therefore might be a wise political move, it still leaves the great majority of the area subject to continuing ORV damage. Public lands shouldn't be sacrifice areas just because not every acre is critical habitat. These lands still are habitat, they still are beautiful, and many species of flora and fauna depend on them. Private land owners don't trash their lands just because they aren't critical habitat. The plan, if it is to be in accord with the area's legislative purposes, should protect fish and wildlife habitat. DNR's alternatives don't do this. Actually, all other uses should be subsidiary to protecting fish and wildlife and their habitats, both because of the intrinsic values involved and because for many users their enjoyment of the area is dependent on the health of fish, wildlife and their habitats; the two purposes are inseparable. And the plan should provide at least as many opportunities for high quality non-motorized recreation as for motorized (the two are highly incompatible and need to be clearly separated, either in space or time); this is an issue not just of legislative purpose but also of basic fairness to all users. Instead, DNR's alternatives grossly favor motorized use, the type of use that creates both the most damage and the most conflicts; this is hardly responsible management. The following, then, are some specific suggestions for management of the area that would help accomplish those

legislative goals and that should be included in whatever alternative is finally chosen; some appear in existing alternatives (primarily #5), others do not. 1. At least 50% of the entire PUA, including the Rippy Trail, should be managed for non-motorized recreation during all seasons, (that is, closed to motorized recreation). This would have the additional (in addition to its strictly recreational benefits) beneficial effects of restoring and/or maintaining fish and wildlife habitat, soils and vegetation, air and water quality, scenic beauty, natural quiet and the opportunity to hear and enjoy natural sounds, and the area's wild and natural character. It would also provide a quiet and safe refuge for both humans and wildlife. 2. Natural quiet should be restored and protected with just as much consideration as any other resource value. 3. Airboats are abominably loud, and spoil everyone else's experience. They also can be highly detrimental to fish and wildlife habitat and populations. They shouldn't be allowed on most public lands, especially legislatively designated areas, including this PUA. At the very least (a poor compromise, in my opinion), they should be allowed only on the Knik River itself. 4. Jet boats are incredibly irritating not only because they're very loud, but also because of their frequent and annoying variation of pitch. And, like airboats, they can travel through or directly adjacent to the vegetation bordering lakes and rivers and destroy habitat and harass wildlife. They should not be allowed in the PUA, no exceptions. 5. The Generally Allowed Uses regulations are not strict enough as they are, especially since they can be very difficult to enforce even with adequate personnel (which DNR does not have). With these regulations in place, areas all across the state have been severely degraded by ORV use. Certainly, no exemptions from these ineffective regulations should be allowed. 6. Cross country ORV travel should be prohibited, with only one possible exception. The only place where off-trail travel might perhaps be allowed, if it's politically impossible to ban it completely, is on a designated, marked route on the un-vegetated Knik River flats. Any plan for the Knik River area should have as its major goal the restoration of its natural beauty and wildness, its fish and wildlife habitat (and populations secure from harassment), its natural quiet and opportunities to hear and enjoy natural sounds, its undisturbed soils and vegetation, its clean air and water, and its role as a safe, quiet refuge for both humans and wildlife. Anything less is just pandering to irresponsible recreationists who seem to think it's acceptable to trash public lands in a manner that would, I hope, be unimaginable as applied to their own, private lands or the lands of their friends and neighbors. Thanks you for considering these comments on the management of a rich, beautiful area that has been sadly and irresponsibly neglected up to this point. Perhaps we can truly turn things around. But it won't happen unless DNR is willing to stand up to the recreation-at-any-cost crowd.

Comment 191 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Please consider the following comments on the Knik River Public Use Area management plan as my preferred alternatives.

Comments on Actions Common to All Alternatives: Add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. I recommend that a shooting range meet the environmental and safety standards and should be placed at the end of Maud Road where there is only one access in and out to the shooting range with controlled time limits. This would keep the shooting of firearms away from the Jim Creek Recreational Area and middle of the night shootings would NOT be permissible.

Other comments: Establish fine for bailable offenses including the intentional or unintentional shooting, wild drunken parties, the burning of vehicles and trashing the KRPUA.

Comment 192 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Please consider the following comments on the Knik River Public Use Area management plan as my preferred alternatives.

Comments on Actions Common to All Alternatives: Add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. I recommend that a shooting range meet the environmental and safety standards and should be placed at the end of Maud Road where there is only one access in and out to the shooting range with controlled time limits OR beyond the Jim Creek Fishing Area. This would keep the shooting of firearms away from the Jim Creek Recreational Area and middle of the night shootings would NOT be permissible. As part of the shooting range I would like to see a skeet range also which is more of a family sport.

My main objectives are to stop the random and careless shooting, trashing and dumping of trash in the whole area, dumping and burning vehicles and wild uncontrolled drunken parties. It is not my wish or intent to restrict the historical uses of the area by limiting access and turning the area into a theme park type area as some would want. The wilderness adventure is what I like about the area and wish to preserve. Four wheeling, taking the family back camping which means the use of pickup truck and other motorized equipment to travel up the river bars beyond Jim Creek and even to go fishing or site seeing.

Other comments: Establish fine for bailable offenses include the intentional or unintentional shooting, wild drunken parties, the burning of vehicles and dumping or trashing the KRPUA.

Comment 193 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Keep up the "Trooper" patrols. A showing on weekends will do a lot to curtail the "reckless" shooting! We need an easement for access to the Knik River at the Knik River bridge. Purchase an easement from private property owners if necessary. Please don't move the "shooting problem" from the sand dune area to "Maud Road". Take care of "it" where it's at! Why move a "problem" from one area to another? Telling all the "shooters" to go to Maud Road will cause a "Trash and Noise" problem in an area that is still "nice". Make a shooting area east of the Jim Creek crossing (near the sand dunes). Bulldoze a "slot" into the woods and put a "dirt berm" for a backstop. The Maud Road area is definitely NOT suitable for a shooting area. Too much noise (from the shooting) will be generated in an area that is now relatively little used and is quiet - except for the amount of shooting that presently occurs. Allow people to "get off the trail" for camping, etc., in vegetated areas. Keep the upper Rippy Trail motorized for a "loop trail" to the Friday Creek area. This will be an alternate trail to the glacier in case of flooding or a change in the main Knik River channel from Friday Creek downstream. Any restrictions on "traget/recreation" shooting should not curtail legal hunting. Change the wording of the "300 ft" swan rule. No "swan" restrictions on moving waterways or areas in lakes where the "nest" cannot be seen from all points of the compass. 1. Good 2. Good 3. NO daily user fees! Keep all existing trails open. Minimum annual user fee (approx \$10.00). Discount for seniors & veterans or handicapped. 4. Pursue trade of state land for Borough land. Pavilion area - motorized trail to the Knik Flats, Maud-Plumly Trail. Obtain an easement for Maud Rd and Upper Rippy Trail. Permit for bridge across Jim Creek (at canyon).

Comment 194 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Alaska Extreme Fourwheelers, Inc. reviewed the Knik Public Use Area Proposed Management Actions and submit the comments below for consideration. Alaska Extreme

Fourwheelers, Inc., based in Anchorage, Alaska, represents over 28 individuals organized for social, recreational, and educational activities; to enjoy and protect our natural resources; to enjoy family oriented outdoor activities; and to foster the enjoyment of four wheel drive vehicles. Some of the areas we frequently visit are covered by the proposed management plan. Our comments are as follows: Preliminary Management Actions and Actions Common to All Alternatives 1. The third sentence under the first "Management Actions" bullet point states "[t]hrough this process, trails may be developed, designated, re-routed, or closed by the Department." We request clarification on how the designation process will occur and the level of public involvement in designating existing trails. We opposed to closure of any trails. The KPUA legislation does not authorize the Department to close any existing trails. 2. The second sentence under the third "Actions Common to all Alternatives" bullet point states "[v]ehicle use off of existing trails in vegetated areas is prohibited." We oppose regulations more strict than the State's Generally Allowed Uses. Off-trail travel should continue to be allowed as long as it does not cause significant rutting or tearing of the vegetative mat. We also request clarification on the definition of vegetated areas. 3. The third sentence under the third "Actions Common to all Alternatives" bullet point states "[t]his does not apply to units or areas designated to allow these activities through the KRPUA Management Plan." This statement needs clarification, as it is inconsistent with the specific unit alternatives. For example, Lower Knik Flats Alternative 2 rescinds parts of the State's Generally Allowed Uses in reference to rutting. In the Lakes Unit, Alternatives 2 and 3 specifically state "[u]se off of existing trails in vegetated areas will be prohibited." In the Grasshopper Valley unit, use off of existing trails in vegetated areas is prohibited. The Upper Knik Flats, Upper Jim Alpine, Upper Friday Alpine, Glacier, and Metal Creek units do not specifically state if travel off of existing trails in vegetated areas is prohibited or allowed. Based on the second and third sentence under the third bullet point for "Actions Common to all Alternatives," users must assume the above listed units will also prohibit travel off of existing trails in vegetated areas. We are opposed to this prohibition.

Unit A. Lower Knik Flats 1. We generally support Alternative 2. 2. We oppose the prohibition of motorized use in 100 foot buffer along Jim and Bodenbug Creek. Travel should be allowed in accordance with the Generally Allowed Uses which prohibits significant rutting, or introduction of dirt, into the streams.

Unit B. Lakes 1. We generally support Alternative 2. 2. Second bullet point: recommend revising "multiple use" to "motorized and non-motorized". 3. Third bullet point: we oppose the prohibition of use off of existing trails in vegetated areas. Travel should be allowed in accordance with the Generally Allowed Uses. 4. Fourth bullet point: we oppose the 300 foot buffer from Trumpeter Swan nests. The Department did not indicate that the swan population is in decline or in any way threatened by changes to the Knik River Public Use Area management, and the area was not reserved as a sanctuary or refuge.

Unit C. Upper Knik Flats 1. We generally support Alternative 2. 2. Please clarify if travel off of designated trails will be allowed. Third bullet point: we oppose the prohibition of use off of existing trails in vegetated areas. Travel should be allowed in accordance with the Generally Allowed Uses.

Unit D. Upper Jim Alpine 1. No comment.

Unit E. Upper Friday Alpine 1. We generally support Alternative 2. 2. Please clarify if travel off of designated trails will be allowed. We oppose the prohibition of use off of existing trails in vegetated areas. Travel should be allowed in accordance with the Generally Allowed Uses.

Unit F. Grasshopper Valley 1. We generally support Alternative 2. 2. First bullet point: we oppose the prohibition of use off of existing trails in vegetated areas. Travel should be allowed in accordance with the Generally Allowed Uses. Further, Alternative 1 notes there are few user-defined trails in the area, while Alternative 2 prohibits new trails during the planning process. The lack of existing trails and strict requirement of prohibiting travel off of the trails means the access to the land in this unit would be very limited.

Unit G. Glacier 1. We generally support Alternative 2. 2. Please clarify if travel off of designated trails will be allowed. We oppose the prohibition of use off of existing trails in vegetated areas. Travel should be allowed in accordance with the Generally Allowed Uses.

Unit H. Metal Creek 1. We generally support Alternative 2. 2. Please clarify if travel off of designated trails will be allowed. We oppose the prohibition of use off of existing trails in vegetated areas. Travel should be allowed in accordance with the Generally Allowed Uses.

Fees 1. We support a fee program for related developed services.

General Comments 1. We support the purchase of the land currently for sale near the Knik River Bridge. This land would make a great additional access point to the area. 2. The management plan should include a clause that no covenants will be held on land obtained by land acquisition and included in the KPUA.

This concludes our review of the proposed management options. Thank you for considering our comments.

Comment 195 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. 1, 2 & 3. Classify 'trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: 'access' roads into KRPUA, 'trail/road' for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational 'areas'. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails. 1&2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc.); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4. DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisition were not identified, nor was a need or use of such land described.

2. To add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to

operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc.

3. 1, 2 & 3. DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the 'unrestricted' access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for 'access' trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail.

4. Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenbug Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area.

Comment 196 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. 1, 2 & 3. Classify 'trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: 'access' roads into KRPUA, 'trail/road' for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational 'areas'. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails. 1&2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc.); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4. DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisition were not identified, nor was a need or use of such land described.

2. To add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or

private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc.

3. 1, 2 & 3. DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the 'unrestricted' access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for 'access' trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail.

4. Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenbug Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area.

Comment 197 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. 1, 2 & 3. Classify 'trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: 'access' roads into KRPUA, 'trail/road' for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational 'areas'. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails. 1&2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc.); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4. DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisition were not identified, nor was a need or use of such land described.

2. To add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc.

3. 1, 2 & 3. DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the 'unrestricted' access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for 'access' trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail. "User-developed" motorized trails are 'bandit' trails & do not rescind protective regs.

4. Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenbug Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area.

Comment 198 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

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Comment 199 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Please consider the following comments on the Knik River Public Use Area management plan as my preferred alternatives.

BARCO Substitutes for DNR Management Actions 1) DEVELOP MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH PRIME CONSIDERATION HOW ANY PROPOSED ACTION WOULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT RESIDENTS regarding traffic, noise, dust, air quality and personal safety and how to mitigate such impact. 2) DEVELOP A TIME-SHARE SCHEDULE FOR MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION. Existing commercial airboat tour operators and aircraft should be exempted from the limitation. Existing ATV guided tours may be exempted on a permit basis. During the trapping and hunting seasons, legally licensed hunters and trappers shall be allowed motorized access. This will benefit different users to recreate without conflict, give respite to wildlife, and give residents and quiet users equal time to enjoy their homes and yards without nuisance noise from power boats, personal watercraft and ORVs and high-use traffic in their neighborhoods. 3) SEPARATE MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED ACCESS POINTS: Centralize Motorized Access: a) from RS 2477 (Knik Glacier Trail/Jim Creek Trail) trail head and parking lot on State of Alaska Land. b) Public Access to Upper Knik River from South Knik River to be determined; Private Access for residents only onto motorized trails if their private property adjoins KRPUA is allowed.

Multi-Use Access: From Pavilion Parking Lot for access to Jim Creek Fishing on Sexton Trail. Motorized access to terminate in existing DNR parking lot uphill from Jim Creek Fishing area. Non-motorized access for campers, hikers, horses, bikers etc to Jim Creek Fishing and beyond. Non-motorized Access: a) from Knik River/Bodenburg Creek Access to protect fish and waterfowl habitat at Bodenburg Creek; to protect adjoining private lands from ongoing trespass, and to allow residents and visitors the enjoyment of quiet recreational endeavors near our homes. b) from Jim Lake Parking Lot to Rippy Trail and Wetlands c) Allow access for motorized handicapped persons and non-handicapped companion in non-motorized areas by permit. 4) CRITICAL HABITAT AREAS SHOULD BE CREATED to include lakes, wetlands, alpine transition zones and sand dunes, to prevent further destruction. Restoration/revegetation plans should be established and implemented for these areas. The Jim - Swan wetlands area and adjacent Rippy Trail should be made a non-motorized area, with a possible relaxation of restrictions during hunting /trapping seasons if daily enforcement is in place. During these times, motorized use should be limited to designated trails and access points. This area has been specifically recommended for special protection by numerous groups, agencies and studies at least since the 1981 USF&W Knik Arm Wetlands Study. 5) ANY LAND ACQUISITION FOR INCLUSION TO THE KNIK RIVER PUBLIC USE AREA will require a public process regarding cost for management, facilities and law enforcement and available funding. Any land acquisition from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough will require a full public process regarding preferences of local residents for that parcel and proposed management actions to ensure a variety of recreational activities for the benefit of residents, and particularly the Youth of the Community of Butte; and the cost of such a land transaction to the State of Alaska and the income to be derived by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough from the sale of these lands. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough shall not "give away" borough-owned assets until the Community of Butte can be assured that they be managed for the benefit of the community. 6) Establish fines for bailable offenses including the intentional or unintentional contamination of land and waters by lead, automotive fluids and other hazardous materials; cutting life trees; rutting and destroying vegetation; contributing to the erosion of river, lake and stream banks; disturbing or harassing wildlife including waterfowl.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES TO DNR ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL UNITS

Limit off-road vehicles to established and hardened trails. Prohibit snow-machine "water skippers" from operating in Knik River or any of its tributaries. Establish bailable offense for this activity for disturbing the peace of residents at any hour. Oppose rescinding any existing rules or other regulatory action in the entire KRPUA which protect streams, fish and wildlife habitat, etc., or are designed to prevent rutting of trails and disturbing vegetation. Do not allow existing destructive uses to continue or expand. Restrict curb weight to 1,000 lb for highway and off-road vehicles until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging in all units is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large-vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES BY MANAGEMENT UNIT

UNIT A. Lower Knik Flats INTENT: Change language to read: "The intent is to encourage a wide variety of recreational uses including nonmotorized and motorized uses as described in HB307. DNR recognizes the high value of this area for quality multiple use recreation. DNR shall not manage any unit as a motor park, moto-cross or mudbog venue but provide a high

quality experience for responsible ORV travelers and sightseers. The management goal includes to separate nonmotorized from motorized uses by creating specially hardened trails for motorized and equine users to lessen impact on the environment and to create safe conditions for all uses. To further this goal, multiple access points will be created which separate motorized and nonmotorized users and which provide safety and quiet for adjacent property owners. DNR shall mitigate high-use multiple use recreation for the benefit of residents and responsible motorized and quiet users. Mitigation measures to include speed limits, speed bumps, controlled access and a highly visible law enforcement presence. Indestructible sanitation facilities and camping area style trash containers shall be placed as soon as possible to protect the health of the public. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Discharge of Firearms: "Recreational discharge of firearms will be prohibited in this entire unit to protect human safety and to prevent pollution of lead from skeet targets and ammunition into the waters of Knik River Valley. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Rescinding of Regulations including Remedies for well documented current Damage in this unit: 1) No existing regulations will be rescinded. All regulations will be developed in compliance with existing laws and regulations, including but not restricted to 11AAC 96.020 (a)(1)(D)(E), 11 AAC 96.025 (1)(2)(3)(A-C) as well as any and all Alaska Statutes which protect fish, game and waterfowl and its habitat. 2) Repair rutted trails and vegetation in forests, wetlands and lowlands. Harden where appropriate. Repair stream banks. 3) Revegetate Dunes. Dunes protect Butte and Palmer from Knik River changing course. 4) Allow unrestricted vehicle curb weight only for travel on Sexton Trail from Pavilion Parking Lot to DNR Parking Lot on the uplands prior to Jim Creek Flats and on Jim Creek Trail to existing DNR parking lot, or parking lot to be established on uplands in forest prior to approaching the Flats. Both Jim Creek Trail (aka RS2477, Knik Glacier Trail) and Sexton Trail should be hardened with speed bumps added for the safety of the public. 5) Restrict curb weight of highway and off-road vehicles to 1,000 lb curb weight until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging from UNIT A to KNIK GLACIER is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit. 6) Prohibit the use of trees for extricating "winching" vehicles out of mud or water. 7) Recommend and agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3 regarding 100' stream buffer protection on all water ways. NEW Alternative 4 regarding utilization of Mat-Su Borough Pavilion Parcel. In addition to equalize the number of motorized and non-motorized trails on this parcel, Mat-Su Borough shall utilize a large portion this parcel for community recreational purposes, including a community park, BMX park, multi-age playground, soccer fields, volleyball and tennis venues to give young adults and families, "something to do." A public campground should be established there as well. The Pavilion Parking Area was built by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough. The picnic pavilion at the site was subsequently destroyed by motorized users. The Pavilion Parking Area should be designated access for non-motorized users. Two non-motorized trails should be designated to accommodate different users, such as for hikers, bikers and horses. A separated parking lot on the west side of the "Pavilion" should allow cars to travel the Sexton Trail to Jim Creek. In addition, An ATV trail should be developed and designated to allow ATV access from the "Pavilion" parking lot to Jim Creek. Residents should be allowed planning participation on this Mat-Su Borough parcel. All motorized access to the entire area should be from the trail head for the RS2477 Knik Glacier Trail (aka Jim Creek Trail) on State of Alaska Land to minimize adverse impact to residents from high traffic, noise, dust and air pollution. Sanitary facilities will be developed and may be shared by users of both the Pavilion and RS2477 parking areas. Separate sanitary facilities may be developed for a public camp ground on the Pavilion parcel. NEW

Alternative 4 regarding Manmade Lake: "No Motorized use" at Manmade Lake except for parking access for picnics, swimming and other non-motorized activities. The bottom of Manmade Lake should be dredged and cleaned from an accumulation of glass, metal and lead and restored to its original purpose as a community "swimming hole."

UNIT B. Lakes - Unit B should be renamed to read "Lakes and Wetlands." INTENT language should be changed to read: Provide for moderate density quiet use and limited motorized use for all seasons for the protection of water fowl in the summer and moose and sheep in the winter. The area in this unit was recommended as Critical Habitat in previous studies. Designate and manage this area as Critical Habitat. Motor size for boats in this unit and Jim Creek shall be restricted to 3 HP to protect nesting and rearing waterfowl including trumpeter swans in all lakes of the unit. No motorized recreational vehicle use in lakes and wetlands area during the summer. No power boats, including airboats, in lakes and wetlands. Establish snowmachine corridor in the winter. NEW BARCO Alternative 5 regarding Rippy Trail; Rippy Trail to remain designated non-motorized in its entirety. No Loop Trail. Rippy Trail was established by and for non-motorized use by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough in the 1980s. Motorized users have destroyed one salmon stream and several springs feeding the wetlands and lakes and, because of their large numbers, have created sanitary issues. A "Loop Trail" would cut into an established wild life corridor which extends from the Alpine environment west to the Knik River-Matanuska River Delta and connects with the Palmer Hay Flats NEW Alternative 5 for the entire unit: Use of any waterbody with a motorized watercraft is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Approaching within 1500 feet of an active Trumpeter Swan nest on land or water is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Legal hunting is allowed; however, swans gathering on the lakes in preparation of their fall migration may not be approached within 500 feet either on land or on the waters they are gathering in. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Mud Lake. In addition, construction of a boat launch/ramp at Mud Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Jim Lake. In addition, construction of a canoe launch at Jim Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. NEW Alternative 5 to prohibit recreational shooting at Jim Lake in order to protect public safety and preventing disturbance of nesting/rearing waterfowl. Legal hunting is allowed after Swan fall migration.

UNIT C - Upper Knik Flats NEW Alternative 3: No vehicles more than 1000 lbs curb weight until an improved road for access is developed to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids.

UNIT D - Upper Jim Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT E - Upper Friday Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT F - Grasshopper Valley Agree with DNR Alternatives 2, with the exception that no additional trails be developed.

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Taking a non-motorized (except for aircraft) stance at this time, while having no effect on present usage, would protect the area against possible future abuses. As has been seen throughout the accessible PUA, any place an ORV can get, someone will take one, and many will not be cognizant of possible environmental damage.

UNIT H - Metal Creek Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. NEW Alternative 3: Prohibit vehicles to travel through Metal Creek in order to prevent pollution of the waters of Metal Creek and Knik River from automotive fluids while traveling through the water and to prevent abandonment of vehicles in the waterways of the Knik River.

FEES Agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3, Point 1 regarding the collection of fees. In addition, amount of fees charged should be based on cost of management, law enforcement and facilities to be determined as the management plan is developed.

Comment 200 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

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UNIT G - Glacier Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. In Addition: NEW ALTERNATIVE 3 regarding future development: Recommend that the area past the Knik Glacier Lake if that is within the PUA be made a non-motorized area, except for aircraft. At this time no other motorized vehicles can generally access it (except if transported by helicopter or other air transportation). However, as the glacier recedes, motorized access may be possible, with deleterious effects to the wildlife and environment. At present this area is almost pristine, with some aircraft landing sites and virtually no other tracks, litter etc. Taking a non-motorized (except for aircraft) stance at this time, while having no effect on present usage, would protect the area against possible future abuses. As has been seen throughout the accessible PUA, any place an ORV can get, someone will take one, and many will not be cognizant of possible environmental damage.

UNIT H - Metal Creek Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. NEW Alternative 3: Prohibit vehicles to travel through Metal Creek in order to prevent pollution of the waters of Metal Creek and Knik River from automotive fluids while traveling through the water and to prevent abandonment of vehicles in the waterways of the Knik River.

FEES Agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3, Point 1 regarding the collection of fees. In addition, amount of fees charged should be based on cost of management, law enforcement and facilities to be determined as the management plan is developed.

Comment 201 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Please consider the following comments on the Knik River Public Use Area management plan as my preferred alternatives.

BARCO Substitutes for DNR Management Actions 1) DEVELOP MANAGEMENT PLAN

WITH PRIME CONSIDERATION HOW ANY PROPOSED ACTION WOULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT RESIDENTS regarding traffic, noise, dust, air quality and personal safety and how to mitigate such impact. 2) DEVELOP A TIME-SHARE SCHEDULE FOR MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION. Existing commercial airboat tour operators and aircraft should be exempted from the limitation. Existing ATV guided tours may be exempted on a permit basis. During the trapping and hunting seasons, legally licensed hunters and trappers shall be allowed motorized access. This will benefit different users to recreate without conflict, give respite to wildlife, and give residents and quiet users equal time to enjoy their homes and yards without nuisance noise from power boats, personal watercraft and ORVs and high-use traffic in their neighborhoods. 3) SEPARATE MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED ACCESS POINTS: Centralize Motorized Access: a) from RS 2477 (Knik Glacier Trail/Jim Creek Trail) trail head and parking lot on State of Alaska Land. b) Public Access to Upper Knik River from South Knik River to be determined; Private Access for residents only onto motorized trails if their private property adjoins KRPUA is allowed. Multi-Use Access: From Pavilion Parking Lot for access to Jim Creek Fishing on Sexton Trail. Motorized access to terminate in existing DNR parking lot uphill from Jim Creek Fishing area. Non-motorized access for campers, hikers, horses, bikers etc to Jim Creek Fishing and beyond. Non-motorized Access: a) from Knik River/Bodenburg Creek Access to protect fish and waterfowl habitat at Bodenburg Creek; to protect adjoining private lands from ongoing trespass, and to allow residents and visitors the enjoyment of quiet recreational endeavors near our homes. b) from Jim Lake Parking Lot to Rippy Trail and Wetlands c) Allow access for motorized handicapped persons and non-handicapped companion in non-motorized areas by permit. 4) CRITICAL HABITAT AREAS SHOULD BE CREATED to include lakes, wetlands, alpine transition zones and sand dunes, to prevent further destruction. Restoration/revegetation plans should be established and implemented for these areas. The Jim - Swan wetlands area and adjacent Rippy Trail should be made a non-motorized area, with a possible relaxation of restrictions during hunting /trapping seasons if daily enforcement is in place. During these times, motorized use should be limited to designated trails and access points. This area has been specifically recommended for special protection by numerous groups, agencies and studies at least since the 1981 USF&W Knik Arm Wetlands Study. 5) ANY LAND ACQUISITION FOR INCLUSION TO THE KNIK RIVER PUBLIC USE AREA will require a public process regarding cost for management, facilities and law enforcement and available funding. Any land acquisition from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough will require a full public process regarding preferences of local residents for that parcel and proposed management actions to ensure a variety of recreational activities for the benefit of residents, and particularly the Youth of the Community of Butte; and the cost of such a land transaction to the State of Alaska and the income to be derived by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough from the sale of these lands. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough shall not "give away" borough-owned assets until the Community of Butte can be assured that they be managed for the benefit of the community. 6) Establish fines for bailable offenses including the intentional or unintentional contamination of land and waters by lead, automotive fluids and other hazardous materials; cutting life trees; rutting and destroying vegetation; contributing to the erosion of river, lake and stream banks; disturbing or harassing wildlife including waterfowl.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES TO DNR ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL UNITS

Limit off-road vehicles to established and hardened trails. Prohibit snow-machine "water skippers" from operating in Knik River or any of its tributaries. Establish bailable offense for this activity for disturbing the peace of residents at any hour. Oppose rescinding any existing

rules or other regulatory action in the entire KRPUA which protect streams, fish and wildlife habitat, etc., or are designed to prevent rutting of trails and disturbing vegetation. Do not allow existing destructive uses to continue or expand. Restrict curb weight to 1,000 lb for highway and off-road vehicles until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging in all units is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large-vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES BY MANAGEMENT UNIT

UNIT A. Lower Knik Flats INTENT: Change language to read: "The intent is to encourage a wide variety of recreational uses including nonmotorized and motorized uses as described in HB307. DNR recognizes the high value of this area for quality multiple use recreation. DNR shall not manage any unit as a motor park, moto-cross or mudbog venue but provide a high quality experience for responsible ORV travelers and sightseers. The management goal includes to separate nonmotorized from motorized uses by creating specially hardened trails for motorized and equine users to lessen impact on the environment and to create safe conditions for all uses. To further this goal, multiple access points will be created which separate motorized and nonmotorized users and which provide safety and quiet for adjacent property owners. DNR shall mitigate high-use multiple use recreation for the benefit of residents and responsible motorized and quiet users. Mitigation measures to include speed limits, speed bumps, controlled access and a highly visible law enforcement presence. Indestructible sanitation facilities and camping area style trash containers shall be placed as soon as possible to protect the health of the public. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Discharge of Firearms: "Recreational discharge of firearms will be prohibited in this entire unit to protect human safety and to prevent pollution of lead from skeet targets and ammunition into the waters of Knik River Valley. BARCO ALTERNATIVE 4 regarding Rescinding of Regulations including Remedies for well documented current Damage in this unit: 1) No existing regulations will be rescinded. All regulations will be developed in compliance with existing laws and regulations, including but not restricted to 11AAC 96.020 (a)(1)(D)(E), 11 AAC 96.025 (1)(2)(3)(A-C) as well as any and all Alaska Statutes which protect fish, game and waterfowl and its habitat. 2) Repair rutted trails and vegetation in forests, wetlands and lowlands. Harden where appropriate. Repair stream banks. 3) Revegetate Dunes. Dunes protect Butte and Palmer from Knik River changing course. 4) Allow unrestricted vehicle curb weight only for travel on Sexton Trail from Pavilion Parking Lot to DNR Parking Lot on the uplands prior to Jim Creek Flats and on Jim Creek Trail to existing DNR parking lot, or parking lot to be established on uplands in forest prior to approaching the Flats. Both Jim Creek Trail (aka RS2477, Knik Glacier Trail) and Sexton Trail should be hardened with speed bumps added for the safety of the public. 5) Restrict curb weight of highway and off-road vehicles to 1,000 lb curb weight until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging from UNIT A to KNIK GLACIER is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit. 6) Prohibit the use of trees for extricating "winching" vehicles out of mud or water. 7) Recommend and agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3 regarding 100' stream buffer protection on all water ways. NEW Alternative 4 regarding utilization of Mat-Su Borough Pavilion Parcel. In addition to equalize the number of motorized and non-motorized trails on this parcel, Mat-Su Borough shall utilize a large portion this parcel for community recreational purposes, including a community park,

BMX park, multi-age playground, soccer fields, volleyball and tennis venues to give young adults and families, "something to do." A public campground should be established there as well. The Pavilion Parking Area was built by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough. The picnic pavilion at the site was subsequently destroyed by motorized users. The Pavilion Parking Area should be designated access for non-motorized users. Two non-motorized trails should be designated to accommodate different users, such as for hikers, bikers and horses. A separated parking lot on the west side of the "Pavilion" should allow cars to travel the Sexton Trail to Jim Creek. In addition, An ATV trail should be developed and designated to allow ATV access from the "Pavilion" parking lot to Jim Creek. Residents should be allowed planning participation on this Mat-Su Borough parcel. All motorized access to the entire area should be from the trail head for the RS2477 Knik Glacier Trail (aka Jim Creek Trail) on State of Alaska Land to minimize adverse impact to residents from high traffic, noise, dust and air pollution. Sanitary facilities will be developed and may be shared by users of both the Pavilion and RS2477 parking areas. Separate sanitary facilities may be developed for a public camp ground on the Pavilion parcel. NEW Alternative 4 regarding Manmade Lake: "No Motorized use" at Manmade Lake except for parking access for picnics, swimming and other non-motorized activities. The bottom of Manmade Lake should be dredged and cleaned from an accumulation of glass, metal and lead and restored to its original purpose as a community "swimming hole."

UNIT B. Lakes - Unit B should be renamed to read "Lakes and Wetlands." INTENT language should be changed to read: Provide for moderate density quiet use and limited motorized use for all seasons for the protection of water fowl in the summer and moose and sheep in the winter. The area in this unit was recommended as Critical Habitat in previous studies. Designate and manage this area as Critical Habitat. Motor size for boats in this unit and Jim Creek shall be restricted to 3 HP to protect nesting and rearing waterfowl including trumpeter swans in all lakes of the unit. No motorized recreational vehicle use in lakes and wetlands area during the summer. No power boats, including airboats, in lakes and wetlands. Establish snowmachine corridor in the winter. NEW BARCO Alternative 5 regarding Rippy Trail; Rippy Trail to remain designated non-motorized in its entirety. No Loop Trail. Rippy Trail was established by and for non-motorized use by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough in the 1980s. Motorized users have destroyed one salmon stream and several springs feeding the wetlands and lakes and, because of their large numbers, have created sanitary issues. A "Loop Trail" would cut into an established wild life corridor which extends from the Alpine environment west to the Knik River-Matanuska River Delta and connects with the Palmer Hay Flats NEW Alternative 5 for the entire unit: Use of any waterbody with a motorized watercraft is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Approaching within 1500 feet of an active Trumpeter Swan nest on land or water is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Legal hunting is allowed; however, swans gathering on the lakes in preparation of their fall migration may not be approached within 500 feet either on land or on the waters they are gathering in. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Mud Lake. In addition, construction of a boat launch/ramp at Mud Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Jim Lake. In addition, construction of a canoe launch at Jim Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. NEW Alternative 5 to prohibit recreational shooting at Jim Lake in order to protect public safety and preventing disturbance of nesting/rearing waterfowl. Legal hunting is allowed after Swan fall migration.

UNIT C - Upper Knik Flats NEW Alternative 3: No vehicles more than 1000 lbs curb weight until an improved road for access is developed to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation

and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids.

UNIT D - Upper Jim Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT E - Upper Friday Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT F - Grasshopper Valley Agree with DNR Alternatives 2, with the exception that no additional trails be developed.

UNIT G - Glacier Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. In Addition: NEW ALTERNATIVE 3 regarding future development: Recommend that the area past the Knik Glacier Lake if that is within the PUA be made a non-motorized area, except for aircraft. At this time no other motorized vehicles can generally access it (except if transported by helicopter or other air transportation). However, as the glacier recedes, motorized access may be possible, with deleterious effects to the wildlife and environment. At present this area is almost pristine, with some aircraft landing sites and virtually no other tracks, litter etc. Taking a non-motorized (except for aircraft) stance at this time, while having no effect on present usage, would protect the area against possible future abuses. As has been seen throughout the accessible PUA, any place an ORV can get, someone will take one, and many will not be cognizant of possible environmental damage.

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FEES Agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3, Point 1 regarding the collection of fees. In addition, amount of fees charged should be based on cost of management, law enforcement and facilities to be determined as the management plan is developed.

P.3 - Especially - Do not rescind any environmentally protective regulations - we see them as a glimmer of hope in this whole KRPUA mess.

Comment 202 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Thank you for allowing the Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC) opportunity to provide written comments on a range of preliminary alternatives and management actions for the Knik River Public Use Area (PUA). The AOC is a statewide organization representing over 10,000 Alaskans who hunt, trap, fish, and recreate on public lands. Perpetuating the natural resource base that our membership depends on is AOC's first purpose, followed next by insuring equality in access and use of natural resources. These were the guiding principles AOC applied when working to support the legislation that created the Knik River PUA. Regulations and policies developed through the Knik River PUA Management Planning process should mirror the intent of the legislation that created the statutes governing the Knik River PUA.

COMMENTS ON Management Actions: - Is is appropriate that the first process of the Management Action would be to provide legal access to the Knik River PUA. All current reserved 17(b) easements should be retained and Management Action plans to adjudicate additional 17(b) easements should be a priority action. Areas that would improve public access such as the parking facility on Sullivan Road, the Pavilion parking lot, and parking near the mouth of Bodenbug Creek should be acquired for inclusion in the Knik River PUA. - Enforcement of current allowable uses of ORVs in vegetated areas within the Lower Knik

Flats and Lakes Units should be the first Management action applied while inventorying of trails continues. - Locations should be identified for the creation of public shooting areas within or near the Knik River PUA.

COMMENTS ON Actions Common to all Alternatives: - AOC would prefer enforcement of current public safety laws regarding the recreational discharge of firearms as opposed to blanket area prohibitions. This action should be common to all alternatives. - Only DNR approved targets should be used. Littering laws need to be enforced to include discarded cartridge casings and shell casings.

COMMENTS ON Preliminary Alternatives: - In general AOC would support Alternative 1. Until such time occurs that the lawlessness of vandalism and shooting has been contained there seems to be little support for collecting user fees or constructing new facilities within the Knik River PUA. Enforcement of exciting public safety laws, acquisition of additional lands and completion of projects listed under the Current Management alternatives may require all the State funding available for the Knik River PUA for the near future.

Other Comments: - Demand for a quality outdoor recreational experience on public lands is increasing near towns with high population. The Knik River PUA provides numerous South Central Alaskan residents a relatively close, inexpensive outdoor destination. Commercial tour operators should not be permitted if their activities would displace a majority of individual Alaskans' recreating in the Knik River PUA.

The AOC looks forward to continuing to work with DNR to improve public safety and access to the Knik River PUA while at the same time advocating for continued conservations of the unique wildlife habitat of the Upper Knik River drainage.

Comment 203 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Please consider the following comments on the Knik River Public Use Area management plan as my preferred alternatives.

BARCO Substitutes for DNR Management Actions 1) DEVELOP MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH PRIME CONSIDERATION HOW ANY PROPOSED ACTION WOULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT RESIDENTS regarding traffic, noise, dust, air quality and personal safety and how to mitigate such impact. 2) DEVELOP A TIME-SHARE SCHEDULE FOR MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION. Existing commercial airboat tour operators and aircraft should be exempted from the limitation. Existing ATV guided tours may be exempted on a permit basis. During the trapping and hunting seasons, legally licensed hunters and trappers shall be allowed motorized access. This will benefit different users to recreate without conflict, give respite to wildlife, and give residents and quiet users equal time to enjoy their homes and yards without nuisance noise from power boats, personal watercraft and ORVs and high-use traffic in their neighborhoods. 3) SEPARATE MOTORIZED AND NON-MOTORIZED ACCESS POINTS: Centralize Motorized Access: a) from RS 2477 (Knik Glacier Trail/Jim Creek Trail) trail head and parking lot on State of Alaska Land. b) Public Access to Upper Knik River from South Knik River to be determined; Private Access for residents only onto motorized trails if their private property adjoins KRPUA is allowed. Multi-Use Access: From Pavilion Parking Lot for access to Jim Creek Fishing on Sexton Trail. Motorized access to terminate in existing DNR parking lot uphill from Jim Creek Fishing area. Non-motorized access for campers, hikers, horses, bikers etc to Jim Creek Fishing and beyond. Non-motorized Access: a) from Knik River/Bodenburg Creek Access to protect fish and waterfowl habitat at Bodenburg Creek; to protect adjoining private lands from ongoing trespass, and to allow residents and visitors the enjoyment of quiet recreational

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BARCO ALTERNATIVES TO DNR ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL UNITS

Limit off-road vehicles to established and hardened trails. Prohibit snow-machine "water skippers" from operating in Knik River or any of its tributaries. Establish bailable offense for this activity for disturbing the peace of residents at any hour. Oppose rescinding any existing rules or other regulatory action in the entire KRPUA which protect streams, fish and wildlife habitat, etc., or are designed to prevent rutting of trails and disturbing vegetation. Do not allow existing destructive uses to continue or expand. Restrict curb weight to 1,000 lb for highway and off-road vehicles until such time as damaged trails are restored and a permanent, hardened road surface with appropriate bridging in all units is developed in order to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids. Allow large-vehicle access to miners, inholders and handicapped by permit.

BARCO ALTERNATIVES BY MANAGEMENT UNIT

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UNIT B. Lakes - Unit B should be renamed to read "Lakes and Wetlands." INTENT language

should be changed to read: Provide for moderate density quiet use and limited motorized use for all seasons for the protection of water fowl in the summer and moose and sheep in the winter. The area in this unit was recommended as Critical Habitat in previous studies. Designate and manage this area as Critical Habitat. Motor size for boats in this unit and Jim Creek shall be restricted to 3 HP to protect nesting and rearing waterfowl including trumpeter swans in all lakes of the unit. No motorized recreational vehicle use in lakes and wetlands area during the summer. No power boats, including airboats, in lakes and wetlands. Establish snowmachine corridor in the winter. NEW BARCO Alternative 5 regarding Rippy Trail; Rippy Trail to remain designated non-motorized in its entirety. No Loop Trail. Rippy Trail was established by and for non-motorized use by the Equestrian Association and the Mat-Su Borough in the 1980s. Motorized users have destroyed one salmon stream and several springs feeding the wetlands and lakes and, because of their large numbers, have created sanitary issues. A "Loop Trail" would cut into an established wild life corridor which extends from the Alpine environment west to the Knik River-Matanuska River Delta and connects with the Palmer Hay Flats NEW Alternative 5 for the entire unit: Use of any waterbody with a motorized watercraft is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Approaching within 1500 feet of an active Trumpeter Swan nest on land or water is prohibited between April 1 and September 30. Legal hunting is allowed; however, swans gathering on the lakes in preparation of their fall migration may not be approached within 500 feet either on land or on the waters they are gathering in. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Mud Lake. In addition, construction of a boat launch/ramp at Mud Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. Agree with DNR Alternative 4 regarding Jim Lake. In addition, construction of a canoe launch at Jim Lake is recommended for access to the lake system. Motors not to exceed 3 HP. NEW Alternative 5 to prohibit recreational shooting at Jim Lake in order to protect public safety and preventing disturbance of nesting/rearing waterfowl. Legal hunting is allowed after Swan fall migration.

UNIT C - Upper Knik Flats NEW Alternative 3: No vehicles more than 1000 lbs curb weight until an improved road for access is developed to prevent rutting, disturbance of vegetation and stream banks and the pollution of the waters of Knik River and its tributaries from automotive fluids.

UNIT D - Upper Jim Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT E - Upper Friday Alpine Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development.

UNIT F - Grasshopper Valley Agree with DNR Alternatives 2, with the exception that no additional trails be developed.

UNIT G - Glacier Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. In Addition: NEW ALTERNATIVE 3 regarding future development: Recommend that the area past the Knik Glacier Lake if that is within the PUA be made a non-motorized area, except for aircraft. At this time no other motorized vehicles can generally access it (except if transported by helicopter or other air transportation). However, as the glacier recedes, motorized access may be possible, with deleterious effects to the wildlife and environment. At present this area is almost pristine, with some aircraft landing sites and virtually no other tracks, litter etc. Taking a non-motorized (except for aircraft) stance at this time, while having no effect on present usage, would protect the area against possible future abuses. As has been seen throughout the accessible PUA, any place an ORV can get, someone will take one, and many will not be cognizant of possible environmental damage.

UNIT H - Metal Creek Agree with DNR Alternatives 2 regarding trails development. NEW

Alternative 3: Prohibit vehicles to travel through Metal Creek in order to prevent pollution of the waters of Metal Creek and Knik River from automotive fluids while traveling through the water and to prevent abandonment of vehicles in the waterways of the Knik River.

FEES Agree with DNR Alternative 2 and 3, Point 1 regarding the collection of fees. In addition, amount of fees charged should be based on cost of management, law enforcement and facilities to be determined as the management plan is developed.

Comment 204 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. Limited recreation land exists to serve Butte youth. Designating more land to KRPUA is not in the best interest of the adjacent community. Land available for community use must not be used so motorists have access to KRPUA, or parking lots. 2. Recreation lands for motor-use are abundant in the area. Deficiencies exist for other uses: where are lands for parks, campgrounds and play areas? Nearby lands must be reserved for ball parks, playgrounds, etc. 3. All local access trails, accessible to residents, should be non-motorized so kids can safely access KRPUA and play areas on foot. Sadly, kids are not safe on trails or paths leading into KRPUA. No safe access for persons on foot. 4. Local kids have no safe access to the area. Every local "trail" is used for motorized travel. By virtue of their wealth the "motorized users" are denying access to local residents who walk trails and lands because we cannot afford the means to access with a motorized vehicle and chainsaw.

Comment 205 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. No plan or method for ensuring sustained use as a motor sport recreation area was proposed. The DNR has not ever evaluated KRPUA to inventory suitable use areas or lands unsuitable for motor use. Nor do they know rate of land loss. 2. The intent to prevent any further loss of vegetation, habitat and terrain was not described. The plan does not seek to discontinue the loss of forest, vegetation or wetlands. The Area cannot sustain perpetual unrestricted motor use. 3. Alt 1-3: No restrictions on motor use. None of the alternatives measures changes occurring in the terrain, and no alternative was made to sustain motorized use by restricting vehicles to sustainable areas of travel. 4. Satellite and aerial photos, along with general information will show rapid loss of suitable terrain for motor use. Well defined use areas will ensure future use by motorized recreators but no alternative was proposed to 'sustain' areas for this purpose. See photo.

Comment 206 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. Alt 2&3 rescind existing conditions for ORV use. The document is a well framed proposal for avoiding confrontation with motor sports groups. No mention was made of designating areas of use for motorized sports, and prohibiting their use in non-designated areas. The USDA Forest Service must therefore be wrong in their assertion that motorized use needs to be regulated (36 CFR Sec 212). 2. The DNR, in opposition to the rest of the scientific community, is preparing to solicit a "use policy" from those individuals most responsible for the destruction of public lands and forests. 3. Assuming no other alternatives exist for the area, other than "look out for cars" the motor sports groups will assuredly guarantee that the KRPUA will be a great future site for nuclear testing. 4. Sadly, the poor motor sports users will have no place to ride in 20 more years - the area will begin flooding erratically and the mud will become too deep to travel over. Once again proper planning could prevent this from occurring.

Comment 207 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan - Preliminary Management Actions and Actions Common to All Alternatives. Alaska

Center for the Environment (ACE) is a grassroots, non-profit, conservation organization, based in Anchorage, with over 7,000 Alaskan members. For over 35 years ACE has been working to protect wild lands and wild rivers, foster sustainable communities and promote recreational opportunities throughout Alaska. We are in support of balanced planning for the Knik River Public Use Area. Unfortunately, the current range of alternatives falls far short in fully and comprehensively addressing a balance between enhancing a wide array of recreational opportunities while at the same time protecting sensitive fish and wildlife habitat. The Draft Plan for the Knik River Public Use Area (KRPUA) must do a better job of detailing how the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will handle these important habitat protection issues. We are extremely disappointed with the Preliminary Alternatives. DNR's current range of alternatives is in fact not much of a range at all. The "range" of alternatives is so narrow that most scoping comments that stressed quiet, non-motorized recreation, and habitat protection were not taken into consideration. We are confident that we are not the only ones who feel that DNR has done a disservice in the drafting of these alternatives. There are many in the community who feel that DNR has completely ignored their concerns and we expect DNR will do a great deal more to address this lack of balance. In addition we think that DNR has underestimated its power to handle the ongoing problems in the KRPUA. We believe that House Bill 307, the act that created the Knik River Public Use Area, gave the Commissioner of DNR a wide range of powers to manage all activities in the area. However, it is evident that DNR has chosen to narrowly interpret the carefully crafted language of HB 307 and has diminished DNR's authority to tackle the tough and continuous issues associated with management decisions. We have submitted an additional letter containing in-depth analysis of statutes and regulations, which clearly shows that DNR has all of the tools it needs to accomplish balanced planning and enforcement in the KRPUA.

House Bill 307 and Legislative Intent There seems to be a bit of confusion as to how and why we have come to planning for the Knik River Public Use Area. ACE closely followed HB 307 through the legislative process and we believe that DNR either does not understand the intent of the legislation or is misinterpreting HB 307. It seems as though the team at DNR is moving ahead with a plan that is based on the original legislation, a draft essentially turning the KRPUA into a motorized playground without regard to environmental degradation.

Throughout the legislative process it became clear that legislators were very concerned about the sensitive fish and wildlife habitat of the KRPUA and amended the legislation to reflect this concern. In House Resources Committee, the first hearing for HB 307, the bill's sponsor, Representative Stolze commented on how he "truly believes in multiple uses, and a plan that protects habitat." In the same hearing DNR Division of Mining, Land, and Water, Director Dick Mylius stated his concerns about the original draft, recognized the area's unique values, and stated that HB 307 gives DNR the authority to manage the area. [House Resources Committee, March 27, 2006] Minutes:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_minutes_comm.asp?hse=H&session=24&comm=RES&
Audio:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_audio.asp?session=24&chamber=H&comm=RES&date

During the next House Resources Committee hearing, concerns over habitat protection were mentioned in public testimony seven times, by representatives from both motorized and quiet recreation groups. [House Resources Committee, March 29, 2006] Minutes:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_minutes_comm.asp?hse=H&session=24&comm=RES&
Audio:

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Again in a Resources Committee hearing, Representative Seaton amended HB 307 to

include the term "non-motorized" under Sec. 41.23.180. Purpose of AS 41.23.180 - 41.23.230. Representative Seaton went on to say the "purpose of the act promotes all kinds of uses" and that the "purpose of the act was to provide for both vehicular and non-motorized activities." Later in the hearing Representative Stolze goes on to state that HB 307 grants the Commissioner of DNR the ability to designate wetlands "particularly for habitat purposes." Director Mylius backs up this fact by stating that DNR has the ability and flexibility to manage trail use in the PUA. [House Resources Committee, March 31, 2006]

Minutes:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_minutes_comm.asp?hse=H&session=24&comm=RES&

Audio:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_audio.asp?session=24&chamber=H&comm=RES&date

The newly amended committee substitute for HB 307 moved on to its second committee House Finance. Here Director Mylius explains that "the management plan is the right way to go about addressing issues, what trails should be used, and what facilities are needed." Director Mylius reinforces his previous statements that with HB 307, DNR has enforcement authority. Furthermore, Representative Kerttula remarked that that portion of the bill (now AS 41.23.200(d)(2)) that required the commissioner to "recognize the existing off-road motor vehicle trails" did not mean that the commissioner had to permit their use regardless of the damage their use might cause to habitat. Representative Kerttula questions Director Mylius: "If DNR finds trails that are debilitating the area. Does DNR have the authority to deal with them?" Director Mylius' response is yes, that DNR does have that authority. At this point Representative Weyhrauch asks about fish and wildlife habitat of the area. Representative Stolze replies that part of the process is to identify areas of the PUA that are sensitive habitat, "with 260,000 acres there are definitely sensitive areas within." [House Finance Committee, April 6, 2006.] Minutes:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_minutes_comm.asp?hse=H&session=24&comm=FIN&d

Audio:

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When a committee substitute for House Bill 307 was considered on the floor of the House, Representatives Gara, Kerttula and Kelly all remarked on the bill and noted that while the bill would dedicate KRPUA to multiple purpose recreational uses, the DNR commissioner had authority to restrict or prohibit uses when he had good reason for doing so. [House Floor Debate, April 20, 2006.] We recommend that DNR review the language and committee hearings of HB 307 to learn exactly what the legislature intended. This is an important foundation for drafting a plan that encompasses the intent of the legislative process and the interests of all users.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat It is important for DNR to identify the significant fish and wildlife habitat within the KRPUA and determine which uses will damage habitat and therefore must be restricted or prohibited when and where it is appropriate. The Preliminary Alternatives say nothing about habitat concern, which leads us to guess that DNR does not have a plan to protect important areas of the PUA. The draft plan must contain information about where these sensitive areas are located and how DNR will manage them. In our initial scoping comments we advised DNR to address habitat: The Public Use Area planning, like all land management decisions should be based on sound science. DNR must account for the needs and limitations of the land and its wildlife. Critical and sensitive habitat areas should be set aside for resource protection before any planning takes place. It is important that DNR enlist the help and expertise of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and abide by the recommendations made by ADF&G scientists. Regrettably, none of the alternatives have

incorporated our comments about habitat protection. Nor has DNR considered the volumes of studies and prior planning efforts that have identified the wetland areas of the PUA as important and sensitive habitat:

Knik Arm Wetlands Study - 1981 (Alaska Biological Research for USF&W) Proposed the Jim-Swan area be an Area Meriting Special Attention noting high density use by ducks, year-round moose concentrations and intensive black bear use. "Long term plans, however, will have to include temporal and spatial zoning practices which will reduce conflicts between recreational user groups as well as between recreational users and wildlife."

Southcentral Recreation Action Plan - 1984 (Alaska Departments of Natural Resources and Fish and Game for Governor Bill Sheffield). Identified Jim/Swan wetlands as "critical importance for habitat" and wrote a senate bill establishing Jim/Swan Lakes State Recreation Area.

Susitna Area Plan - 1985 (DNR, F&G) "The Jim-Swan lakes area will be managed to provide a variety of recreation, including hunting and fishing. Because of its high value for these uses, its proximity to large population centers and its vulnerability to overuse and environmental degradation, the Jim-Swan area should be designated by the legislature as a State Recreation Area."

Resource Assessment of the Knik Glacier Area - 1993 (USDA/SCS, Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District, Mat-Su Resource Conservation & Development, Inc). "The area supports healthy populations of moose, Dall sheep and black bear. Other large animals inhabiting the Knik River drainage include mountain goats, wolves, coyotes, and brown bears. Wetlands in the Jim-Swan Lake area are important habitat for spawning salmon, winter forage for moose, and as a staging and breeding area for waterfowl. The south facing slopes on the northern side of the valley are important lambing areas for Dall sheep."

Ecological Review of the Lake George National Natural Landmark - 1996 [The Landmark contains sections of Knik River/Jim-Swan region] (Alaska Natural Heritage Program, US Dept of Interior, NPS, Alaska Natural Landmark Program). The program was established to identify, recognize and encourage the preservation of the best remaining examples of the geological and biological features composing the Nation's natural history. "Human use levels need to be evaluated if the NNL's ecological stability is to be maintained".

Cook Inlet mapping - 2002 (Coast Guard, Cook Inlet Spill Prevention and Response, Inc, Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, NOAA, DNR, F&G) Jim-Swan is sensitive as a waterfowl concentration area and receives priority protection during oil spill planning and response.

Aerial Swan Survey Data 1998-2004 (William A. Quirk, Biologist) "For the early arriving and late migrating trumpeter swans, the lakes in the Jim Creek area have a significant advantage over other lakes in the Upper Cook Inlet Region

Cooperative Management Agreement - 2003 draft (Requested by Butte and South Knik River Community Councils). "For the Purpose of Managing Public Lands for Multiple Uses in the Jim Creek - Swan Lake - Knik River Area"

Asset Management Plan for Borough Owned Land in the Butte Area-2004 Draft (Land Design North) Designate 'Jim and Mud Lake Primitive Area...work with DNR to designate the area as a Special Use Area for summer non-motorized use..."

BLM Draft Ring of Fire RMP/EIS - 2005 Proposes the Knik River Special Recreation Management Area to provide additional "protection of resources, specifically wildlife and fisheries". In our review of the alternatives it has become obvious that no one at DNR has been tasked with the study and analysis of fish and wildlife habitat in the KRPUA. It is extremely important that the draft plan address habitat, particularly, where these sensitive areas might be, why they should be considered important for habitat protection, including documentation and/or analysis on sensitive areas of the KRPUA.

Review of Preliminary Alternatives As we stated in our introduction, ACE is in support of balanced planning for the KRPUA. The Preliminary Management Actions do a good job of stating the purpose of the planning efforts. We are happy to see DNR addressing "trail impacts to critical fish and wildlife habitat, including wetlands", and providing for their protection. But, we strongly oppose the exemption of the Rippy Trail from these actions. We would like to focus our comments on Units A and B, because these two units are well used and the most contentious units in the KRPUA. The alternatives for these units are lacking any mention of quiet recreation or the protection of habitat. Again, we must stress that the parameters of the alternatives are much too narrow and that more work needs to be done to incorporate the "enhancement of non-motorized recreation" into the alternatives. Unit A. Lower Knik Flats has one non-motorized trail to Manmade Lake proposed. First, this trail would cut through random ad hoc shooting ranges, some of the most dangerous parts of the KRPUA. Second, Manmade Lake is not a desirable destination for those who are seeking quiet recreation. How did DNR come up with this idea for a trail to Manmade Lake? After reviewing the scoping comments, we cannot find mention of this proposal from quiet users. Next DNR suggests rescinding restrictions of OHV use that causes significant damage to vegetated areas. Why? It makes no sense for DNR to roll back regulations to make illegal, destructive activities legal. DNR should not be advocating for destruction on any of its lands. If current uses and their impacts are illegal it is not the duty of DNR to condone such activities. ACE is in favor of the restriction of firearms discharge in the entire unit to protect users and the community. That is, if "restriction" means prohibition of unloading your weapons in an unsafe manner. The residents of the Butte and South Knik River Road have had to endure years of unacceptable behavior by gun toting outlaws along the flats. We think that this alternative is the best choice for the unit.

Unit B. Lakes is the most biologically sensitive unit in the KRPUA, sadly DNR does not acknowledge this fact. Instead the department pays lip service to this unit's importance and its biological significance to the PUA. As stated above the Jim Swan Wetland areas of the KRPUA should be designated as important and sensitive habitat. DNR goes onto suggest that the Rippy Trail be developed as a multiple use trail, with the possibility of loops being developed through the wetlands. Again Why? Going back to the scoping comments, there were over forty-five comments specifically asking for a non-motorized designation for the Rippy Trail. However, DNR has done the opposite, calling for motorized use and further development of loops through sensitive fish and wildlife areas. This would effectively cut the only wildlife corridor in the KRPUA. If DNR's plan is to destroy sensitive wetlands and bisect wildlife corridors then the draft alternatives for the Lakes unit accomplishes just that. DNR's failure to recognize and enhance non-motorized recreation is most apparent in this Unit, which we believe is best suited for quiet activities. In addition, DNR should look for ways to increase non-motorized boating and paddling activities in the Lakes unit. This would provide an assured buffer zone between motor/air boats and nesting grounds for waterfowl. Alternatives offered by DNR do a woeful job of protecting swans, with minimal approach distances and only limiting these rules to swans. What about other bird species?

Conclusion The KRPUA planning effort must do a better job of representing all user groups. We would recommend that DNR develop alternatives and a plan that balance the motorized and quiet recreational uses, with sensitive habitat protection at the core of all management decisions. With 260,000 acres there is plenty of room for all groups to have their separate areas. The key to this is enforcement, it is important that DNR work with the Department of Public Safety to stop the unnecessary, unlawful activities in the Knik River watershed. Since none of the current alternatives go far enough in addressing resource protection, we are joining groups such as the Knik River Watershed Group in asking DNR to consider an Alternative 5. This is an alternative that allows for motorized use on a vast majority of the KRPUA, while at the same time protecting the fish and wildlife resources of the wetland areas. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. ACE looks forward to working with you in the future.

Comment 208 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

I have sent a series of comments but the one comment I will reiterate is this.... Do NOT rescind any of the legal restrictions, rules, etc. that are in existence at this time. We need to protect the wetlands, not destroy them for the sake of recreational ATV riding.

Comment 209 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

The Knik River area is one of my favorite destinations, and I am writing this letter in response to the proposed management plan for the Knik River Public Use Area. I frequent the Knik River area for personal recreation. I am a birder - a bird watcher, and I lead birding field trips for the public in the area, especially the vicinities of Jim-Swan Lakes and Reflection Lake. I am a member of Mat-Su Birders Group and serve on the board of directors of Anchorage Audubon Society. I actively enjoy non-motorized recreational activities in this area, and I am a wild flower aficionado. I urge you to accept the comments, in toto, submitted by BARCO (Butte Area Residents Civic Organization), Knik River Watershed Group, and Alaska Trails Coordinator Samantha Carroll (DNR-Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation) as my formal comments and preferred alternatives to the proposed Knik River Public Use Area management plan. I ask that notices of any future planning activity regarding this area be forwarded to me so I can remain actively involved in helping to manage the area for the benefit of Alaskans who treasure the area as much as I do. Feel free to contact me should you wish to follow up with this correspondence.

Comment 210 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. Shooting recreationally in a multi-use area open to motor vehicles should not be allowed. Shooting ranges are safely situated, away from homes & trails. Contamination from shooting must be contained and fire hazards must be controlled. 2. Not only should firearms discharge not be allowed but should be prohibited and punishable by fine as "endangering" life safety when it occurs in recreation areas that support multi-use. 3. Prohibit recreational discharge of firearms and post warnings regarding hunting activities at 'all' access points to KRPUA. 4. A warning or indication is needed to alert people that a hazard exists during hunting season. Tourists and non-local visitors may not be aware that hunting in the area may result in shots being fired across their trail: in particular "user created" trails.

Comment 211 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

1. 1, 2 & 3. Classify 'trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: 'access' roads into KRPUA, 'trail/road' for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational 'areas'. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails. 1&2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA

lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc.); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4. DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisition were not identified, nor was a need or use of such land described.

2. To add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc.

3. 1, 2 & 3. DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the 'unrestricted' access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for 'access' trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail.

4. Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenbug Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area.

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1. 1, 2 & 3. Classify 'trails' either ORV or non-motorized; no multiple use. Limit wooded ORV trails to 1000 lb weight. Distinguish between: 'access' roads into KRPUA, 'trail/road' for ORV travel thru KRPUA and ORV recreational 'areas'. Identify seasonal use only ORV trails. 1&2. Identify and eliminate motor vehicle trails providing access to KRPUA from non-KRPUA lands, unapproved DOT accesses or trespassing. Identify costs and funds needed for developing, operating and maintaining both on and off road vehicle accesses sited near parking, signage and sanitary public facilities. Limited motor vehicle access reduces upkeep costs and guarantees seasonal access for motor sports, trail repair, recovery crews, fire fighting, emergency response, law enforcement, tours, etc. 3. Map terrain unsuitable for ORV use (erosion, saturation, vegetation, wildlife habitat, cost, access, etc.); inventory and map damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4. DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisition were not identified, nor was a need or use of such land described.

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1. Management actions all look good. 2. Third bullet I do not like "vehicle use off of existing trails in vegetated areas prohibited." Most of the vegetated areas will grow back to "original status" quickly. 3. In favor of bullet 1 Alt 2 pg 3 of 8. Not in favor of bullet 3 Alt 2 pg 3 of 8. Not in favor of bullet 1 Alt 1 pg 4 of 8. 4. I think you guys working on the KRPU Plan are doing a great job . . . Will look forward to the continuation of the planning process.

Comment 222 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Thank you all for your dedicated and hard work on this exciting and challenging project! And thank you for the opportunity to express our thoughts and suggestions in the planning process - very much appreciated! Following herewith are my opinions on the "Preliminary Alternatives" as outlined in 8-page information bulletin of 3/23/07.

Unit A: Lower Knik Flats - I strongly support alternative 1 - current management. - Alternative 1 complies with the 11 AAC 96.020 "Generally Allowed Uses" that Bill creating Knik River Public Use Area intended to preserve and protect. - I strongly recommend the establishment of a clearly defined and prominently identified recreational shooting area. The ideal location would be accessible by "one way in/one way out" to encourage responsible behavior (no "escape routes" to elude enforcement", and have a secure backdrop area - adequately away from adjoining residential areas, trails, and waterbodies. I favor any designated recreational area be posted with "responsible use and safety" signage - including notice of personal responsibility to clean up and remove all waste (targets, shells, food & beverage containers, etc.). - In addition to alternative 1 - current management, I support the following from alternative 2: - Parking & sanitation facilities may be developed in the area of pavilion and Bodenbug Creek as land status & access rights resolve. - Sanitation facilities may be developed at Manmade Lake. - I strongly recommend the installation of timber bridges over Bodenbug and Jim Creeks for motorized access to all units of KRPUA. Bridges should be of a size to accommodate allowable 4x4 trucks and backcountry motorized vehicles pursuant to 11 AAC 96.020(1)(D)(E). - I support the following from alternative 2 'as amended herein': - Motorized use on the waters of Manmade Lake will be 'restricted ('not' prohibited - this is a multi-use area) during ice-free periods. The Hovercraft Club uses this waterbody respectfully and responsibly for safe training and practice. I feel it is appropriate to allow motorized use - perhaps establishing designated days and/or hours for such use, posted prominently on location.

Unit B: Lakes - I strongly support alternative 1 - current management. - Alternative 1 complies with the "Generally Allowed Uses" that the Bill creating KRPUA intended to

preserve and protect. - I strongly recommend the establishment of a designated recreational shooting area. (See comments under Unit A.) - I strongly recommend the installation of timber bridges over waterways and/or wetland "problem areas" to preserve and facilitate motorized access to all units or KRPUA. Bridges should be of a size to accommodate allowable vehicles pursuant to 11 AAC 96.020(1)(D)(E). - In addition to alternative 1 - current management, I support the following from alternative 2: - Rippy trail will be developed as a sustainable 'multi-use' trail. A multiple use loop trail may be developed to connect this Rippy Trail with the Knik Glacier Trail. The entire looping trail will be developed to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife habitat and will be developed as a sustainable 'multiple use trail' (including motorized use). - Facilities may be developed at Mud Lake. - Facilities may be developed at Jim Lake.

Unit C: Upper Knik Flats; Unit D: Upper Jim Alpine - I strongly support alternative 1 - current management. - Alternative 1 complies with the "Generally Allowed Uses" that the Bill creating KRPUA intended to preserve and protect. - I strongly recommend the establishment of a designated recreational shooting area. (See comments under Unit A.) - I strongly recommend the installation of timber bridges over waterways and/or wetland "problem areas" to preserve and facilitate motorized access to all units of KRPUA. Bridges should be of a size to accommodate allowable vehicles pursuant to 11 AAC 96.020(1)(D)(E).

Unit E: Upper Friday Alpine - See comments for Unit C&D.

Unit F: Grasshopper Valley - See comments for Unit C&D.

Unit G: Glacier - See comments for Unit C&D.

Unit H: Metal Creek - See comments for Unit C&D.

Fees - I support reasonable user fees (such as alternative 3) . . . However, it is my opinion that fees should only be utilized if those fees are actually (specifically) designated for the exclusive use of management and maintenance of KRPUA. If fees cannot be set aside for the exclusive use of KRPUA, then I oppose user fees. - I support funds generation by 'fines' of prohibited activity within KRPUA.

General Comments - I strongly support volunteer maintenance by user groups . . . IE: - Motorized trail maintenance by ATV & off-road clubs. - Shoreline & launch maintenance by watercraft groups. - Hiking trails & picnic/camping areas by scouts/outdoor groups. - Equestrian trails by 4H, saddle clubs, trail riding groups. - Fish habitat & spawning areas by fishermen/sportsmans groups. - Recreational shooting areas by gun clubs, NRA, etc. - Litter patrol by environmentalists/wildlife enthusiasts. - "Adopt An Area" by local community councils. - Etc., etc., etc. - Human nature is to take pride in an area you are active in maintaining. Volunteer work creates a sense of responsibility, and builds community. KRPUA managers could alert volunteers to maintenance needs, and volunteers could alert KRPUA managers to management issues. - Volunteer "areas" could be designated and groups could sign up for a one-year commitment to "patrol" and maintain a specific area (suggested minimum of once a month?) Many people are eager to help when they know of a specific need they can meet.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Thank you especially for the trooper presence and enforcement in these recent weeks. Consistent enforcement will greatly diminish the "anything goes" attitude of lawless users when there are tangible consequences to irresponsibility or blatant disregard of existing laws. My family has lived on Knik River Road since 1989, and our family has enjoyed a multitude of recreational adventures in the

now-designated KRPUA. We look forward to many more wonderful memories to be made in this awesome area.

Comment 223 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Alaska Center for the Environment ("ACE") on the Department of Natural Resources ("DNR") Draft Preliminary Alternatives and Preliminary Management Actions and Actions Common to All Alternatives" for the Knik River Public Use Area ("KRPUA") Management Plan. The KRPUA was established by the Legislature with the passage of Chapter 83 of Session Laws of Alaska 2006, AS 41.23.180 -41.23.230. In AS 41.23.190(a), the Legislature gave DNR the task of developing a management plan for the KRPUA. ACE is very pleased to see that DNR has now begun the planning process. The lands and waters within the KRPUA are amazingly beautiful, even for Alaska. The KRPUA includes significant fish habitat important for both sport and commercial fishing. For decades it has been an important sport hunting area, particularly for water fowl, sheep, moose and other game. Unfortunately, the KRPUA has become the site of vandalism, littering, dumping, and other criminal activity, uncontrolled target shooting, and other damaging recreational activities that have destroyed important habitat and driven away many traditional users. Thus, DNR should have as its ultimate goal the adoption of a management plan that will bring a prompt end to these activities and that will protect the lands and waters of the KRPUA for use by present and future generations. The purpose of these comments is to: (1) identify the most important considerations concerning the application of the laws and regulations pertinent to the KRPUA that must guide DNR's approach to the planning process; (2) remark on what is already known about the impacts caused by some of uses that the KRPUA legislation addresses; and (3) remark about certain aspects of the initial alternatives relating to trail use that DNR has proposed. ACE will be submitting additional comments separately on other aspects of DNR's preliminary planning ideas.

GENERAL INTERPRETIVE ISSUES CONCERNING THE APPLICATION OF THE LAW CREATING THE KRPUA DNR's "Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan Information Sheet 3/23/07" asserts that the "State must manage lands consistent with all existing statutes, regulations, and policies as well as regulations and policies developed through the KRPUA Management Plan." Among these "existing statutes" is AS 46.03.010, enacted in 1971. In this statute the Legislature declared that it is the "policy of the state" to: conserve, improve and protect its natural resources and environment and control water, land, and air pollution, in order to enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the people of the state and their overall economic and social well-being. AS 46.03.010(a). The Legislature also declared that it is the policy of the state to: develop and manage the basic resources of water, land, and air to the end that the state may fulfill its responsibility as trustee of the environment for the present and future generations. Id. at (b). In interpreting and applying AS 41.23.180 -41.23.230, in developing the management plan for the KRPUA, and in enforcing the plan and applicable laws within the area, DNR must abide by the protective policies of AS 46.03.010. Alaska Statute 41.23.180 sets out the primary purposes of the KRPUA. The KRPUA was created for the "perpetuat[ion] and enhance[ment] of "general public recreation ... [and] public enjoyment of fish and wildlife" and the "protect[ion] and maintain[ence of] migratory waterfowl nesting areas; habitats for moose, Dall sheep, and brown bear; and other fish and wildlife habitat so that traditional public use of fish and wildlife populations may continue" within the KRPUA. AS 41.23.180(1) -(2). The focus of the KRPUA is recreation: to "provide an area for the public to enjoy the full spectrum of public uses, including maintenance and enhancement of off-road motorized vehicle and nonmotorized recreational opportunities" AS 41.23.180(3). The DNR commissioner is directed to "maintain and enhance off-road

motor vehicle options and opportunities" within the KRPUA" while at the same time providing for "increased use of the public use area." AS 41.23.200(d)(2). To that end, the "commissioner shall allow" the KRPUA "to be used for activities that are compatible with the" purposes set out in AS 41.23.180. AS 41.23.200(d)(1). Those "activities" include "all-terrain vehicles, aircraft, watercraft, airboats, snowmobiling" and a long list of normally quiet activities, such as hunting, skiing, and so on. AS 41.23.200(d)(1). The DNR commissioner also is directed to "recognize the existing off-road motor vehicle trails and access those trails provide to areas" in the KRPUA, and "make accommodations that will provide the shortest possible route to avoid critical habitat" AS 41.23.200(d)(2). In short, in AS 41.23.180 -41.23.200, the Legislature directed the DNR commissioner to seek an appropriate balance between authorized recreational uses, always bearing in mind the overall fish-and wildlife-related protective purposes set out in AS 41.23.180(1) -(2) and State environmental policies in AS 46.03.010. To that end, after adequate public hearings, the DNR "commissioner may designate incompatible uses" AS 41.23.190. The only uses excepted from the commissioner's authority in that regard are "lawful fishing, hunting, or trapping rights" regulated by the Board of Fisheries and Board of Game and the "use of weapons, including firearms ... except in locations where the commissioner determines the use of weapons constitutes a threat to public safety." AS 41.23.200(c)(1) -(2) (emphasis added). Once a use is designated as incompatible, the commissioner may "prohibit or restrict" it by imposing time, place, or manner limitations. AS 41.23.200(a). In other words, the commissioner may determine that there are times and places when otherwise allowed activities --- such as the use of firearms or all-terrain vehicles --- would be "incompatible" with the protective and public enjoyment purposes set out in AS 41.23.180. Indeed, only this interpretation of the KRPUA statutes would be consistent with the guiding environmental policies in AS 46.03.010. The legislative history for Chapter 83 SLA 2006 also supports this interpretation. When a committee substitute for House Bill 307 was considered on the floor of the House, Representatives Gara, Kerttula and Kelly all remarked on the bill and noted that while the bill would dedicate KRPUA to multiple purpose recreational uses, the DNR commissioner had authority to restrict or prohibit uses when there was good reason for doing so. [House Floor Debate, April 20, 2006.] In particular, Representative Kerttula remarked that a section of the bill (now AS 41.23.200(d)(2)) that required the commissioner to "recognize the existing off-road motor vehicle trails" did not mean that the commissioner had to permit their use regardless of the damage caused to fish and wildlife habitat. [House Finance Committee, April 6, 2006.] Consequently, a necessary first step in the planning process is for DNR to identify the important fish and wildlife habitat within the KRPUA. Only after that will DNR be able determine which uses should be permitted, and where and when they should be allowed within the KRPUA. It is obvious that some recreational uses, if left uncontrolled, will damage habitat. Therefore, these uses must be restricted or prohibited by the imposition of time, place and manner limitations.

APPLICATION OF 11 AAC 96.020 As explained above, under the applicable statutes DNR has a duty to provide for multiple recreational uses within the KRPUA, but must do so in such a way as to ensure long term protection of the area's important natural resource values. Unfortunately, DNR's "Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan Preliminary Management Actions And Actions Common To All Alternatives 3/23/2007" instead suggests that the protection of the area's natural resource values is not at the center of DNR's initial planning suggestions. This is apparent from DNR's discussion of the applicability of 11 AAC 96.020 in the Preliminary Management Actions document. In the Preliminary Management Actions document, for much of Unit A -Lower Knik Flats within the KRPUA DNR proposes a rescission of "conditions for highway and off-road vehicle use" imposed by 11 AAC 96.020.

Id., Alternative 2, page 1. 11 AAC 96.020 describes those "generally allowed uses on state-owned public domain land" that may occur "without any permit or other written authorization from the department... ." Id. at (a). Under 11 AAC 96.020, the use of a "highway vehicle with a curb weight of up to 10,000 pounds, including a pickup and four wheel-drive vehicle" or a "recreational type off-road or all-terrain vehicle with a curb weight of up to 1,500 pounds, including a snowmobile and four wheeler" either "on or off an established road easement" was a generally allowed use not requiring a DNR permit or other authorization but only if the use of the vehicle did not cause or contribute to water quality degradation, alteration of drainage systems, significant rutting, ground disturbance, or thermal erosion... . Id. at (a)(1)(D) -(E). 11 AAC 96.025 then imposes additional "conditions [on] generally allowed uses" which uses are otherwise exempted from the permit requirement imposed by 11 AAC 96.020, as follows: (1) activities employing wheeled or tracked vehicles must be conducted in a manner that minimizes surface damage; (2) vehicles must use existing roads and trails whenever possible; (3) activities must be conducted in a manner that minimizes (A) disturbance of vegetation, soil stability, or drainage systems; (B) changing the character of, polluting, or introducing silt and sediment into streams, lakes, ponds, water holes, seeps, and marshes; and (C) disturbance of fish and wildlife resources; (4) cuts, fills, and other activities causing a disturbance listed in (3)(A) - (C) of this section must be repaired immediately, and corrective action must be undertaken as may be required by the department; 11 AAC 96.025 (1) -(4). DNR already has a vast quantity of evidence in its files --- photographic, official on-the-ground investigative materials, and first hand accounts from members of the public, including many embattled local residents --- conclusively demonstrating that past vehicle and off-road vehicle use in Unit A of the KRPUA has caused "water quality degradation, alteration of drainage systems, significant rutting, ground disturbance, or thermal erosion." 11 AAC 96.020(a)(1)(D)-(E). Therefore, these vehicular uses were not legitimate, that is, not "generally allowed uses" for which no permit was required under 11 AAC 96.020. Even if that were not true, the conditions on generally allowed uses imposed by 11 AAC 96.025 were routinely violated by those individuals who used vehicles and off road vehicles to create "user-developed" trails within what is now the KRPUA. In proposing in the Preliminary Management Actions document that Unit A of the KRPUA be left open to vehicle and off road vehicle use, DNR apparently believes it can now legitimize these uses and allow their continuation within the KRPUA by the simple act of rescinding the applicability of 11 AAC 96.020. There are two things wrong with DNR's proposal, however. First, the Legislature has not given DNR authority to take this action. Second, and equally important, 11 AAC 96.020 no longer applies within the KRPUA. The regulation states that "generally allowed uses in (a) of this section does not (1) apply to land withdrawn from the public domain and no longer managed under AS 38" Id. at (b)(2) (emphasis added). The KRPUA has been withdrawn from the public domain. See AS 41.23.230 ("reserved for all uses compatible with their primary function as public use land"). Moreover, the KRPUA is managed under AS 41.23, not AS 38. Consequently, because 11 AAC 96.020 does not apply to the KRPUA, the only uses that may be allowed within the KRPUA are those that the DNR commissioner, guided by listing of uses in AS 41.23.200(d)(1), finds are compatible; the commissioner may allow those uses to occur only to the extent they are consistent with long term protection of the fish and wildlife habitat within KRPUA. See AS 41.23.190(a) ("commissioner may designate incompatible uses"); AS 41.23.200(a) ("commissioner may prohibit or restrict uses determined to be incompatible with the purposes" of the KRPUA); AS 41.23.190(a) ("management plan must include provisions for the enforcement of the plan and compliances with the requirements of the plan").

AS 41.23.200(d)(2): "RECOGNIZE THE EXISTING OFF-ROAD MOTOR VEHICLE TRAILS"

As indicated above, AS 41.23.200(d)(2) requires that the DNR commissioner "recognize the existing off-road motor vehicle trails and access those trails provide to areas" in the KRPUA. To satisfy this directive, DNR must first inventory the trails. In that regard, there are two categories of trails to consider. The first category is those trails established in the past in accordance with applicable law. Such legitimate trails might include, for example, portions of the trails locally known as the Sexton and Rippy Trails, apparently constructed years ago for authorized logging operations, and portions of the Knik River Trail, which DNR claims as a federal Revised Statute 2477 right-of-way. The second category consists of what DNR euphemistically calls "user-developed trails." DNR, Preliminary Management Actions, Alternative 1, page 1. As is apparent from the evidence already in DNR's files, many of these so called "user-developed trails" were created by ATV and other off-road vehicle users without authorization, in direct violation of 11 AAC 96.020 - 11 AAC 96.025. In some instances these "user-developed" trails include unauthorized extensions of otherwise authorized trails, such as an unauthorized extension of the Rippy Trail. To legitimize these "user-developed trails" would reward violations of law and disserve the protective purposes of the KRPUA, something the Legislature has not permitted DNR to do. Of particular concern are the many illegitimate and damaging "user-developed trails" that have been created in the KRPUA's wetland areas. Wetlands are the "most productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to rain forests and coral reefs." U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, American's Wetlands - Our Vital Link Between Land and Water, at 5, available at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/vital/nature.html>. They must be protected. Indeed, at the same time it instructed the DNR commissioner to recognize motor vehicle trails and to designate incompatible uses, the Legislature also instructed the commissioner to "identify wetland areas within the Knik River Public Use Area and provide for the protection and use of the wetland areas in the management plan." AS 41.23.190(d). The Legislature also directed the commissioner to "make accommodations that will provide the shortest possible route to avoid critical habitat" AS 41.23.200(d)(2). The wetlands in the KRPUA plainly are "critical" habitat within the meaning of AS 41.23.200(d)(2), and thus any trails routes must "avoid" them. In any event, DNR may not authorize any kind of vehicle use within the KRPUA if the use could cause a discharge of pollutants to the waters of the United States, including wetlands, without first securing a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act. See 33 U.S.C. § 1344(a), 33 C.F.R. Part 323, 40 C.F.R. Part 230. In the end, the protective purposes of the KRPUA mandate that DNR limit ATV and off-road vehicle uses to areas where it can be conclusively demonstrated that habitat destruction will not occur and that other legitimate users will not be driven away. There is an ever-growing body of scientific evidence demonstrating that ATV and off-road vehicle use causes severe impacts to fish and wildlife and their habitat, and adversely impacts other user groups. ATV and off-road vehicle use stresses and harms fish and wildlife (particularly during spawning, nesting, and mating seasons); compacts soil; fragments wildlife habitat; greatly increases erosion and sedimentation into creeks and streams; quickly destroys vegetation, especially ultra-fragile tundra and wetlands; prevents seed germination; encourages the invasion of non-native species; causes air pollution; causes severe noise pollution, driving out other users; and jeopardizes the safety not only of the operator but also other outdoor recreationists. See November 2000 bibliography of scientific literature from the University of Vermont available at http://www.bluewaternetwork.org/reports/rep_atv_socialeffects.pdf (last visited April 20, 2007), and other publications at Bluewater Network, http://www.bluewaternetwork.org/reference_pl_atv.shtml (last visited April 20, 2007). Ironically, many ATV and other off-road vehicle riders seek out challenging terrain, and that is exactly the type of terrain within the KRPUA that is most easily degraded and destroyed.

Once their use is generally authorized, the constantly changing profile of ATV and off-road vehicles --- periodic model changes, ever increasing horsepower, and so on -- will make it very difficult for DNR's land managers to prevent adverse impacts from these vehicles within the KRPUA. Thus, it is critical that DNR take into account the best scientific evidence available when planning for the area's long term use and protection.

CONCLUSION DNR's land managers have the overriding responsibility to ensure that use of the KRPUA by one user group neither destroys the publicly-owned lands, waters, fish and wildlife of the area nor destroys the outdoor experience for the majority of users who do not use vehicles when recreating. Therefore, DNR must restrict vehicles to areas and trails that can be used without causing fish and wildlife and habitat damage and without deflecting or displacing other users, equally entitled to use the KRPUA under AS 41.23.200(d)(1). Only by doing so will DNR ensure that the KRPUA remains protected for use by present and future generations consistently with the State environmental policies expressed in AS 46.03.010. On behalf the ACE, thank you for considering these comments. ACE looks forward to participating in the KRPUA planning process.

Comment 224 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, I am the project manager for a newly developed residential subdivision along the north Shore of Knik River, named River View Estates. We are just beginning the marketing of the home-sites. The property borders the Knik River Public Use Area and is located about ½ mile west of the Old Glen Hwy off the E. Republican Way. To my knowledge, at 37 lots this is the first river front subdivision of this size, to be developed along the north side of the Knik River. The Knik Public Use Area has the potential to be a positive influence to the marketing of home-sites in our neighborhood and to the Butte area, if serious efforts are made to enforce health, safety, environmental and habitat issues involved in the use of the various multi purpose trails. Frankly, I am glad to see that within DNR and other State Agencies, what appears to be a growing recognition that action is needed soon to reverse the trends of the past, in order to preserve and enhance this beautiful area for generations to come. The key will be whether DNR is able to come up with a means to provide an active on-site enforcement presence, especially during the heavy use periods of spring through fall. To that end, if new statutes and regulations need to be enacted or changed to hire, train, employ &/or contract for effective enforcement, then please make it a primary goal to do so. I believe you have an active and willing constituency that will support new laws and/or regulations, if needed, to bring about effective enforcement of this public use area. That along with consistent funding at levels appropriate for effective management and enforcement will help to turn the tide on an area that has sadly been overlooked for far too many years.

Comment 225 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:00 PM:

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damaged terrain; provide legend explaining the nature and causes of damage; identify feasible methods to repair and/or prevent degradation; identify and map land mass utilized or damaged by ORV's; identify and map land mass to be designated for ORV use; identify and map proportionate land mass for non-motorized use; identify perpetual funding sources for repair, enforcement, and grooming of designated motorized trails and areas; determine self-supporting user fee. 4. DNRs' proposal to acquire additional lands for additional vehicle access to KRPUA is without merit and obstructs the planning process. The primary deterrents to public enjoyment, recreation and enforcement efforts at KRPUA have been lack of motor-vehicle control, lack of law enforcement and lack of sanitary facilities not lack of access or lack of parking. Expenses, funds and timetables for the land use acquisition were not identified, nor was a need or use of such land described.

2. To add; Recreational discharge of firearms to be prohibited in the KRPUA unless a shooting range is developed, safely away from recreational areas, trails and residential or private property. Shooting range must meet environmental and safety standards. Extrication or recovery from prohibited water crossings to be performed by bonded wreckers able to operate without disturbing banks, vegetation and trails. Damaging trails, operating motorized vehicles off trail, and trespassing to be prohibited; DNR to reserve off-road use exemption or permitting as per private land access, fire, rescue, military, research, game recovery, etc.

3. 1, 2 & 3. DNR proposes to rescind existing land use restrictions to provide free use of public lands for (ORV's). The KRPUA management plan was created to manage land use, prevent illegal activities and enhance recreation, safety, wild life and habitat. The greatest deterrent to achieving these goals is the 'unrestricted' access and use of ORV's. To meet the objectives of HB 307, an ORV use plan and policy must be created that designates specific trails and areas for ORV use, and prohibits ORV use outside of designated areas or off designated trails. Rippy Trail accesses the KRPUA but was not intended, designed or developed for vehicle use. DNR criteria for 'access' trails and loops must consider original use and capacity. Access trails must equitably accommodate non-motorized users ability to access the KRPUA without encountering motor vehicle safety hazards, dust, noise, etc. With little cost, Rippy Trail is only suited for use, and access, as a non-motorized access trail.

4. Unrestricted motorized use trails are easily damaged, expensive to repair and costly to maintain. Controlled motor access facilitates fee collections, familiarizes visitors with area use designations and ensures accessibility to emergency responders. ORV use in multi-use recreation areas must be prohibited; campers, swimmers, picnic groups, fisherman, kite flyers, and others using Bodenbug Creek, Jim Creek, and lower Knik River should not be engulfed by noise, dust or motorized vehicles while engaged in approved recreational activities on public land. Either prohibit ORV's in dense use areas, or provide a regulated-speed trail that routes motorists to a designated ORV use area.

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Comment 229 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:10 PM:

My name is Tom Faussett. I own and operate Hunter Creek Adventures. We have been operating tours in the Knik Valley for over 15 yrs. I currentley have a DNR land lease in

upper Knik flats. I am one of 5 tour operators here in the Knik valley. Tourism associated with the Knik Glacier is alive and growing. Currentley we share the scenic beauty and natural wonders with thousands of visitors every year. The Knikriver PUA is all within the boundry of Lake George National Natural Landmark. This federal designation recognizes this areas unique geology and ecologicical features and encourages public to be good stewards of the land. I beleive this needs to be given the utmost concideration in Knik river PUA. A couple of concerns.

Gunfire: Recreational shooting in upper Knik flats has become extreemley unsafe in the last 5yrs. Tour operators including myself have become accostom to having our guests run and duck for cover. I have wittnesed machine guns, 50 call cannons and all other types of firearms blasting away at the glacier or anything that moves. Often alachol is part of the situation. We understand that we must share the valley with other user groups however this has gotten out of control and created an extreemley unsafe, accident waiting to happen enviornment!

ATV: Knik River PUA is not an ATV park! Areas of ecological importance need to be evaluated and off limits to motorized vehicles. The vegetative matt in upper Knik flats has gone from pristine to torn up motocross tracks that will take decades to recover, in only 5yrs. The terminal moraine of the Knik Glacier needs to be evaluated and a portion restricted to motorized use.

Thanks for your time and efforts. Tom Faussett Hunter Creek Adventures 907-745-1577
glacierranger@alaska.net www.knikglacier.com

Comment 230 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 01:28 PM:

Knik River Comments

I am dismayed at the apparent lack of consideration of science and past studies in the alternatives presented thus far. Take time to conduct environmental analyses and look critically at protecting the existing resources. DNR is supposed to be our land steward and planning for this PUA can be done responsibly with consideration for all users.

My comments are primarily directed to the Lakes area, Unit B and I support BARCOs recommendations for the remaining units of the PUA.

Unit B constitutes 5% of the total PUA, is a sensitive area and it deserves to be protected. Existing statutes 11 AAC 96.020 Generally allowed uses ., sections A.1.E and A.5.C provide the basis to protect the area. Laws should not be rescinded to allow rutting.

" Recommend making the waterways and the Rippy Trail nonmotorized from April 15 through July 31 to protect vegetation, wildlife resources, migrating, nesting and brood rearing waterfowl, including Trumpeter Swans and Loons. Non motorized activity should be restricted in the vicinity of known nesting Loons, Trumpeter Swans and other water fowl. " According to a USFWS hydrologists technical note(available on request), the profile of the creek bed and streambanks of Jim Creek are showing evidence of erosion likely caused by boat wakes. Boat speed limits should be imposed after August 1 when the area becomes multiuse. " Multiuse activity resumes after Aug. 1. In the winter snowmachine activity should be limited until there is adequate snow cover to protect vegetation. " Develop the Rippy Trail as a single track non motorized trail. Abandon plans to develop Rippy Trail loop accessing the glacier. The trail travels near wetlands, potential swan nesting areas and crosses anadromous streams. Already damages have occurred to wetlands from a spur off the trail and one anadromous stream has been lost. I believe further destruction should be avoided by making

the trail non motorized and not extending the trail any further. Do not side step the normal planning process for this trail.

Mud Lake developments need to be coordinated with Eklutna, Inc. and should include: " Restore shoreline, reduce erosion, and improve small boat launch " Develop a wildlife viewing platform, create interpretive signs on the values of the wetlands, migration and waterfowl " Improve upper parking area, install restrooms and bear proof garbage containers.

Jim Lake developments should include: " Establish restrooms and bear proof garbage containers " Improve upper parking area and develop a small campground away from the waters edge. " Close the road to the shoreline and develop it into a handicap accessible path to a viewing site. " Repair the shoreline taking care to not interfere with the salmon spawning area. Reduce erosion. " Develop a small boat launch to help reduce erosion. " Maintain the integrity of the Jim Lake Portage.

Airboats have been described as another form of ORV. In the Lakes area they have created damages to the wetlands, removing vegetation, creating new channels and causing erosion. The speed and noise of airboats can cause nest failure, separates broods, and reduces time available for feeding and resting(Korschgen, Dahlgren/USFWS, 1992) Given that studies have indicated that the Lakes area has exceptionally high density of dabbling and diving ducks when compared to other areas in the Southcentral region (Moore and Fritz, 2007) it is imperative that airboats be included in the nonmotorized restrictions of the area

For safety prohibit recreational shooting within ½ mile of all facilities and moderate to high use areas. Maintain a minimum of a ¼ mile buffer from all water bodies to prevent lead pollution. Lawful hunting will be allowed.

Develop restrooms and bear proof garbage containers in moderate to high use areas. Impose user fees. Develop educational materials.

There are 200,000 acres in the Knik River PUA, more than adequate acreage to enhance motorized recreation. The Lakes unit is the perfect area for a non motorized area for the benefit of fish and wildlife. Creating a seasonal non motorized area would help to satisfy the PUA legislative intent to protect habitat and wildlife.

Thank you for considering my comments Nancy Moore

Comment 231 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 02:20 PM:

My husband and I are landowners that live in a neighborhood off of Knik River Road. As a result, we spend a great deal of time on the Knik River Road side of the Knik River. Specifically, we regularly walk down to and on the river with our dogs in the summer, we fish, and we cross country ski down near or on the river as often as the conditions permit in the winter. We believe the area should be managed to minimize impacts on fish and wildlife habitat. Because of our constant use of the Knik River Road side of the Knik River, we support measures that either maintain the amount of both the current use and the protection of resources on our side of the river, or increase the protection to those resources. We, however, urge the department to be mindful of its management tactics so that its efforts to manage certain resources and use do not merely displace current unsustainable activities from one area to another. In connection with that, we offer the following comments. We do not wholly agree with any one of the proposed alternatives.

We support the development of an access brochure for the KRPUA, limiting fires without

permit, the prohibition of the transportation of a non-functional vehicle into the area, the prohibition of abandoning vehicles, the prohibition of dumping refuse etc., the prohibition of the burning of vehicles and other household materials, and the prohibition of camping at one site for more than 14 days.

We believe the recreational discharge of firearms needs to be prohibited in certain areas for public safety. We appreciate the intent of that aspect of Alternative 2. However, the prohibition of firearms in this area needs to be greater. The proposed Alternative 2 only prohibits shooting to the point at the intersection of Tempra Road and Knik River Road. The prohibition should extend at least to the end of Knik River Road, and possibly to the glacier.

We support managing and developing trails for sustainable multiple use in this area; however, we believe that there should be attention to both motorized and non-motorized trails.

We disagree that there should be any rescission of restrictions on highway and off road vehicle use that cause significant rutting or ground disturbance.

We support the prohibition against approaching within 300 feet of an identified active Trumpeter Swan nest between May 1 and June 15, and the identification and signing of them annually. We support the development of a parking area at Jim Lake, improving the campsites and road and boat launch, and the development of sanitary facilities there.

We would support the development of sanitation facilities at the Pavilion Parking areas. We do not support the development of sanitation facilities at Manmade lake.

We do support the implementation of facility and resource management fees if necessary to properly management the area for the public uses. However, in the event such fees are implemented they must be implemented even handedly in all access areas on both sides of the river so that they will serve their purpose and not merely displace traffic from one area to another.

Comment 232 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 02:40 PM:

Please consider: 1. Restrict recreational discharge of firearms in this entire unit to protect human safety. 2. Do not rescind any restrictions of the restrictions on highway and off-road vehicle use that causes significant rutting or ground disturbances. 3. Collect fees in order to cover property maintenance costs, sanitation costs, and safety regulations enforcement. 4. Before any trails and roads are developed (such as the Rippy Trail), environmental impact studies must be done to preserve habitat. 5. Restrict boat usage and type (from canoes to jet boats) to preserve water habitat (for fishes, plants, waterfowl) and to mitigate erosion. 6. The Alternatives provided in the KRPUA Management Plan Info Sheet date 3/23/2007 lacks an alternative to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat - fish, fowl, fauna, and flora. And don't forget water quality and noise abatement.

Thank you.

Comment 233 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 03:58 PM:

I appreciate that DNR has chosen to release the draft alternatives for public comment at this stage rather than waiting to release a full draft management plan at a later date. The draft alternatives and actions presented generally address most of the serious public safety concerns but are not sufficient in addressing habitat degradation in the sensitive wetlands areas, fisheries and wildlife habitats. I have been going to the area since the early 80s and have watched the trails and wetlands become destroyed by vehicles. It is disturbing to me

that the state has allowed this to happen to such a special place. Please hurry and stop the madness.

My specific concerns and recommendations follow: Management Actions : It is unclear from this document when the trail assessment process will occur and what the status of existing uses will be until such time as the trail inventory is completed. Many of the existing trails have been created by recreational users in areas that are in sensitive wetlands, travel through anadromous streams and cause erosion by destroying native vegetation. To continue uses that further habitat degradation is not a management plan but a plan for continued abuse of the resources. Until such time as the trails inventory and assessment is completed, any trails that are not sustainable should be closed or rerouted. Actions Common to All Alternatives: The draft Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan addresses many of the common concerns about public safety, trash and vehicle dumping and unauthorized fires within the Actions Common to all Alternatives. These are concerns that I share with many users of the area that detract from safe and enjoyable recreation.

Preliminary Alternatives Unit A. Lower Knik Flats Alternative 3 provides the best range of actions to address public safety concerns, sanitation problems and access trails. I am not in support of rescinding existing regulations to allow current recreational uses that damage the area. Recreational uses should be managed to prevent or minimize habitat damage otherwise this area will not be suitable for many recreational uses in the future.

Unit B. Lakes The Jim/Swan wetlands complex has been recognized in several regional studies as important wildlife habitat for a variety of migratory and resident species. Over 25 years of studies have documented the importance of this area for wildlife and have recommended restrictions on uses during critical periods of the year. None of the alternatives presented provide sufficient actions to protect the wildlife populations or habitat in the Lakes area. I suggest restricting motorized use of the Lakes Unit from April 1 through August 1 to allow for migration, nesting and rearing of waterfowl species; and restricting motor size on boat motors to 15HP max. The Rippy Trail, as the only upland trail in the area, should be a nonmotorized trail from the Jim Lake parking area to the Chain Lakes with a walking bridge constructed over Jim Creek. That portion was originally built in 1984 by the Mat Su Borough for pedestrian and equestrian use. It should remain that way.

I do support improving the parking areas to accommodate ten vehicles or less and boat launches to provide for small craft launching. The bank areas of the lakes that have been trampled and denuded of vegetation should be revegetated and restored. Recreational shooting should be prohibited in this area except for sport hunting. Units E, F, G & H Uses off existing trails in vegetated areas should be prohibited for all of these units.

Fees I support Alternative 2 for fee collections. The fees are similar to those required at state parks and should be manageable for most users. The boat ramp usage fee should only apply to developed hardened ramps and not to walk-in ramps in the Lakes Unit. Additional permit fees should be required of commercial users based on the number of clients brought to the area on an annual basis.

Planning Process The Knik PUA has been the subject of many resource studies by a variety of agencies that have considered special management status due to its valuable natural resources and considerable opportunities for a range of recreational uses. During the planning process, DNR should examine published studies and contact resource agencies with internal documents and staff expertise to assess the fisheries and wildlife resources. Historical photographs should be examined to determine the extent of trail development over

the years in order to evaluate future trail options. The precautionary principle of preventing damage to resources should be the guiding principle for the entire region especially where there are scientific data gaps. A process for assessing, monitoring and evaluating natural resources in conjunction with other federal and state agencies should be included as part of the management plan. If a thorough scientific analysis cannot be completed during this 18 month planning process, the planning process should be extended. Without a thorough science base, this planning process will lack credibility and will lose public support.

Comment 234 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 04:08 PM:

To Whom It May Concern: I very much like to visit the Knik River Watershed area, for multiple activities. I enjoy fishing in Jim Creek, riding horses along the Knik River, and walking in the Jim and Swan lakes area. Please consider using Alternative 5 as described by the Knik River Watershed Group. This plan seems to allow for multiple uses at appropriate times of the year and has a sustainable approach to enjoying and utilizing the resources. Sincerely, Jessica Dryden

Comment 235 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 04:13 PM:

1. Consider providing more priority to the natural resources in the area. There have been studies documenting various wildlife habitat. People (regardless of mode of recreation) can always recreate in another area. Wildlife may not be able to nest elsewhere because of certain habitat requirements. Maybe some areas could have restricted access during critical time periods. This should be a primary concern for natural resources management. Private industry has a long record of assessing resources first being doing things in an area. It can be done.
2. Consider working with the MSB and Butte area residents / local entrepreneurs to create a Regional Multi-Use Recreation Area where there could be some of the following: shooting range / site, more supervised motorized recreation that might be suitable for younger riders, campground.
3. Consider the concept of diversity of trails where the design of a trail would attract certain users. This might reduce some of the conflicts among user groups and wildlife. This is along the lines of the Trail Management Objectives that you learned about in recent training session.
4. I support the concept that trails that are traditionally (like decades) motorized be kept for their original uses, BUT the carrying capacity of those trails has got to be considered in sustainable management. Trails used by a miner to get to his claims a few times a year may not be able to handle a convoy of 20 ATV's in the rain. (More relevant elsewhere probably, but winter logging roads may not support any summer use.) This potentially results in resource damage - increased runoff, soil erosion, loss of habitat, etc.
5. FWIW, non-motorized traffic is restricted in some areas of the MSB during certain times of the year. Perhaps the same concept could be applied to motorized traffic to allow some trails to recover.

Please consider your entire mandate in managing the Knik River Public Use Area. Part of what attracts people there is the wildlife. Thank you.

Comment 236 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 04:24 PM:

Dear Sirs, I support Alternative 5 as written by the Knik River Watershed Group. Please take this alternative into your considerations.

Sincerely, Brian Winnestaffer

Comment 237 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 04:36 PM:

I was afraid my earlier comments did not get submitted so I am sending them again.

Knik River Comments

I am dismayed at the apparent lack of consideration of science and past studies in the alternatives presented thus far.

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Unit B constitutes 5% of the total PUA, is a sensitive area and it deserves to be protected. Existing statutes 11 AAC 96.020 Generally allowed uses, sections A.1.E and A.5.C provide the basis to protect the area. Laws should not be rescinded to allow rutting.

" Recommend making the waterways and the Rippy Trail nonmotorized from April 15 through July 31 to protect vegetation, wildlife resources, migrating, nesting and brood rearing waterfowl, including Trumpeter Swans and Loons. Non motorized activity should be restricted in the vicinity of known nesting Loons, Trumpeter Swans and other water fowl. " According to a USFWS hydrologists technical note(available on request), the profile of the creek bed and streambanks of Jim Creek are showing evidence of erosion likely caused by boat wakes. Boat speed limits should be imposed after August 1 when the area becomes multiuse. " Multiuse activity resumes after Aug. 1. In the winter snowmachine activity should be limited until there is adequate snow cover to protect vegetation. " Develop the Rippy Trail as a single track non motorized trail. Abandon plans to develop Rippy Trail loop accessing the glacier. The trail travels near wetlands, potential swan nesting areas and crosses anadromous streams. Already damages have occurred to wetlands from a spur off the trail and one anadromous stream has been lost. I believe further destruction should be avoided by making the trail non motorized and not extending the trail any further. Do not side step the normal planning process for this trail.

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Airboats have been described as another form of ORV. In the Lakes area they have created damages to the wetlands, removing vegetation, creating new channels and causing erosion. The speed and noise of airboats can cause nest failure, separates broods, and reduces time available for feeding and resting(Korschgen, Dahlgren/USFWS, 1992) Given that studies have indicated that the Lakes area has exceptionally high density of dabbling and diving ducks

when compared to other areas in the Southcentral region (Moore and Fritz, 2007) it is imperative that airboats be included in the nonmotorized restrictions of the area

For safety prohibit recreational shooting within ½ mile of all facilities and moderate to high use areas. Maintain a minimum of a ¼ mile buffer from all water bodies to prevent lead pollution. Lawful hunting will be allowed.

Develop restrooms and bear proof garbage containers in moderate to high use areas. Impose user fees. Develop educational materials.

There are 200,000 acres in the Knik River PUA, more than adequate acreage to enhance motorized recreation. The Lakes unit is the perfect area for a non motorized area for the benefit of fish and wildlife. Creating a seasonal non motorized area would help to satisfy the PUA legislative intent to protect habitat and wildlife.

Thank you for considering my comments Nancy Moore

Comment 238 of 238 - received on 05/04/2007 at 04:55 PM:

I am a member of Audubon Alaska and support their position on Alternative 5 for the Jim-Swan Wetlands. I am a little reluctant to give 100% backing as I could not find Alt. 5 on your website. Please let me know what this alternative is, even though I realize that today is the deadline.

As a 37-year resident of Alaska I realize that there is growing conflict between mechanized access to the wilderness and less intrusive enjoyment. I am a member of the walkers/hikers/canoers preferred group, and I definitely would not like to see any bird habitat threatened or damaged by opening up access to ATVs, etc. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Harriet Shaftel