

# DNR - Mining, Land & Water Online Public Comment

## Knik River Public Use Area

### Topic: Knik River PUA Public Scoping Comments

**Comment 1 of 255 - received on 10/31/2006 at 01:00 PM:**

We have lived off the Glenn Hwy about 0.7 mile from the Knik River for about 33 years. We used to go down to the Knik River at the bridge frequently, but haven't for years due to all the crazy activity down there. It's too much of a circus to enjoy anymore. We have continued to canoe and hike regularly through the Jim/Mud/Swan Lakes areas. Unfortunately, with the new snow, we are probably done for this year. Spring and early summer are the enjoyable times of year for us, and during the week is preferable to weekend. Hopefully we can get out together next year. Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers (VMBaH) did a Fall hike out on the Rippy trail October 7th to lower Chain Lake. The group did the same hike, but went a little farther last year October 1st, so maybe it will become an annual event. Cecily, my husband Bob and I walked the Rippy trail to Chain Lake again on the 19th, for a trail survey for the KRWG grant. Prior to these hikes I had not been on that trail since Spring. I was amazed at the change in the southeast wetlands area of Jim Lake. This is the area about a half hour or so hike out the Rippy trail from Jim Lake proper, just before the trail turns and goes along than up onto the bluff. A branch goes out to the wetland and there has been an extensive increase in ATV tracks out onto the wetland where this trail comes out of the woods. What only last year was a light track along the edge is now a definite track along the edge of the wetland in both directions. My husband has also occasionally canoed from Jim Lake to Jim Creek to salmon fish. We took some company out there last summer during fishing season in early August and were amazed at the traffic. We meet several other canoes and a lot of motor boats, all of which were considerate and slowed down as soon as they saw us. We also found that some fishermen had filleted their fish at the portage from Jim Lake into the stream. Not an illegal act, and the remains will rot, but it did ruin it as a stopping point for others like us who had planned to lunch there. I would like to think that some educational signs to be considerate of others, leave no trace would help with such actions, but am afraid some just don't care.

**Comment 2 of 255 - received on 11/09/2006 at 07:05 AM:**

hello, sorry i could not make the meeting at the butte school last tuesday related to my work schedule. i have a "wish list" that deals mostly with my side (south) of the river...my children and I were frequent users of the manmade lake area until people started to camp out there and race around on 4wheelers and dock hovercraft in the lake. I am not against responsible sharing of the area but I do object to feces and toilet paper in the bushes, piloting hovercraft through children swimming in the lake, 4wheelers racing around near the children playing on the beach, and extremely loud music. i would like to see an outhouse of some kind placed at the site for public use, perhaps a sign warning of children playing in the area, and enforcement of the 14 day camping regulations. trash bins would also be appreciated. 2) many people like to ride their bikes on knik river road and occassionally there are races on the road. i would like to see a bike path that follows the road that would allow these activities to continue safely. with the new lodge going in at the end of the road and the new subdivisions going up there will be much more traffic to deal with and there is often no shoulder to the road. 3) as for other aspects of the area, iwould like to see some boat launch facilities near the knik river bridge, also outhouses at the bridge and at frequented fishing holes, trash bins, perhaps a message board, signs to designate private property and protected nesting areas. there are

places where trails cross salmon streams that could use bridges, and I would like to see scheduled sweeps to remove burned out and stranded vehicles. Perhaps off-roading groups could be offered sections of trails to be responsible for routine maintenance (like the hwy trash pick up) with little signs designating their areas "this section maintained by the Knik River Riders Club". I would also like to see designated shooting ranges. If possible development of salmon viewing areas like the one along the Old Glenn and other points of interest with a viewing deck and/or informational signage. Good back up for the poor peace officer assigned to the area... thank you for your time and consideration

**Comment 3 of 255 - received on 11/15/2006 at 08:42 AM:**

When we go to Knik area we usually take the trucks and go to the glacier. We used to camp out there 7-8 times a year. There should be no shooting within 5 miles of the main parking area.

**Comment 4 of 255 - received on 11/15/2006 at 08:42 AM:**

I represent a group of 50 OHV recreationists that use the Knik area in many fashions. OHV users represent a large user group at Knik Recreation area, from Jim Creek fishing, Geology tours to the glacier, trail exploration, area management (cleanups, self-policing against trashers), subsistence hunting, camping, hiking, ATV recreation and shooting sports. We are a small portion of the greater area users, but have access to clubs statewide, and access to representatives from ATV clubs, SnowMachine user groups, Musher clubs and all 4x4 clubs.

We do not want to see limitations placed on responsible usage of the Knik MUA, and will work to influence votes accordingly. We are a self-policing community who take pride in knowing, utilizing & teaching the Tread Lightly! principles.

It has been reported that shooting sports have become a source of contention and are being 'policed' by Troopers. Area use bans are NOT the reason we chose to support the designation of the area for recreation, we wanted to see some action from Law Enforcement when we notify them that we have observed kids burning cars, trash dumping, and other UN RESPONSIBLE area uses.

We hope you'll consider our area use principles when making any decisions concerning access, usage limitations, and Administrative policies concerning the Knik MUA.

**Comment 5 of 255 - received on 11/15/2006 at 09:35 AM:**

I spend lots of time in the Knik area. I ride dirt bikes, drive a 4x4 truck, sometimes shoot (in a safe manner), camp, hike, raft and canoe the river, climb on the glacier.... I would like to see the Knik area stay pretty much the way it is with less trash, burned cars and stupidity. We spend several days each year at the Knik cleanup. This should not be necessary. As much as I hate to see it happen, a law enforcement presence will be required at least short term. My main concern is if we close Knik to the morons that do this kind of thing, they will move to the next unpatrolled trailhead that is a lot more environmentally sensitive than Knik. Most of the problems at Knik occur between the entrance and Jim Creek. Fewer problems between Jim and Friday Creek and relatively few issues beyond Wolf Point. I would hate to see any trails closed at Knik. What I wouldn't mind seeing is some sort of controlled access. Gate? Mabe with a Ranger who can eyeball people on the way in and out?

**Comment 6 of 255 - received on 11/15/2006 at 10:59 AM:**

I enjoy riding my motorcycle and driving my off road truck out at Knik. I would like to see the area left untouched by heavy equipment. The only problem I see out there is the trashing of

cars, and then they are left. Without equipment scraping the road, they will not be able to get cars back there to leave. They will still have access by truck and ORV. Every year, I help with the Knik cleanup, and I am just trying to figure out ways to cut down on the trash out there. It is very easy and quick to walk into the fishing area, so people will still have access. I would also see if some kind of agreement can be worked out with the State Troopers, so they will respond when they are called about crimes happening out there. We have called them three or four times about crimes taking place, stolen cars being trashed, littering in major ways, etc., and they have not responded. Thank you for letting the public send in ideas on this.

**Comment 7 of 255 - received on 11/15/2006 at 11:02 AM:**

I like the Knik area the way it is. I think that it serves a wide variety of people, from hikers to OHV users. Over the years my family and I have greatly enjoyed this beautiful part of Alaska. My family and I frequent the Glacier regularly with our Jeep. We are an avid outdoors family. We belong to the local clubs and have also participated in all the cleanups. I would like to see more law enforcement out there, or maybe suggestions to the OHV community on some sort of community patrol. Thank you for reading my comments -Erik Morse Tread lightly master trainer. erik@wdm.com 907-229-0953

**Comment 8 of 255 - received on 11/15/2006 at 11:11 AM:**

I have been accessing the Knik area since I was a child. In the mid-70's my father would take the family "jeeping" back to the Knik Glacier. I often take friends and family on visits there, and I participate in clean-ups with the National Gaurd via our local 4x4 club, 2broke2play. I also kayak on Jim Creek, and fish there as well. In winter, I snowmachine in the area. I have also hunted small game in the area in the past. I support all uses of the Knik area, I think it is a wonderful piece of Alaska for the public to enjoy.

**Comment 9 of 255 - received on 11/15/2006 at 11:21 AM:**

I just wanted to start by saying that I'm glad steps are finally being taken to take back control of this area.

Now on to my ideas;

I currently use this area for four wheeling in both OHV's and ATV's. I have gone all the way to the glacier multiple times (and failed many more). I also just go out to Jim creek for fishing, and sometimes take the four wheelers, or even the jeep for that matter, out to that area with the family. We have had picnics there while playing in the water, my sisters have all learned how to drive a dirtbike there, my girlfriend learned to shoot a .22 there, and almost everyone in the family learned to shoot a 12ga out there.

I have been a very big user of this area over the last 3 years, and unfortunately my schedule has not allowed me time to come to any of the sessions regarding land use issues. I have been using this are on and off for the last 9 years. I am 20 now. When my father first moved to Wasilla this is where we spent many of our weekends, on ATV's. We would do it year round and have many lifelong stories come from those trips. I do admit that it was different back then, and felt bad when I had the opportunity to return a few years later. By that time I was 16 and able to drive, in the typical Alaska spirit my first vehicles a 91 Ford with 6" of lift and 35" tires. Needless to say I used that area at least once a month. Even at that age I would go out there by myself, which in retrospect was not the best idea, and go camping with just my girlfriend and a dog. I regret to say that I also attended a couple of high school parties. Luckily I was a little older mentall than the rest and spent most of the night trying to ensure that nothing was damaged/destroyed. But the fire did stay under control, no trees were cut down, no shots were fired, so it wasn't a bad night.

I do see the aftermath of some parties, including burnt cars. I have stopped people from doing this in the past, and will continue to do so if I see it happen. Just last month I saw a few kids driving a beat up subaru, and following the guideline "Drive it like you stole it". Anyways, I stopped them and talked to them, asking where did they get that, do they plan on leaving it, etc. etc. The plates still had good tags on them but the vehicle was obviously on it's last leg. I took down the plate number, and wrote down a description of the two guys. They didn't leave the car there that day, but I wouldn't doubt if it showed up soon. I called the state troopers with the information as soon as I got it and all I received is a "Thank you, we'll look into it". I never heard anything again. I'm hoping good did come of it, and perhaps that's why I haven't seen it out there.

I have participated in 3 annual cleanups/bumper drags. The first I did not have a vehicle so I just picked up trash. The second I helped pull a few vehicles and parts out with my modified Jeep/Bronco. The third I drove my truck with a trailer and hauled pieces out. I feel that all of them were a great success and plan to attend every one while I still live here.

Now on to what I think should happen

I think everyone is getting away with murder out there so to speak. I have only once ever seen a state trooper out there, and that was only as close as the parking lot. Many members of the OHV community, including myself, have policed this area on our own. Not vigilante mind you, but just asking questions whenever things don't look right. I have seen a recent improvement in the area and hope that we can continue this trend.

Accountability is definitely the biggest issue out there, and we are working on that on our own ways. Another problem is that it is too easy to access the area, but not allow any law enforcement back there. If these kids can drive a Ford taurus back there the troopers sure can drive a superduty truck or Ford explorer back there.

I think that paid parking would be a good addition, just like state parks. Most people that go out there and are up to no good are not going to pay, and it would help deter them.

Sorry for the lengthy comments, but I want you to know how important the area is to me,

**Comment 10 of 255 - received on 11/15/2006 at 11:57 AM:**

I would like to see the trails in the Friday Creek area to remain open if a land transfer occurs. Also trail hardening on the south end of Wolfe Point. And of course toilet facilities at the trailhead. Target shooting prohibited at and/or around Jim Creek unless in a single designated area deemed safe. More enforcement in the area, I would like to see zero burned vehicles and garbage. It would be cool to place water markers crossing Jim Creek that show the deep holes and provide a safe crossing, some kind of orange poles or whatever.

**Comment 11 of 255 - received on 11/15/2006 at 02:16 PM:**

I use the area quite frequently, mainly making trips up to the glacier in my 4x4. Sometimes I like to bring the guns out there and shoot skeet, and or targets. I think shooting should not be allowed from the parking lot to Jims Creek. Anywhere past that it should be allowed. The things I dont condone, is underage kids drinking. partying, and shooting guns off at all hours of the night. When i do decide to camp out there, I always cross Jims Creek and go in about 3-5 miles past. Back there you dont have all the underage kids drunk, and shooting firearms. Lets keep this place open and clean, theres no reason to close it due to a few bad apples. If we could get State Troopers out there on 4 wheelers and or trucks I think the precense of them would make it cool down a lot quicker. Dont allow shooting inbetween the parking lot

and Jims, there are tons of kids riding there 4 wheelers, dirt bikes, or whatever they may be doing.

**Comment 12 of 255 - received on 11/15/2006 at 02:20 PM:**

I utilize the KRPUA for personal enjoyment of offroad activities utilizing my 4x4 trucks. I have gone generally everywhere legal, with the current trail system, from the access points to the "parking lot" area. I believe it should be left as is, in terms of accessibility and utilization. Increasing and actively pursuing litter fines and enforcement would help solve the problems with abandoned vehicles and equipment out there. Providing some sort of utilities ie 2 public bathrooms (One at the bridge entrance area, and one at the "parking lot" area) would be wonderful, as well as some sort of illumination for both entrance areas, and possibly picnic tables as well.

Generally, I think both entrance points should be somewhat outfitted akin to a roadside rest stop area with the addition of the washoff/tire pump area at the "parking lot" near the drag strip.

I appreciate your time. Pace Kenville

**Comment 13 of 255 - received on 11/15/2006 at 04:55 PM:**

we use the knik area for trail riding and access to the glacier

**Comment 14 of 255 - received on 11/15/2006 at 06:17 PM:**

I believe that it is important to keep motorized access, namely full size 4x4 trucks and Jeeps. Without these modes of access it will be impossible for many Alaskans to enjoy the immense beauty of the Knik River area. (Especially the handicapped)  
Thank you for listening.

Brook Green

**Comment 15 of 255 - received on 11/16/2006 at 05:13 PM:**

My traditional uses of the area are: Riding all the trails just for the enjoyment of getting out. Rock hunting. Sightseeing-photographing the wildlife, sheep, moose, eagles..... Panning for gold. Fishing. Camping. Exploring the glacier itself, looking for ice caves. I do not want any of these uses to go away.

**Comment 16 of 255 - received on 11/17/2006 at 10:15 AM:**

The Kink River area is a very important recreational site for me, my family and friends. There is a group of 10 women that I ride ATVs, snowmachines and camp with each year. We all appreciate the beauty and accessibility the Knik River offers from a recreational standpoint. It's so important for those of us who do utilize these public areas, to be able to do so close to home. We are good stewards of the area, and do our best to provide good role modeling for others. Many of my circle, myself included are also ardent fisher-folk. We love nothing better than to be able to go fishing locally, without taking time off work necessarily to do so. Assuring that those of us born and raised, and raising our families locally, have somewhere to fish, camp and utilize our ATVs without having to drive far is of utmost importance to us. It's practical, and much safer than some other alternatives. Thanks for your consideration.

**Comment 17 of 255 - received on 11/17/2006 at 04:00 PM:**

I would like to comment that me and my family enjoy the opportunity to go four wheeling without having to drive several hours. We ride the entire area and respect the trails and others. We hope that the people who are shooting up the place and burning cars will not

prevent my family from having fun. It would be nice if the state could increase the amount of trails out there. I subscribe to Dirt Wheels magazine and am a bit jealous that in the lower 48 the amount of riding areas available to riders We are the largest state but have no where near the access that is available outside.  
Please keep it open for four wheelers.

**Comment 18 of 255 - received on 11/18/2006 at 04:14 PM:**

The tone set at the access points to this area is critical to influence the behavior of those using it. It is imperative that a well designed and well run campground be established on State or Borough land near the Knik River bridge. The campground must be well maintained and include sanitary facilities for human waste and trash and they must be maintained to higher standards than are normally present in Alaska State parks. The interface between users and the landowners adjacent to the access point is also critical and can be best managed through a well maintained campground. For this campground there must be reasonable rules to include well established and enforceable traffic patterns to channel recreational vehicles away from private property. Barriers and signage is critical. A local police force is critical, one that is committed to patrolling on a daily basis for at least the first three years until a pattern of acceptable behavior is established. What I advocate here is way beyond any State of Alaska managed facility that I've ever observed though I believe it is critical for this area if we expect to establish a code of conduct for protection of the environment and the neighbors.

**Comment 19 of 255 - received on 11/19/2006 at 09:21 AM:**

I would remind folks writing this management plan, that all activities are not appropriate at all times. There should be trails designated for certain uses, and allowances should be made for trail closures if conditions are not appropriate (ie, mud and lack of snow). From what I remember of HB 307, there are allowances for the use of firearms. A public use area should NOT include operations of firearms as an acceptable use, unless a managed shooting range is developed.

As far as trail designations, hikers, skiers, bikers, and horse riders do not mix with motorized users. The motorized users run the non-motorized users off the trails. Bicycles and horses do not mix well for the most part as bicycles approach quickly and quietly surprising many horses which can lead to dangerous situations, I was personally nearly run over by a run-away horse who bucked its rider off after being surprised by me bicycling up in Campbell Tract. This is just something to keep in mind, while planning trail uses.

I would also suggest that a large amount of money needs to be set aside for the construction of bridges and boardwalk for motorized trails. Too often large mud pits are created when motorized users cross wet areas, and streams. The Knik River area is an important nesting and spawning ground, if the stream banks are eroded, and wetland areas turned to mud one user group will be eliminating the reason another user group comes to the area, then the area is no longer a public use area.

It is important that the management plan emphasize a change in attitude. For a long time this area has been considered the area for the reckless, where individuals need have no concern for others. The plan needs to take make sure that all user groups use the area appropriately and with respect for all the other users groups. This is going to take a large amount of enforcement. As a non-motorized outdoor enthusiast I would like to feel that the trails in the KRPWA are safe for me to walk on, and that my car will not be vandalized in the parking lot. I want to know that I will not be shot at, nor will I be the victim of a stray bullet.

And most of all this plan needs to preserve the habitat and ecology of the area. Regardless of how it makes the users feel!

**Comment 20 of 255 - received on 11/20/2006 at 08:19 AM:**

Thanks for the opportunity to comment here. This recreational area is important to Mat-Su residents as well as multiple wetland species. We at the Wasilla Soil and Water Conservation District monitor water quality near the mouth of Bodenbug Creek and from McRoberts Creek which flows into the recreational area. My first concern with regard to future plans would be to ensure protection of the wetlands within the area. In recent years the practices of motorized exploration and "mud-bogging" have damaged wetlands which are critical habitat for multiple species. I would encourage designating the more sensitive habitats as non-motorized. If trail routes on existing trails must pass through sensitive habitat I would encourage trail hardening and signage to direct motorized recreationists to stay on main trails and not continue to find new routes and increase the problems of trail braiding that occur frequently in wet/soft ground areas. Kevin Meyer, with the National Park Service, is a great source of information about trail hardening techniques. My other comment is with regard to overall management of the recreational area. There is a NEED for on the ground management. Staff, and the visible presence of enforcement, is of critical importance. Many outdoor enthusiasts have quit using this area as a result of indiscriminate shooting, the dumping of vehicles, and the inappropriate behavior of a handful of people. This area is a local "jewel" and should be enjoyed by more area residents. The best way to ensure that happens is to eliminate the reckless behavior of those who endanger others and/or damage this resource. That can only be done with enforcement. Thanks for your consideration regarding these concerns.

George Taylor Wasilla Soil & Water Conservation District Program Coordinator

**Comment 21 of 255 - received on 11/20/2006 at 01:14 PM:**

The Knik River Watershed area is a tremendous recreational resource to the citizens of the area. There is room and opportunities for a wide variety of uses but they must be planned and coordinated so that there is minimal degradation to the area and also so that public safety is insured.

I support multiple use and do not favor complete restriction on any existing use. However, current use practices have resulted in severe safety impacts in some areas. The unsafe firearm practices by some citizens are a threat to everyone. Excessive speed by some motorized users is a serious hazard in areas where there are many other users. There are several sensitive wetlands and wildlife habitats that are being destroyed by inappropriate use.

I favor a planning process that would identify the uses and major user groups. Then there need to be some compromises to define areas where uses can mix and areas where some uses are appropriate and others are not.

Again, define use areas to eliminate the environmental destruction and to eliminate the safety threats. None of this will be possible without good public input, good planning, and it needs to be followed up with enforcement.

I believe one of the most immediate needs is to develop designated areas where firearm users can safely practice without impacting the safety of others. I would not favor restrictions to general hunting in the area. Areas of existing environmental damage and areas sensitive to future damage need to be identified and then restricted to appropriate uses (or seasonal

restrictions). Wide open areas with good visibility, such as the flats should be left with less restrictions to accommodate those who want high speed motorized travel that presents hazards elsewhere.

**Comment 22 of 255 - received on 11/20/2006 at 04:21 PM:**

Number one priority is to allocate enforcement authority. Due to the heavy use I would like to see hours of use posted and enforced; fee areas set up; designated camping areas and restroom facilities and designated trails. This would require gates and infrastructure but if fee areas are established this should be self maintained. Guns should not be allowed except as needed such as during hunting season and the type of gun for that use allowed. The fees would not only go to enforcement but also restoration of trails. Also should be a violation fee that is high enough to encourage proper use of this area such as keeping ATV's and motorized vehicles out of the WATERS of the US. In order to have any implementation of public health and safety and environmental practices, enforcement needs to be in place and active. This is nothing new. It is done all over the US and in places in Alaska. DNR and the SOA has the privilege to protect all who use a public area, from the fish spawning in the rivers to people enjoying Alaskan resources, but in a sustainable and safe environment. This action will require strength and courage of policy makers but it is the first step in creating a vision we all need to have.

**Comment 23 of 255 - received on 11/20/2006 at 10:33 PM:**

Saturday the 18th of Nov. Carl Bingham and I went out to find the snares set along Knik River Rd. one of which had unknown to him had snared one of his dogs for 3 days. She somehow got free and made it home Friday night with a deep snare scar around her belly and hips, thin, dehydrated, and hypothermic. We were surprised she survived at all. We went out with his 2 kids and their other dog along the swamp bordering the road. The dog found the 1st snare, running into it's invisible hoop, snapping it around the neck and slamming her to the ground. It took us 10 minutes to remove the snare from around her throat. We found 6 other set snares and the snare that had almost killed their other dog. They were set for lynx, fox, or coyote, or anything else that gets caught including pets in the residential areas 1/2 mile on either side. I and many other residents are getting sick and tired of the ignorant idiots who think they have the right to do anything they want anywhere they want. We'll see how effective this PUA is or if it's just a paper tiger in name only- time will tell.

**Comment 24 of 255 - received on 11/26/2006 at 05:07 PM:**

I urge continued traditional uses of the Knik River Public Use Area. I have lived in the Butte area since 1991. My family and I rely on fish from the Jim Creek area for a substantial portion of our annual fish harvest, we hunt the Knik River drainage for moose, bear, and small game. ATVs are our normal means of accessing this area. We use the Knik River as our primary ATV and hiking area, we camp and picnic in this area from the Knik glacier to the Jim Creek trail head. ATV riding is an important year round activity in this area for my whole family, wife, children and grandchildren; and visiting family and friends. I also urge the study group to look at a designated area for recreational target shooting. My family and I used to shoot in this area regularly, but due to the recklessness of many shooters and the controversy surrounding these irresponsible actions we have been forced to discontinue this practice.

**Comment 25 of 255 - received on 11/28/2006 at 10:30 AM:**

The knik river area is a big part of where i grew up, my family grew up, and alot of my friends grew up. we fish there, in jim creek, we canoe the river, boat in the river, we use atvs all over this huge chunk of land. The knik area is really one of the only places in the matanuska valley where you can even ride atvs any more, now if you are caught driving on the trail to

get there, you get pulled over, or even get your atv impounded. Im not used to that, when i was growing up you could just ride wherever you wanted and have a blast doing it, because no one bothered you, and everyone you knew were riding right there along with you. Alot of people depend on fishing there. Alot of people use atv to get to their favorite fishing spot also. I have been to the glacier, it is amazing, one of the only ways to get there is to use an atv, you have to go through all of those major trails also. There is alot of beautiful things that you can see in this area that you can only access by boat, or atv. There is one major problem though, that is misuse of the area by littering, torching vehicles, killing animals and just leaving there carcusses everywhere. This can be prevented. It can be prevented by having more enforcement, fish and game ARE qualified to give out citations for everything that a state trooper can, and they are always out there. I am seeing such a huge change in the place that ive grown up in. Nothing is ever going to be the same, i wish i could show my children someday how much fun i had, having the freedom to ride atvs, snowmachines, but all this development is happening so fast i really dont think im going to have the opportunity to show them what ive experienced. Please keep the knik river area open to riding atvs, fishing, boating, maybe just get a little bit more enforcement out there. Thank you very much.

**Comment 26 of 255 - received on 11/28/2006 at 01:40 PM:**

Criminal activities do not like witnesses, the best way I can see to improve this area is to upgrade the Lakes and Jim Creek access points for family oriented uses. 1- Improve the road access to Mud Lake. Blade and gravel the parking area off the road so as to not intrude on native holdings. Blast down the rock impediment and smooth out the drive down to waters edge to make trailering boats to water easier with a gravel pad for boat ramp. That makes less wear and tear on vehicles and less wear and tear by vehicles on the ground. 2- Improve the road access to Jim Lake, widen and gravel the trail down offering a spoke gravel pad with RV/ campsite pullouts among the cottonwoods with picknick tables, fire pits, trash bins and outhouses. The muddy parking area at the lake edge could be flattened and gravelled offering parking for those to launch canoes/ kayaks to access the creek. With family campers you get witnesses to wrong doings. 3- Improve the road access to the Upper Jim Creek crossing and put in RV park on the ridge above the sandbar with picknick tables, trash bins, and outhouses so that people can access the river and dunes with the view of the glacier. To improve the area also makes it easier for state troopers and rescue service to access the river on callouts. 4- At the 1st fork of Jim Creek put in picknick tables, firepit, and campsites around the old massive cottonwood tree. Tie-off anchors for parked boats could be put in along the bank. The cost of improving the area will be expensive but spread out over a period of time. We have lived with the higher cost of having NOTHING been done for the past 30 years and as a result this valley has been dragged down into the dump with very little protest by locals. It is far easier to ignore the problems than face and deal with them. Mark Simpson

**Comment 27 of 255 - received on 11/28/2006 at 02:25 PM:**

The Knik River area is a wonderful place that my family and I have enjoyed for years. Please keep this area open for responsible motorized recreation. We enjoy dirtbiking in the area as well as driving out in 4x4s to go camping. We enjoy taking friends from out of state to Knik in a 4x4 to look out upon Knik Glacier and camp on the bank of the river. Please do not let the bad manners of a few close this area to motorized recreation. There are many responsible people out there who want to see this area kept open for generations to come and who are willing to help keep the area clean and safe.

Please keep this area open for motorized recreation, including 4x4s, 4 wheelers, and dirtbikes. Please also keep it open for camping and fishing.

**Comment 28 of 255 - received on 12/04/2006 at 01:28 PM:**

Enforcement: I strongly recommend that adequate enforcement is in place for this area. As we all know, there have been a number of illegal and dangerous events occurring in this area for a number of years. It will be difficult to change things on the ground without adequate enforcement!

Sanitation: This area needs to have places to safely and cleanly dispose of human waste (ex. port-a-lets, outhouses, etc.).

Multiple use: For years, this area has been dominated by motorized traffic making it uninviting for those who want to enjoy the area on foot, dog sled, bikes, ski's, or paddle boats. There will need to be some sort of segregation of uses in at least parts of the area, so that non-motorized users can enjoy it as well as motorized users.

Restoration: There has been significant damage to wetlands and trails that should be mitigated and restored.

I am grateful for this opportunity to provide comment! Thank you.

**Comment 29 of 255 - received on 12/04/2006 at 01:56 PM:**

i believe all user groups should have access to this area but i believe we need to limit the use of orv and atv. these vehicles should only be allowed to operate on the sandy, gravely flood plain areas along the knik river and should NOT be allowed into areas where vegetative and wetland damage has occurred or could occur. this is an increasing problem throught out alaska. if these user groups cannot monitor themselves i believe it is necessary for government to regulate them.

thank you howell powder

**Comment 30 of 255 - received on 12/04/2006 at 01:59 PM:**

No more motorized noisy vehicles, this should be a wilderness area for animals and hiking. If these people are too lazy to walk then stay on the pavement.

**Comment 31 of 255 - received on 12/06/2006 at 02:48 PM:**

The use of guns has been a problem along the trails, better rules/enforcement should be done to ensure safety of bikers/hikers when using them. I'm all about people being allowed to go sight their guns in but there should be a set area for this so hikers can be aware.

Currently there are no designed areas and it is a free for all. Also guns could be prohibited in sections of trail, or shooting could be restricted within a 1/4 mile of the trail. These solutions would help bikers and hikers feel safer and want to use the trails again. Thank you.

Wendel Lewis

avid outdoor hiker

**Comment 32 of 255 - received on 12/06/2006 at 07:43 PM:**

Hunter Glacier Hiking Trail

There is an existing well-established trail on the east side of Hunter Creek. The trail starts along the ridge just above the road on the east side of Hunter creek. The trail climbs to about 1200 to 1500 ft elevation. The trailhead is not defined. Please provide a parking area and well-defined public access to this trail. Install trail markers along the trail. The existing trail ends at Hunter Creek at approx 61.23.682N, 148.46.842W, and 1240ft. elevation. Continue development of the trail to Hunter Glacier. Provide resources for on going maintenance the trail.

I would be happy to show you where this trail is located.

Best Regards, Dick Quinn 907 745 2792

**Comment 33 of 255 - received on 12/06/2006 at 08:48 PM:**

I grew up in Palmer and used to spend alot of time all over this area.I quit as many did when it became a party and dumping grounds. I'm very pleased that we are taking this area back so I can take my kids to enjoy what I used to.I hunted ,fished and hiked all over although my main access as always been on either a 4 wheeler or snowmachine ,and when in high school 4 wheel drive pickups all the way back to the glacier.Hopefully all of these uses will continue in the plan as I feel that is what most people use this area for.I don't see big paved parking lot's at the trailheads or any "park" ammenities other than maybe rental cans to keep it cleaner ...Don't build anything you can keep up and pay for. We all agree that the enforcement issue has always been the biggest problem so start there and try to keep the plan simple.Most of us old timers would just like to see it go back to the way it was 20-30 years ago.

**Comment 34 of 255 - received on 12/06/2006 at 09:31 PM:**

Knik Glacier Trail

Portions of the trail between Friday Creek to just past Wolf Point are badly rutted and flooded. This section needs a dozzer blade and some fill. I travel this trail by bicycle.

Best Regards, Dick Quinn 907 745 2792

**Comment 35 of 255 - received on 12/06/2006 at 09:49 PM:**

Publish Trail Information

Please publish maps and written descriptions of the established trails within the Knik River Public Use Area, including canoe/kayak routes. Links to detailed Arial photographs would be much appreciated.

Best Regards, Dick Quinn

**Comment 36 of 255 - received on 12/11/2006 at 07:22 PM:**

I would like some sort of provisions enacted in the management plan to allow reasonable use of the Knik River Valley area by non-motorized users. The idea of entering the area for non-motorized recreational activities, such as hiking, fishing, hunting, ice climbing, mountain climbing, and kayaking, is scary concerning the existing indiscriminate shooting, arson, and other lawlessness that are taken as the normal course of action in Jim Creek and the rest of the Knik River Valley. In particular, I think active oversight of the management plan would help reduce these threats to those who would like to use the land in a lawful and non-destructive manner. Bans on target shooting or restricting target shooting to specific areas are safety measures that all reasonable law-abiding users of the area would support. In addition, the use of motorized vehicles to cross anadromous fish streams should be restricted in order to prevent damage to the natural resources.

**Comment 37 of 255 - received on 12/11/2006 at 09:36 PM:**

Why is it that we allow firearm useage in heavily traveled and use areas? Are thaere too many people around so you wish to thin them out? People can enjoy the out doors without use of guns, it is pretty disconcerting to be walking in any area of the chugach and Knick area and hear gunfire. One never knows where that gun is being pointed. ATV useage creates long lasting tracks when used on wet terrain like tundra areas. I fully believe that there needs

to be designated areas that leave less impact for ATVs and off use in areas that are destroyed by these vehicles. One only needs to go up the Glenn and travel back Puritan trail and see the huge damage these vehicles make in high country. The scars will take years to heal if the State should ever decide to do some much needed management. Back country is accessible with less damaging vehicles, called legs. dolly

**Comment 38 of 255 - received on 12/13/2006 at 03:51 PM:**

I have personally hunted, fished, camped and recreated in this area since 1972. I am on the trails in the Knik River Public Use Area on the average of 3 days a week during the summer months and several times a month during the winter months. I have also been involved in Boy Scout and Church Youth groups which have used this area for character and skill building events as well as many service projects to clean and improve the area. I have seen the use of this area grow a lot. Most of the increased activity in the upper portion of the valley has been fairly responsible. Sure there have been occasional cars burned and littering incidences in the area above Friday Creek, but nothing like the area around Jim Creek. Careless shooting in this valley is also a problem. I would like to see these things controlled. I am excited about the presence of law enforcement that will now be present in the Knik River Valley. I hope every effort will be made to make those responsible for these acts accountable for their actions. I would also like to comment on the many different user groups that access this area. I believe we can all share this area. No one should be restricted who wants access. There are several that would like certain areas made accessible to non- motorized access only. With the current legislation, they understand that it is not the intent of the bill to restrict access to any user groups, so they try to get their way by presenting false scares laced with undocumented environmental or ecological propaganda. The problem that I see is that some of those who are interested in restricting motorized use in certain areas have a proven track record of generating concerns based on trumped up environmental damage issues. They push for restrictions in any area in which they can get someone in authority to believe that there is an environmental concern. For instance, a couple of years ago there was a group of people who are opposed to motorized access who took photos of a trail that was quite muddy. They published a report stating that ATV's were causing irreparable environmental damage to this trail. The pictures were taken during the middle of Spring Breakup. About 45 days later another person took pictures of the same trail at the exact same view and it was very plush and green with no ruts or mud. I am very passionate about this area and the proper care of it. I believe that all users need to treat our land right in order to keep it in a condition that others can enjoy for many years to come. However, I do not believe in shutting down access to areas just because some may not be in favor of motorized access. If an area is being used by motorized users, they should not be shut out unless there truly is an environmental concern. Even then, I feel that every effort needs to be exhausted to preserve the area by making trail improvements, bridges, etc, before keeping people out of these areas. There is so much land in the KRPUA that there should be no problem developing new trails to accomodate people who want no noise, or are concerned in other ways. My hope is that any time there is a group that presents environmental concerns to those developing the management plan for this area, all types of user groups are polled for their opinions and that you conduct your own environmental studies rather than taking reports said to be factual from other groups. We have to face the fact that we live in a State with a growing population. Also, the ATV industry is one of the fastest growing in the Nation. Rather than cutting back on access, we need to be actively involved in efforts to develop new trails for both motorized AND non-motorized users. Otherwise we will overburden the trails we have. Developing trails for non-motorized users is probably much less expensive than trails for motorized users, but both need attention. I look forward to taking an active role as the development of this

management plan moves forward.

**Comment 39 of 255 - received on 12/14/2006 at 03:10 PM:**

I hunt and fish in the KINK River area year round. the thing I mind the most is the noise from shooting. Am all for shooting but it needs to be further down river because of noise when trying to hunt around Swan or Jim lakes. I have been using this area for the last twenty five years, and enjoy it tremendously. On a warm day in the summer it's the most beautiful place in the valley. It's my chesapeake's most favorite place to swim. There's one thing I would like not to see and that is charging a fee to use this area. I might not live in the Butte area but am sure I utilize that part of the valley more than half of the people that live there. What's needed is some type of reporting system to rid the area of all the rif-raf that give the honest people a bad name. If there is any way I could help with that please contact me.

**Comment 40 of 255 - received on 12/14/2006 at 03:43 PM:**

As a consumptive user of the area I have hunted ducks in the Jim/Swan Lakes and their immediate drainages and fished the confluence of Jim Creek/Knik River. I have used motorized vehicles on the lakes as well as "four wheeler" for access and purely recreational purposes on the lower Jim Creek area. - I do NOT desire to curtail any LEGAL activities in this area but do feel it needs some protection from vandals and other illegal activity. We do not need for it to become "Knik River State Park" nor does it need to continue "as is". - Public restrooms placed at high impact areas such as the confluence of Jim Creek/Knik River and the boat launching areas of Jim Lake area would go a long ways. "Porta-Potties" could be used to augment permanent facilities during high usage times such as fishing/hunting peaks of use. If this means a modest "user fee" then I am willing to pay it. - I would like to see the shooting activity located and directed in such a manner as to promote safety to other users as well as nearby housing. An area set aside for that purpose only with an appropriate backstop. Trash cans for spent shell casings could aid in general cleanliness of the shooting area. I have no answer to the lead contamination issue which will occur in the "backstop" area. I am not so naive as to believe there is a "silver bullet" that will make everyone happy nor is there one that will make all users take responsibility for their action (or inaction). But I do believe that increased patrol by law enforcement and a judicial system that will "bite" those cited would greatly aid in cleaning up the area and the actions of those "slob" users once the word gets out.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment and I'll be looking for information on this site pertaining to this particular area. I'm willing to aid in "clean up" efforts if I have sufficient notice to plan. Perhaps some of the user groups could post planned activities regarding clean up efforts and recreational activities planned for the area on this site also? I'd like to participate in some of them but never know when they're going to occur since I can't possibly belong to every club or organization.

Again - Thanks for this opportunity to be heard and especially "THANKS FOR YOUR EFFORTS" in making this area suitable for all users.

Lee

**Comment 41 of 255 - received on 12/14/2006 at 08:22 PM:**

I feel that continued useage of ATV's and motorized boats is essential to this area for recreation, hunting, and berry picking. We often access from Knik River terminus, and occasionally from Maude Road. We use ATV's to fish Jim Creek in the summer, but never take our dog. He loves to go after bobbers and roll in the fish guts, so that's out of the equation! I love the closeness to Anchorage and the diversity of trails, dunes, and water. The

mining/logging trails are intricate, and varied, allowing a good training area for manipulating ATV's.

We take our grandkids and their friends to ride on the 4 and 6-wheelers, wade in the water, go berry picking and hiking. We throw frisbees, build a campfire, roast marshmallows, and have even camped near the Knik River. I would love to see that as a continued option for the area.

I like the simplicity of the area. I like that it's no fee. I like that it's only 45 minutes from Anchorage. I like that it's so versatile. I like the idea that our nephews can drive up towards Knik Glacier in their trucks, if they wish, and of course, have the learning experience of getting unstuck, or not, and always know that they need to consult and be aware of the tides. I like the idea that it's open air, and as tame or as wild as you wish it to be, depending on how deep into the area you go.

I'm hoping that it can continue to be an area with these activities and freedoms. I'd prefer not to have a fee area, though it would be nice to have restrooms. I know that my husband might like to have a shooting range of some kind. I can see that as a fee area, though myself I think it diminishes the quality of the natural experience we so vividly enjoy.

I have attended two separate public meetings and find them informative. I feel quite proud that we are able to participate in this process. I think it's one of the greatest "near to nature" areas in the area and love the thought of being able to keep it that way, and being a part of this process. I do respect the fact that there does need to be some sort of supervision. I wish all people were as respectful of the land and other people as they should be, but that not being the case, I understand the need for some oversight. That's fine. What I don't want is to be limited, by that I mean, I don't want to find that the only way to see the area is with a tour guide, or too defined that your imagination is in check, it's much too special a place for that! Thank you for your time! I appreciate you listening to these comments.

Sincerely, Margie Crain

**Comment 42 of 255 - received on 12/15/2006 at 01:33 PM:**

Considering the large population living close to this PUA (some 400,000 plus) no existing use should be prohibited or restricted. It is not realistic to expect this to be a "quiet or non-motorized area". There are just too many people that use it with a variety of motorized conveyances from jet-skis, to snow machines, to 4 wheelers, to airboats and hover craft. Some pilots even use the area to practice gravel strip landings or just to fly out and have lunch. The area should be open to all users and the State should advise people that want to use the area that there will be other users there. If you are riding a bike on a trail or a canoe in the creek you should expect to encounter a 4wheeler or an airboat. Control the vandalism, garbage dumping, car burning and indiscriminant firearm discharge. Protect the wildlife and scenery but leave the trails and waterways open to all existing users. Thank you for your efforts.

**Comment 43 of 255 - received on 12/15/2006 at 03:25 PM:**

I like the idea of this being a multiple use area. Along with that it would be nice to have 1 or 2 (jeep size) trails that loop through the area with a unimproved camping area along the route. Most trails in Mat-Su are setup so that you have to travel the same way in and out. By making a looping trail you not only make the experience more enjoyable, you also cut down on the wear and tear of the trails.

**Comment 44 of 255 - received on 12/18/2006 at 03:58 PM:**

I am a frequent user of the Jim Lake/Mud Lake/Swan Lake area in all seasons. This area is exceptionally productive for a wide range of wildlife. Dall sheep are abundant on the cliffs to the north, the lakes and marshes are heavily used by moose and waterfowl, and the Jim Creek system is an important fishery.

I am particularly troubled by the extensive ATV damage that I have seen along the Rippy Trail and in the adjacent marshes. Additionally, the area is seemingly a "free fire" zone littered with informal shooting ranges.

I walk, hike, skate, and bird watch in the Jim/Mud/Swan lakes area and would very much like to see this area managed for quiet recreation and wildlife.

**Comment 45 of 255 - received on 12/18/2006 at 05:12 PM:**

I am totally against allowing shooting in the Jim and/or Swan Lake areas. My family and I often hike and birdwatch in those beautiful areas, and would be highly distressed if it became a designated shooting area. We go there for the peace, quiet, beauty and serenity, as well as the large number of birds that can be found there. The noise from a shooting range would certainly change all that. The area is often frequented by birding groups, including but not limited to the Mat-Su Birders, of which my family is a member. A shooting range would likely end our visits there. Seems like a spot for a shooting range could and should be restricted to an area where other noisy sports take place, like snowmachining and four-wheeling. Leave those of us who prefer the peace and quiet of the lakes and forests a little bit of space to enjoy that. Thank you!

**Comment 46 of 255 - received on 12/19/2006 at 07:19 PM:**

As a former longtime resident of Maud Road, and continued user of the area, I support public use management as a means to maintain the freedoms of exploring the Knik River area with as minimal damage as possible. Jim Creek and the lakes are amazing stillwaters with little room for trash and random vandalism. If it takes a fee system to preserve the area's beauty and open space for all to use, I support it and will pay a reasonable fee. This area is a unique bayou whose variety is a treasure to all Alaskans. It is the only combination of upland/lowland activities so close together in one place and near our population centers. So that a few do not ruin the area for the rest, I support increased policing and paying for it. I support trailheads and designated uses and paying for it. I support trash collection and toilet facilities and paying for it. Funding should come from parking fees, camping fees, off-road vehicle registration, boat registration and all other recreational public use sources already available. I do not support random shooting beyond ethical hunting. I do not support continuing open season with oversaturated hunting registrations that leads to bullets flying in more directions than moose. This makes other users less safe here than in other areas of the valley. Hunting is a privilege and a valued life experience as long as people don't abuse it. A permits system will keep the hunting experience sustainable, valued, and ethical.

I do not support a shooting range near the lakes or mountain base. The current defacto shooting range at the end of Maud Road is a mess and increases noise and disrupts the other uses in that area. Instead, a shooting range should be situated similar to Potter Rifle Range, out at the end of the river near the Glenn Highway, into a raised bank towards the inlet beyond. There it poses less of an impact to any downstream uses and has no mountains to echo off of. Leave Jim Creek alot more peaceful area to canoe, motorboat and fish.

I do not support off-roading that leads to continued erosion of the wetlands and Jim Creek outwash. I do support designated muddy trails for a great 4Wheel Drive experience.

Otherwise, the only free reign areas for all vehicles or high intensity off-roading should be confined below ordinary high water and the river bars.

Let's have an investment tax or permit fees on all users, so we can maintain and preserve the beauty and use of this area for future generations. We need to be able to have the same experiences 50 years from now that are there today.

**Comment 47 of 255 - received on 12/20/2006 at 10:47 AM:**

Airboats should not be restricted or limited in the knik river Jim creek areas. Thank you for your time.

**Comment 48 of 255 - received on 12/27/2006 at 11:47 AM:**

I recommend increased police patrols and law enforcement for the Knik River - Jim Creek area. This will provide the most benefit for the least amount of money by reducing the amount of illegal gunplay, underage drinking, vandalism, reckless driving, and theft that occurs in this area.

I would hope that all existing users from hikers to 4 x 4 users, from canoes to airboats can all be accomodated as it is such a large area with so many places to disperse into if you so choose. Most of the user conflicts involve illegal, reckless, or threatening behavior. These activities will be best addressed through increased armed police patrols and law enforcement.

If there is damage to certain terrain, ecosystems or areas, then the damaging use activity should be regulated to prevent that damage. My definition of damage does not include 4 x4 trails unless they are widely dispersed and causing significant erosion. My definition of damage does include measurable adverse impact on critical habitat for fish, game or waterfowl.

My personal use consists of power boating (mud motor on a V-hull boat) and camping/fishing. I have been everywhere from the new Parks highway bridge .....all the way up to Knik glacier.

The USGS stream gage on-line data is critical for planning boating trips. The stream gage will hopefully continue to be used and available to the public on-line.

**Comment 49 of 255 - received on 12/27/2006 at 04:25 PM:**

KRPUA Public Scoping Comment By: Steve Rowland December 27, 2006

Comment provided as a concerned resident and professional who has been an active user of the KRPUA for 50 years.

" Effective management of the KRPUA will require resolution of land ownership issues. Particularly, the BLM managed lands identified as native selected with state top file. Given the critical land position occupied by the feds it may be prudent to include a BLM land manager on the planning team.

" Focus planning, management and resource effort on high use areas (Jim/Swan Flats & lower Knik River).

" Develop a near and long term access plan with appropriate trails and corridors identified. Improvements to existing access points are needed to mitigate ongoing uncontrolled degradation at the Sullivan Road and Maud Road access points. The Jim Lake access is an example of a bad situation which is getting worse annually.

" Long term trails plan should include trails to "world class" scenic points on both the north and south sides of the river valley. On the north side an extremely dramatic destination may be the ridge located between Glacier Fork Knik River and the Knik Glacier. This trail could include a foot traffic suspension bridge over the Glacier Fork/Metal Creek Gorge. A south side trail could be developed to an overlook above Lake George. Trails of this type would be definitely be considered World Class.

" Extend non-motorized trail from end of Rippy Trail to Friday Creek. This route provides fantastic views and opportunities for access to alpine terrain.

" Include equestrian trail and access considerations in planning effort. A broad range of horsemen have traditionally utilized the Knik River area. However, in recent years there has been less equestrian use due to conflicts with inconsiderate motorized users.

" Unfortunately, uncontrolled use of ATVs and other vehicles is resulting in damage to some sensitive areas and will require some form of restriction.

" ORV and ATV access routes and use areas are likely appropriate along the Knik River flood plain, and as such, an effort should be made to identify routes and management procedures.

" Given the unique characteristics of the lake, swamp and creek complex (Mud, Jim, Swan, Flint) with highly variable annual and seasonal water depths and extents, special consideration needs to be given in development of the management plan for these areas. Motorized boats may not be appropriate, especially since all areas are easily accessible via nonmotorized craft.

" Work toward obtaining BLM managed lands immediately adjacent to the Knik River and in Friday Creek Valley. This could potentially be accomplished through an exchange for state lands which adjoin federal land at Metal Creek Glacier.

" An active field presence by law enforcement personnel and land managers will be required to return some areas to a condition amenable to general public enjoyment.

" Materials extraction (rock and gravel) may be appropriate in certain areas and could easily be planned to ultimately improve opportunities for public use. Completed extraction sites could result in parking areas, ponds, range facilities, equestrian activity sites or any number of functional uses. Sale of extracted material could provide a source of revenue for management of the KRPUA.

" Christmas tree harvest and firewood removal are both compatible activities given the nature of the area and historic use for those purposes.

" The development of a firearms range is commendable and encouraged. However, careful consideration must be given to location of such a facility to mitigate annoyance of other users and area residents. It has been noted that a range off the Maud Road access would be very poorly positioned due to the effects of noise echo off of the mountains and slopes. This is a noticeable problem now with the current unofficial range activity.

" Consideration should be given to sharing management responsibility in specific areas with non-profit user groups or other interested and qualified land management entities.

" Knik River Public Use Area encompasses a unique and highly varied region with world class opportunities for public enjoyment. Planning and care are paramount.

**Comment 50 of 255 - received on 12/27/2006 at 10:13 PM:**

I support keeping access and trails open to the Knik River and Glacier and surrounding area.

**Comment 51 of 255 - received on 12/28/2006 at 08:57 AM:**

Please consider all users of this area, wildlife, non-motorized and motorized.

The Jim-Swan wetlands are critical wildlife habitat. Habitat protection should be the the DNR's primary consideration for Jim-Swan area. A secondary consideration is to enhance recreation appropriate to the natural values of the area.

The wetlands and immediately adjacent upland trail, the Rippy Trail, should be nonmotorized. This is especially important when the ground is very soft in the uplands, and the swans and other waterfowl are present in the wetlands (generally from April through August). Relaxation of the nonmotorized designation during hunting and trapping season would be appropriate provided that daily enforcement patrol is in place, especially during the very busy waterfowl hunting season.

Enforcement personnel must have the authority and ability to enforce all fish and game regulations.

Jim-Swan and uplands comprise approximately 5% of the entire public use area. Asking for only 5% of the area to be designated as nonmotorized during the warmer months is an extraordinarily reasonable request and barely satisfies DNRs responsibility via the legislation to ensure nonmotorized use.

Every point in the wetlands, shoreline and along Rippy is accessible by canoe or on foot in a few hours to half day outing. There is no denial of access by designating it nonmotorized.

Jim-Swan and the immediately adjacent uplands are best suited for nonmotorized recreation on the canoe trail and the Rippy Trail for consumptive and nonconsumptive use and enjoyment of the tremendous wildlife resources.

Thank-you.

Sincerely, Tim Leach

**Comment 52 of 255 - received on 12/28/2006 at 08:58 AM:**

I would like to see a time-share schedule for non-motorized trail users similar to that in Eklutna Valley. Also, either a ban on open shooting or a designated target shooting area. This area has become very dangerous for non-motorized trail users. I'm certainly not against motorized use in the area, I'd just like to see equal time where you could travel and recreate in the area with some peace and quiet as well as feeling safe from open gunfire. The area also need designated access and parking lots.

**Comment 53 of 255 - received on 12/28/2006 at 09:15 AM:**

(This is my second set of comments and is meant to be an addition to my first set, providing more specific comment.)

I want to specify that I feel the Rippy Trail should be closed to motorized use. This trail is highly degraded and as such, will need extensive restoration. Further use by ORV's is unsustainable.

I also feel that wetland areas should be closed to airboats. It is plain to see through photographs over the years how airboats have impacted the wetland vegetation. This is an unacceptable use in a wetland area.

**Comment 54 of 255 - received on 12/29/2006 at 09:44 PM:**

To: Brandon McCutcheon, Planning Project Manager & David Griffin, Area Manager  
Thank you for the opportunity to comment during the Knik River Public Use Area Scoping process.

Although my daughter and son-in-law hunt, fish, and use an ATV to ride to the Knik Glacier on the Knik River side of the watershed, I am restricting my comments to the Mud/Jim/Swan Lakes area of the Knik River watershed, as that is the area that I use most often.

I have hunted and fished all of my life but, as I get older (I am over 70), I spend most of my free time hiking and birding. I regularly bird the entire unpaved length of Maud Road and hike the Rippy Trail to access the far end of Jim Lake, and Swan Lake.

It is my understanding that, historically, prior to the advent of all-terrain-vehicles, all of the Rippy Trail, except for about the first mile that was used for logging access, was non-motorized! The Rippy Trail, and the parking areas of Mud and Jim Lake, are now a muddy, boggy mess in spring, summer, and fall! In many places, especially in the curves, the Rippy Trail has been gouged out to a depth of two or more feet below the surrounding terrain and, in the wet, you can sink in up to your knees in those curves. And, when the trail conditions get too bad for an ATV, riders have no misgivings about leaving the trail and creating an alternate trail and creating new bogs! In at least one location on that trail, one of the salmon-bearing streams that crosses the trail has been diverted from its regular channel and the stream now runs along an ATV rut!

I was amazed at the recent comments attributed to Alaska ATV Club President, Mike Erickson, who is quoted as stating that all of the trails in the Knik River area are good trails. If that statement is correct, I would not want to see what that gentleman calls a bad trail! In order to hike the Rippy Trail, I often have to leave it to get around ATV gouged-out bogs!

The approximately 8,000 acres of the Jim-Swan Lakes area is less than 5% of the almost 200,000 acres in the Public Use Area, and the Jim-Swan Lakes area of the Knik River watershed needs to have special protection within the Public Use Area. Restructuring the Rippy Trail to support ATV use is cost-prohibitive and would not stop the abuse nor the creation of new unauthorized trails! I fully support hunter access to the Jim-Swan Lakes area, but motorized access is not necessary for hunters. The trail is not that long nor difficult and hunters who are not fit enough to hike in and then pack out their kill on that trail should not be out hunting in the first place.

I strongly recommend that the Rippy Trail be returned to its non-motorized status to stop the continued abuse on and along the trail!

In a December 13, 2006 article in the Mat-Su News section of the Anchorage Daily News (Knik River site on seesaw of public interests), two gentlemen were quoted as agreeing that Jim Lake was the best place for a designated shooting area! Unbelievable!!

The Mud/Jim/Swan Lakes area of the Knik River watershed is the primary waterfowl nesting area within that watershed and it has been sited as critical waterfowl habitat requiring special planning in several U.S. and Alaska government studies (Knik Arm Wetlands Study [USF&W - 1981]; SouthCentral Recreation Action Plan [DNR/AKF&G - 1984]; Susitna Area Plan [DNR/AKF&G - 1985]; Cook Inlet Mapping Effort [CG/NOAA - 2002]; Mat-Su Borough/Coastal Management Plan -2005; and the draft Butte Area Asset Management

Plan). Additionally, in 2005 the Jim-Swan area was designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by International Birdlife and The National Audubon Society because of the high use of the area by migrating Trumpeter Swans, which land exhausted in the Jim-Swan area after a 1500 mile migration from southern British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon.

In 2002 the American Birding Association (ABA), in its ABA Birdfinding Guide Series, published A Birders Guide to Alaska, by George C. West (Prof. Emeritus, Univ. of Alaska), the only internationally available birding guide for birders visiting Alaska. The Guide directs visitors coming to south-central Alaska to both Mud and Jim Lakes for birding. So in addition to local users, we also have out-of-state visitors using this area for birding.

As a former waterfowl hunter (and still a Ducks Unlimited member), I would not give two cents for the future value of the Jim-Swan-Mud Lakes area as a waterfowl hunting area if a shooting range is established there. There is already enough lead pollution around and in those lakes, and the wildlife disturbance, wetland impacts, the human safety concerns related to a public shooting range, in addition to conflicts with existing uses such as hunting, fishing, bird watching, etc., make the location of a shooting range there unthinkable! I support monitored shooting ranges in appropriate places, but placing a shooting range in the Jim-Swan-Mud Lakes area, with continued gunfire reports echoing off of the Chugach Mountain Range, in an area frequented by hunters, birders, canoeists, kayakers, bikers, and hikers, is ludicrous! It will not only ruin hunting in that area but will also destroy the outdoor experience for other users.

I strongly oppose any move that would place a shooting/target range in the Jim-Swan-Mud Lakes area of the Knik River Public Use Area!

I can appreciate the problems that you will have trying to balance the competing demands of the public in the Knik River PUA. However, unless something is done to curtail the rampant abuse by many ATV riders, and the other forms of abuse currently occurring, we are shooting ourselves in the foot as far as our future use of the Knik River PUA for hunting, birding, hiking, and other nonabusive pastimes is concerned. Continued ATV use in the PUA should be allowed, but there needs to be some limits so that continued abuse does not permanently ruin the Knik River watershed and decimate its wildlife and there needs to be a continuing public education program describing the needs of the waterfowl and other wildlife in the PUA.

Thank you!

Sincerely, Robert A. Winckler P.O. Box 877378 Wasilla AK 99687

P.S. There is apparently some problem between my internet server (Mac Safari) and this site, since every place that I tried to use quote marks or an apostrophe, a square with an X in it appears. I tried to delete the squares by using the Make Change button and editing, but they won't disappear.

**Comment 55 of 255 - received on 12/31/2006 at 08:57 PM:**

I am a equestrian and have enjoyed the Knik River Public Use Area for over 25 yrs. I use to be a member of MREA (Mantanuska Recreation and Equestrian Assoc.) that leased the trailhead area from the MSB about 20 yrs ago (were the pavilion was). We use to host trailride competitions using the area trails and river. It was a struggle back then to keep the area clean and vandalism down. The group (MREA) finally gave up sometime in the 1990's. I

am excited to see more control of the area as far as vandalism goes since Ive been afraid to leave my rig unattended these last few years. This was a concern of many people who recreated in the area. I hope to continue to be able to ride my horse on the trails and on the river safely. My main concern is the irresponsible use of firearms on the river. I have come down from the dunes off a trail and found my horse and I were on the backdrop of a shooting range...scary. I believe in the right to bear arms but responsibly. I'm not sure what you could do about this, maybe designate a area for shooting. I would like to see shooters pick up their casings also, since these never go away and fill up an area fairly quickly over continues use. So far Ive been pleased with the effort that has gone in to make this site more user friendly and safer than it was years ago. I'm also pleased with the clean-up efforts that have been going on. I would like to see the area remain multi-use with community involvement encouraged for keeping it cleaned up and maintained. Thanks for all your hard work on this.  
Lori Benner

**Comment 56 of 255 - received on 01/02/2007 at 06:26 PM:**

Initial management of the area must address abuses via guns and motor vehicles. The unrestricted and lengthy "recreational" abuse of the area, along with steadily increasing use makes the area highly hazardous due to dust, vehicular collisions, stray bullets, fires. None are recreational activities I support in heavy use areas. Nor do I the sanction many of the areas current activities; car burning, dumping, shooting, under-age drinking. Vehicular access control to this increasingly used area must be achieved, in the same manner as Thunderbird Falls, Eklutna, Kinkaid, etc. Thank You. CA Hummel 4065 S Old Glen Hwy

**Comment 57 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 10:31 AM:**

**Knik PUA Response to DNR Uses Request**

I am Robert Howard of Palmer, Alaska. My family and I have enjoyed the Knik Basin since the 1970s for many purposes, as we have always been avid outdoor enthusiasts. My first hunting rifle was presented to me at nine years old and I followed my father all through the Rocky Mts. - hunting, fishing, enjoying, and learning respect for our natural world. We moved to Alaska in 1961 and have continued the journey. My wife was born in Juneau, where her grandfather was a Territorial Marshall. We moved to the Mat Valley from Fairbanks for its beauty and opportunities.

Thank You, for seeking input on our uses in the Knik PUA! Motorized:

Both my boys, now grown, learned first to ride their dirt bikes in this area. It was an ideal place to teach them the basic responsibilities of machine operation while enjoying the freedom and appreciating the resources. My wife rides, as well. We enjoyed ATVs and our modified early Ford Broncos. We have worn several out in the watershed. The trip to the glacier has always been a favorite. We use a small (2h.p.) 4-stroke Honda motor on our canoe to access the many possible routes in the wetlands. The vehicles have been used for hunting and fishing. I have also rescued several people with the vehicles one particularly serious incident involving a pregnant lady who totaled her new snow machine and completely dislocated her hip. The old Broncos are comparatively light and narrow I was able to reach her by navigating the packed snowmachine trail and was the only vehicle available to get her to the waiting ambulance at the trailhead.. (Most winters, snow is too sparse and windblown to attract snowmachines in large numbers, though they are in the habit of using the creeks). We stopped riding on the seriously eroded portions of the dunes many years ago when we realized how rapidly they were degrading as user numbers increased dramatically. We have chosen to try to use terrain appropriate vehicles in order to help maintain the very resources that attract us to this wonderful area.

Non-motor:

We hike, bike, ski, kayak, canoe, and snowshoe in as many places as we have time for in the basin. These uses range from pleasure floating the Knik R. to as far as our adventures, being pleasure or harvest, will allow into the highlands. We use all of the accesses you have listed. Wildlife viewing is premier in the watershed. By example, the Rippy Tr. provides every thing from fish, to waterfowl, moose, and sheep incredibly and often, without moving from where you happen to be standing at the time! We have had many visitors from other parts of the world delighted and pleased to visit the Knik area, that is until we could no longer avoid or ignore the obvious abuses.

For pleasure shooting we found remote safe spots, above waterline, and then cleaned up our targets.

Summer comes weeks before it does in the Anchorage bowl we go to see large numbers sheep at low elevations for the first blades of grass available anywhere. The south facing slopes are very attractive, Waterfowl abundance and variety is amazing. Open waters, productive habitat, easy access, and superb beauty year around have attracted us as much as the wildlife! The area has suited our first sojourns for favorite spring activities more than any other until recent years, as the abuses have turned the trips from pleasure to deep concern. (My family no longer will visit the area.)

Aside from the recreational activities, we have tried to help with the ongoing issues effecting everyones enjoyment in the Knik. I have participated in MSB planning efforts, served on their Trails Committee, and have been a member of Mat-Su Trails Council. I have helped as a citizen activist to plan/coordinate for National Guard Cleanups and GPSd every abandoned vehicle, appliance, storage battery, etc. I could locate for pickup. We have participated in many, many cleanups sponsored by a wide variety of entities - hauling trailer loads of never ending garbage, disposed pets, appliances, etc. (some dangerous, some even obviously dumped by businesses!) I believe the cleanups are now falling far short of protecting the resource as lead, petroleum products, heavy metals, etc. disappear under the sands and waters into the environment.

My recent uses of the Knik Watershed have consisted primarily of photo documenting the alarmingly increasing rates of damage; ironically, accelerated by the heightened awareness/notoriety resulting from the very process being endured that is supposed to possibly provide an avenue for protecting sensitive habitats or at least enforcement of existing laws! By far, the most frustrating aspect has been watching the ongoing destruction of anadromous waters and wetlands.

I have also been involved in doing USFWS grant work in cooperation with Knik River Watershed Group. A presentation I gave along with Brit Lively and Gregory Nillson inspired Cecily Fritz to start the Knik River Watershed Group. We had been told for years that we needed a group in order to affect positive changes in the deteriorating, notorious watershed. Countless presentations and meetings have passed.

I will be presenting hard copies, as well as supplemental and essential digital documentation on issues of high concern. Please feel free to discuss any of this information with me or to request additional (as one example only, my files contain over 80 news articles pertaining to problems in the PUA area). I sincerely am open to your questions and wish to be of assistance, as possible.

This planning effort is part of that long awaited and hard-earned effort which included, for me,

eleven days lobbying in Juneau this past session for workable legislation.

The opportunity for lasting improvement is upon us. With your thoughtful actions, we look forward to once again enjoying the area with our children and grandchildren.

R. Howard Dec. 2006

**Comment 58 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 12:28 PM:**

I live on the cusp of Lazy Mountain and Butte community council zones. I have lived in Palmer for 17 years and have used the Rippy Trail to ski, hike, and Bike. I have experienced ATVs (snowmachines and fourwheelers) on the trail and have only felt threatened by the speed of the machines. I think the two activities can co-exist but with some regulation. The beginning of the Rippy Trail is wide and it allows for motorized vehicles to travel and increased speeds. Aside from motorized vehicle use I am more concerned with the use of fire arms. While hiking a friend had to yell toward the trail to "Hold your fire" as he heard bullets wizzing through the air near him. The shooter couldn't see that my friend was just off the trail in the woods. Jim and Mud Lakes are very polluted with shot gun shells, trash, lead spray from shots fired into the water. Over the years, with increased use, the area is not the most peaceful place to spend the day with family. I am speaking only of the area accessing the Rippy Trail from Maud Rd to Jim and Mud Lakes. I now have a toddler who loves to hike in the backpack and I am afraid to take her back there with me due to shots fired and the speed of the ATV's. The trash around the shore of the lakes is hideous however the area is beautiful. I think there is a need for trash recepticals, outhouses, regulation or some kind of control on the type of activities allowed. I realize that the area is used for hunting and fishing and I think we can all coexist by implementing some kind of control on the days of use by certain users the way Eklutna lake has for ATV's and hiker/biker's. Another issue is the Knik River shoreline where the area has become a target practice area for gun owners. I no longer will hike on the Knik River flats due to the random fire of guns. Perhaps there is a need to establish a target shooting range on the flats the way the Rabbit Creek area established. The gun fire needs to be controlled. ATV use needs to be established in areas that aren't prone to erosion or we will have on our hands the issue of the Kenai River and then have to forbid the use of the area all together. All in all the area is large and there is a way to coexist but not without establishing specific use areas for ATV's, shooting, hiking, biking, etc. Sadly, I haven't used the area for a few years because it feels very unsafe.

**Comment 59 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

We have lived in the Butte area since the early 70s. With out 2 children we have been regular nonmotorized users primarily of the Knik River & Jim/Swan/Mud Lake wetland areas for hiking, canoeing, mountain biking, ice skating, skiing, birding, fishing and camping. Concerns & suggestions: On the ground law enforcement - All users agree this is essential to address the many problems in the area.

Shooting - Creates problems with safety, trash accumulation & possible pollution. Over the years we have picked up numerous shot gun shells & target items next to the lakes and along trails, been in a canoe on Mud Lake when shooting across the water started and seen shooting occur across the road as were driving into the lakes. Please consider: - Shooting safety education courses & educational signs - Work with the Mat-Su Borough to establish designated shooting ranges - In establishing any site consider noise pollution and compatibility with other uses - Prohibit shooting next to lakes, trails & Knik River access

Preserve the wetlands, lakes and upland springs - Numerous studies nationwide have shown the importance of wetlands for such things as wildlife, water quality & flood control. The variety of terrain within a small area makes this area unique - gravel flats and sand dunes along the Knik River, wetlands around the lakes rising to tundra and upland springs. It is critical habitat for a large number of birds, animals & fish. Currently motorized use trails are increasing in some wetland areas along the Rippy Trail. Please consider: - Education & signs - Proper use to prevent degradation of habitat & promote safety between user groups - Motorized vehicles should not be allowed in the wetland areas - Speed limits should be established for powerboats & airboats and perhaps horsepower limits on motors - Seasonal closures of some areas or trails to some uses: - Such as during bird nesting season, or wet spring conditions - Evaluation of existing trails - Improvement where needed and closure of duplicates and those in wetlands - Establish a canoe trail with signage and camping areas. This could be a real recreational draw. - Work with other landowners to establish a campground & nature center at Jim or Mud Lake

Rippy Trail - From Jim Lake area toward Chain Lakes Consider: - No motorized or horse back use early in the Spring when wet - Any motorized use here should be limited to an improved trail with an end point - Any motorized trail should not be allowed to completely encircle the lakes & wetland area - Access needs to be blocked to wetland area that is south of Jim Lake - (about ½ hour walk along the trail just before the trail turns and climbs up onto the bluff) - Trail needs to be rerouted where it climbs up onto the bluff and maybe should end there for motorized - If motorized use is allowed further on the trail - Rerouting or bridging is needed in the wetland/spring area after the trail drops off the bluff - Motorized use trail should definitely end before the Chain Lake wetland - Establish a non-motorized only trail in the upland area starting from Jim Lake - Again great recreational potential

Sanitation Facilities & dumpsters are needed - access points have toilet paper & trash throughout parking lots and adjacent woods. We regularly pick up as we use the area. Please consider: - Outhouses & dumpsters (with regular pickup) at all access points - Educational signs on -leave no trace- etiquette

Knik River & Glenn Hwy access - We live about 0.7 of a mile from here. The whole family used to enjoy riding our bikes down to the river but haven't for years due to the free for all that prevails. The noise often makes it difficult to enjoy our yards or even sit in the house with the window open. Consider: - Work with adjacent landowners to create a manned campground - Place speed limits on motorized use near the populated area to control noise - Make the major access point off of Sullivan with user fees - Non-motorized use days would allow hikers, mountain bikers & horse back riders back in the area

Other considerations: The guiding principle for use should be compatibility with habitat and wildlife Remember it is a multi use area not a motorized use area as we often see it referenced Education is key - safety, consideration of other users, protection of habitat & wildlife Look for the common ground where user groups can work together so we are all able to enjoy the area Consider the residents Many residents do not feel represented by the current Butte Community Council There is no web page or posting of minutes to find out what they are doing

Additional Comments Consider putting use questionnaire on website Consider access for hiking trail up hunter creek & up upper Jim

**Comment 60 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I am a 36 year resident of Alaska and have been an outdoors sportsman all my life. I enjoyed the many years I have spent hunting, fishing and trapping the Knik River area. I hope to have the ability to enjoy and have access to the Knik River area in the future.

I strongly oppose the Knik River access restrictions being proposed. These restrictions would impose limitations for all who now use this area. The control treatment and management should be guaranteed to the public.

By everyone working together and agreeing on the usage of the Knik River area all generations and users will be able to experience the great outdoor times I have had.

**Comment 61 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Hopefully the actions taken by the planners and managers for the Knik River Public Use Area will take action that complies with the intent and desires of the people who worked long and hard on creating this KRPUA. And hopefully the implementation of the new plans and the management will show support for the majority of people who fought for the KRPUA! And that the new regs, management, and planning will comply with the language of House Bill 307!

Our intent during the fight for this public use area was ALWAYS to ensure that we would have traditional access to the Knik River valley for off road motorized vehicles, boats, etc., and that all EXISTING trails would remain open! for use by the public. This is mentioned in several resolutions by the Butte Community Council and a petition signed by approx. 3,000 people!

I think that the planning & management team should make sure that the KRPUA is managed to agree with the language outlined in House Bill 307. I think that the existing trails should remain open for public use and that all traditional uses should be retained and allowed. More enforcement is needed to eliminate trashing, burning of cars, and dangerous shooting in the sand dune area. I think that -target shooting- should be eliminated in the sand dune area. Patrols by the Alaska State Troopers should occur regularly on weekends from the Knik Bridge area to the sand dunes. Legal hunting with firearms should still be allowed. A show of troopers on a regular basis will do a lot to curtail -unwanted- activities. An annual card (fees) would be a lot better than daily user fees; especially for people who use the area a lot - like people with a trap-line. The whole area should be open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. There are several parcels of private property and several mining claims. Those people use the unimproved trails for access. Keep the area open for motorized vehicles and airboats.

**Comment 62 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

In reference to the Knik River Public Use Area. With so much of Alaska's public lands coming under regulation and restriction it is quite refreshing to see an area set aside for basically unrestricted use by the general public. It is unfortunate to see people that do not understand the consequences of abusing the public areas by leaving refuse or using unsafe practices in using firearms and recreational vehicles. A basic oversight of the area should not concentrate on any user group or means of conveyance but instead target particular individuals who are already violating existing laws. The basic area can support all groups and individuals in a harmonious manner in the future as well as is done at present.

**Comment 63 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I would like to have a location set aside to target shoot with rifles, pistols and bow & arrow. I would like to see a parcel of land set aside off the Rippie trail by Mud Lake. This would be road access. It is far from residents. It would have a mountain for a back stop. I live not far from there and could live with it.

I run ATV and snowmachine.

**Comment 64 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

PROBLEM: 1. Random shooting not involving hunting or trapping. a. Causes complaints by local residents. b. Other recreational users feel unsafe. c. Enforcement of unsafe practices is not possible because of lack of designated shooting areas.

CONSIDERATIONS: 1. Locate public shooting areas a. Will ease identification of unsafe practices. 2. An area for pistol shooters a. Mostly short distance shooting (less than 100 yds) b. Down range backstop is closer so less area is needed. 3. An area for longer range rifle shooting. a. Need for backstop (impact area) marking. b. Larger - in length - area needed. 4. Ask for help from shooting groups a. Will help identify useful areas. b. Volunteers to help improve locations. c. Volunteers to help maintain areas.

I really feel that the Knik River area is used by so many people from Anchorage, Eagle River, Chugach & Mat-Su for 4 wheelers, airboats, jet boats that already a primary use area has been established. I believe that with minimum enforcement non-motorized users will feel they can use the area without harassment.

**Comment 65 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

The Butte Community initiated this action to have open access for all user groups no gates no fees open access for all manners of conveyance both land and water if facilities are discussed funds must be set aside for maintenance so as not to create a cause for closure like so many parks & facilities all over the state. The nature of the ecosystem and the location make this a perfect recreation destination and the community supports this as a way of increasing revenue and bolstering economy. The trails here are traditional use, open and notorious to the community and it is not our intention that this management plan in any way change what has been a -given- use, sussistence use precludes the ability to close any of this area.

**Comment 66 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Please keep the KRPUA open to all users with no restrictions against motorized vehicles, 4 wheelers, jeeps, motorcycles, airboats, hovercraft & aircraft. Both in the Jim C. Drainage and the Kink R. drainage.

I use an airboat throughout the Jim Cr. Lake system. I have a friend that has airboated there since 1943.

**Comment 67 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I feel that the Knik River Public Use Area is a good thing. I support the use of motorized vehicles in this area. I think this area should be used by all recreationists. There are those who would like this to be an exclusionary spot for hiking, horses, etc., we should work out a solution fitting for all interests.

I feel that enforcement of the law is also necessary in this area as it has been a freeforall for some time. Let's be sensible, not exclusionary in our decisions.

**Comment 68 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

The Knik Public Use Area is an essential part of the spirit of Alaska. I use this area almost every day during salmon season. I like the fact that it is not maintained and that it is rough to get into the area. I also live in the Butte area. The sound of the race track does not bother me either. I like to go to the race track also. I may feel the opposite of most people who are

disturbed by this. I would feel like moving if it would all be restricted. I moved back to Alaska because I am tired of all the restrictions in the Lower 48. Let us enjoy it like it is! I use a 4x4, but I support all forms of access to the Knik River access and may use other forms of motorized access in the future, both land & water.

**Comment 69 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I feel the problem is not motorized vehicles, its people making bad decisions and disrespect of others.

**Comment 70 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I have lived hear the Knik River Bar my entire life. I have been up and down it's streams and across it's lakes in all manner of watercraft (airboats, john boats, canoes and kayak). I have traversed the many trails on 4 wheelers, 3 wheelers, 4x4's, motorcycles & swamp buggies. I have enjoyed many wild and beautiful sights along the way. My parents and grandparents were the first to introduce me to the wonders of the Knik River Bar. I rode in the back of my father's swamp buggy up to the Knik Glacier when I was small. I remember being awestruck by the enormous chunks of clear blue ice floating in the water. Throughout my life I have enjoyed utilizing this beautiful area and hope to show my children the same sights I was priviledged to when I was small. I hope to have the same opportunity to teach my children how to use their motorized vehicles responsibly. This area should stay open to motorized vehicles, without them I would not have had such a wonderful experience.

**Comment 71 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Access to the Knik River Public Use Area through the Sullivan Parking Lot on Borough lands should remain open for all public use.

The Sullivan Parking Lot is the perfect starting point for all trails leading to public use areas such as Jim Creek, McRoberts Creek, the Friday Creek Drainage, Metal Creek and the Knik Glacier for all motorized and non-motorized vehicles, as well as boats.

I also believe that there should be law enforcement to deter such things as trash disposal, abandoned vehicles and having a State Trooper there would keep the area cleaner and safer. A shooting range would also be a good idea for the simple fact that there is a lot of shooting down there and people shooting in all different directions causing a safety issue, and a shooting range in one specific area away from other areas that people play, fish and camp could help.

Let me finish by saying that I have been in a wheelchair for the last 25 years, and having a place to ride my 4-wheeler with my children and hunt and fish with my family would not be possible without the public use area. That area has been giving my family and I access to all the great things that Alaska has to offer with the limited mobility that I have.

There should be more motorized use trails created on State Public Lands. The State Parks and Refuges should have more access for motorized/OHV use and not on a time share as it is currently is.

**Comment 72 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

No user groups or means of access should be limited. Existing laws concerning dumping and abandoned vehicles should be enforced. All access points should remain available to all types of watercraft and/or vehicles. At least one area should be designated as a safe shooting area. Showmachine use should be allowed whenever the ground is frozen to 3 or 4-depth and not based upon snow depth. The same rules should apply to ORVs. State and borough land for existing access points should be leagely dedicated to that access to assure

continued access to all users.

**Comment 73 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

No user group or means of access should be limited.

Airboat, 4x4 trucks, ATVs and other motorized means of access should not be restricted to appease non-motorized users.

**Comment 74 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

This is one of the few areas that's fairly close to population that has numerous trails and areas for pleasure hunting and fishing. To close it to motorized vehicles is absolutely ridiculous.

**Comment 75 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I'm 68 years old. I was born and raised in the Valley and have lived here all my life. I have no desire to live anywhere else.

Due to polio, I'm handicapped and wear a brace on my leg. If it wasn't for snowmachines and 4 wheelers, I'd never get to see the beautiful country I enjoy so much. Keep the Knik River area trails and all other snowmachine trails open so that me and others like me can enjoy the outdoors.

**Comment 76 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Knik River Public Use Area. We have the following comments for your consideration:

- The Jim-Swan wetlands provide critical habitat for wildlife and DNR should 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.
- The wetlands in the Jim-Swan area and the adjacent Rippy trail should be nonmotorized from April to August when the ground is wet and waterfowl are present in large numbers. This area represents only 5% of the entire Knik River Public Use Area and we feel that having a non motorized area is vital to the goals of establishing a well managed public use area. However, during hunting and trapping season nonmotorized regulations might be relaxed assuming that adequate enforcement patrol is in place, especially during the busy waterfowl-hunting season.
- 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 use 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 river, streams and wetlands.

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 development.

**Comment 77 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I support leaving the Knik River Public Use Area open to all forms of motorized use. I live near this area, I use it for hunting, trapping, and fishing. I also use this area for recreational motorized use. I ride dirt bikes and ATVs in this area, I drive 4x4 vehicles in this area, I run power boats in this area, and I snowmachine in this area. I enjoy using the Knik River Public Use Area, and I want it to stay open to all forms of motorized use.

**Comment 78 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Beautiful area. Need a greater emphasis on keeping it clean. Garbage and junk cars seriously detract from the biking/hiking/paddling experience. Make trash cans and fine litterers. A non-motorized trail to the glacier would be great. Something away from the noise and dust of the ATVs. Also, the south side of the river is great. Is there any state land there for a parking lot and a trail to the glacier or Lake George? In general, I don't feel "welcome" when I'm there. It shouldn't be that way.

We've lived in the Butte for almost 5 years and I've only visited the Jim Creek area once, mainly because I've been scared away because of the stories of burning cars and drunk people with guns. It would be nice to cleanup the area and restore its reputation as a family-friendly recreation area.

**Comment 79 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I have lived here all my life and plan to stay. I snowmachine with my husband. I've gotten to see areas where I never would have if it wasn't for snowmachines and 4 wheelers. Keep the Knik River trails open as well as the other trails so we can continue to enjoy the outdoors.

**Comment 80 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Please accept these comments on the Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan on behalf of Cook Inletkeeper and its more than 500 members who use and enjoy Cook Inlet resources, including the Knik River and surrounding areas.

HB 307 grants DNR broad authority to protect the region's spectacular natural resources, while also maintaining various motorized and non-motorized recreational uses. Among the most sensitive and important resources in the region occur in the Jim-Swan wetlands complex, which provide critical fish and wildlife habitat. Numerous studies have documented the special natural characteristics of this unique region. For example, the Knik Arm Wetlands Study (USF&W, 1981) proposed the Jim-Swan area to be an "Area Meriting Special Attention," noting high density use by ducks, year-round moose concentrations and intensive black bear use; the South Central Recreation Action Plan (DNR/ F&G, 1984) said the area possesses "critical importance for habitat"; and the International Birdlife/National Audubon Society (2005) designated the Jim-Swan as an "Important Bird Area."

As a result, DNR should designate habitat protection as the primary consideration for the Jim-Swan wetlands, with a secondary consideration to enhance recreation and motorized access appropriate to the natural values of the area. For example, the wetlands and immediately adjacent upland trail, the Rippy Trail, should be non-motorized, especially during the warmer, wetter months (i.e. April through October). The Jim-Swan wetlands and accompanying uplands comprise only approximately 5% of the entire public use area. Furthermore, every point in the wetlands, shoreline and along Rippy Trail is accessible by canoe or by foot in a few hours to half day outing. As a result, access would be preserved even if motorized use is restricted.

**Comment 81 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I strongly support the continued use of all types of motorized access in the Knik River Public Use Area.

I have hunted, fished, snowmachined, used both 3 wheelers and 4 wheelers as well as airplanes for use and access to this area. I have also extensively cross-country skied and snowshoed throughout this whole area.

As many of us get older we are not able to get around as much as we did many years ago. The continued use of motorized access allows us to continue the enjoyment of the area as I have enjoyed for the past 42 years.

**Comment 82 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Leave the trails and roads as they are, we've got enough restrictions, freedoms are going fast. As far as the shooting on the river, these sand dunes to shoot into for backstops, some of the younger generation doesn't understand, that they need to shot in to a good backstop, there needs to be trash containers there, for trash, and I and my family support all land use, and we need to be able to run airboats up Jim Creek, as well as the river. We support all motorized modes of transportation and we do not want any modes of transport eliminated.

**Comment 83 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I strongly feel that there should be a need of use of motorized vehicles in the Public Use Area. The use of snowmachines, airplanes, 4-wheelers, 4 wheel drive trucks, jet boats, air boats, truck - rigs, and jet ski. I have in the past run 4-wheelers up and down the river and had a lot of fun. It is a good place to take family and enjoy a day.

**Comment 84 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I was born in Palmer AK 1961 and I start going up the Knik River in 1966 with my family and enjoy then and still do, and I do not believe I should be regulated, I have never resisted anyone from walking or skiing in the area, I have used all forms of motorized machines to get up the Knik River area.

**Comment 85 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I support the use of the Knik River Public Use Area for the uses of ATV, airboat, bush plane, 4-wheeldrive and any form of motorized vehicle. I have been using the Knik River Public Use Area for 37 years and have lived in the area for just about as many years. I see no reason to close any part of this area or restrict it. I also feel there is no need of DNR enforcement. The state troopers have done ok and I see no need to change from State of Alaska to the DNR. The use of this area by the people of southcentral Alaska and many other residents of the state is a good ideal because this gives people something fun and constructive to do other than trespassing or criminal mischief and I believe this is also a great place for families to come together and enjoy this great state and it's resources.

The resources of this state are many and few are used or allowed to be used.

**Comment 86 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I am 65 years old. I can not pack heavy loads or hike for too many miles. This is certainly true with 100 lbs of moose meat on my back.

Access for me must (emphasis added) remain the way it is or I will be forever barred from the Knik. This could possibly cause a class action lawsuit for discrimination. For me access must (emphasis added) remain open as it is for all motorized land and water.

I have used and enjoyed and subsisted on the Knik and Jim Creek area for over 38 years. Please do not take it away from us and give it over to some special interest group.

**Comment 87 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Currently the state has millions of acres protected with limited or no access other than hiking and other non motorized use. We need to maintain the Knik River P.U.A. for all users, including motorized use.

The impact to the area by motorized users is minor compared to the natural dances of the river and wind.

I do not want to loose one more acre to non motorized. I have been here since the 60's and have watched the gradual loss of areas where I can use my buggy and snowmachine, etc.

I'm not against some rules and enforcement to promote safety. We desperately need a place to site in rifles. However we still need to maintain hunting within this area.

When I say motorized - I mean all motorized veh.

**Comment 88 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I want Knik River Area to stay open for all motorized transportation, and should not be limited or restrictions of any kind.

**Comment 89 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Nothing should be eliminated motorized or not.

**Comment 90 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

The users of the Kink River drainage should all have equal use of the trails and creeks and swamps.

The trails have been there before I came here and there isn't much difference except more people.

What we need to do is enforce the laws we have and get rid of people who dump cars and garbage on the river bar.

The borough should have a outdoor range for shooting so that people are safe and that are regulated so there isn't any stray missiles flying around.

**Comment 91 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I have been hunting, fishing and trapping and enjoying this area for more than 35 years. I nor my family consume alcohol or use drugs. We utilize the area year-round for family recreation and because it gives us a place to enjoy close to home.

We feel that people need to behave themselves and act like civilized people and pick up after themselves.

Whenever we use the area, we always carry out more trash than we produced.

I support public use of this area with all types of motorized and non-motorized vehicles.

**Comment 92 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

The main thing I would like to see done is the elimination of car burning, reckless shooting, and general mayhem that occurs in the area. It needs to be patrolled in a manner such that those elements participating in aforementioned behavior be caught and disciplined so as to discourage such activity.

The people who use the area in a responsible manner should be allowed to use the area in the same manner as has been done over the previous years.

**Comment 93 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family and friends. On an average trip I have 6 people with me. I make 2 trips within the area per year. I ATV in the Public Use Area. I use the Knik Glacier area. I get to the area by ATV. I like that the area is not improved and has no fees. I would like to see nothing at all done in the area.

**Comment 94 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends, and alone. On an average trip I have 1 person with me. I make 20+ trips per year. I snowmachine & ATV. I use most all of the Knik River PUA, Jim Creek to Glacier. I get to the areas I use by ATV & snowmachine. I like the wildness, openness, no improvements, no pavement, no restroom, and freedom. I don't think it's big enough. I wouldn't like to see anything done in the area.

**Comment 95 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends. Number of people with me on average trip: 1 Number of trips within the area per year: 10 I ride 4-wheeler, drive 4wd truck, hunt for grouse, fish for salmon. The areas I use are: Jim Creek Drainage, Friday Creek Drainage, Netal Creek Drainage, Knik Flats. I get to the areas by 4 wheeler and 4wd truck. I like the freedom to enjoy the Alaska outdoors with limited amount of regulation. I love everything about this area as it is. I would like to see continued use of this area by all types of motorized vehicles year around.

**Comment 96 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

As a recent resident to the Butte area it has become apparent that my backyard is everyone elses playground. Normally I wouldn't mind, but I can't find anyone with tolerance or respect for what other people like to do in the area. I live about 1 mile from Knik River, I bought the property last year hoping to build it into a stable and bed & breakfast business in the future. I own a horse, and this area should be a great place to go riding. However, I cannot ride on the posted non-motorized path as there are any number of motorized vehicles racing up them all day and night. In the winter we get snow machines. My horse is fairly brave, and I could teach him to go by the machines, if I could just get them to wait and sit still till we walk by. I've had machines go racing by even when it was the horse was barely under control due to them roaring by.

I also belong to the Chugach Range Riders the oldest horse club in the state, which started in 1958. They have had yearly rides at Jim Creek which can bring out over 100 riders and horses. But, the people on machines are rude to not only the riders but also the people we have located along the trail (out of the way mind you) for our game. We've had people string wire across a track, as well as logs and remove markers from the trail. The comments from the ride has been so bad that no one wants to go out there anymore. How sad, it is a large area and has plenty of room to share even if you don't want to race around on a noisy machine but listen to nature and move a little slower.

I'm not sure what the right answer is, I really love the area and think that the existing race-track isn't too bad although I'm none too thrilled about the possibility of a round track. I moved from Palmer where I lived about 1 mile from the fair grounds. When they put in their track, it became impossible to sit in the back yard and relax - you couldn't hear, or talk, and the vibration just went through your body - it was amazingly disturbing.

The Butte area has a bad rep, not completely undeserved. I hope that we can work together to make it a better place for the future I'd like to see the area stay rural, and I'd like to be able to use the path that goes right by my house to the river without fear of being run-over.

For some facts about me, I'm a 30 year resident in Alaska, am a 23 year employee for the Alaska Railroad and am currently the Director of Technology Infrastructure. I was hoping this home was my retirement place, and I could build it into someplace that tourists and visitors from out of state would enjoy to come to. It needs some work!

**Comment 97 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I feel that you are making the right approach to the public meeting with interested groups and getting an idea what people want. No restrictions should be put on motorized units with access to land, water, or air. All foot and animal traffic should also receive the same respect. I believe educating the public on the dos and don'ts will eliminate a majority of the problems of the past. Enforcement of the laws by authorities at key times, i.e., holidays, weekends and nights will help weed out the problem makers. Signing of designated areas for target shooting and trails will be a big help.

I'm willing to help in any reasonable way.

**Comment 98 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

We need to keep the area open for all people no exclusionary policies should be adopted. Long may we ride. We need this kept a motorized area open to all people.

**Comment 99 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Access to the Knik River Public Use Area (KRPUA) through the Sullivan parking lot on Borough lands should be guaranteed to remain open for the public's use and not become a site for a school or other whim of the Mat Su Borough. Existing state lands adjacent to the parking lot on Sullivan Road should be made into a parking lot/trailhead if the borough property can not be guaranteed to remain open for public use. The state could trade lands somewhere else in the borough other than lands in the KRPUA to satisfy the borough if they can not guarantee the Sullivan Road Parking lot.

The Sexton Trail, Trail of Envy and the RS 2477 Trail (Kink Glacier Trail or Jim Creek Trail) should be accessed through the Sullivan Parking lot. If this is not feasible then they should be relocated to access through the state lands parking lot.

Access points such as Jim Creek, McRoberts Creek, the Knik River Boat launch, Jim Lake and Swan Lake should remain open for access by airboats, canoes, kayaks, john boats, river boats and Hovercraft. All other access points including airstrips should remain the same. The trail from Friday Creek Airstrip to the Dry Hump should also remain open for access year round. Camping facilities at the trailheads would be appreciated by all user groups. If a user fee is implemented to supplement state monies, then the fees should be an amount that would be affordable to all of the public. There should also be consideration for local residents.

The Maude Road and the Maude/Plumley Trail should be recognized by the Borough as access points to the KRPUA for the local user groups. There should be a connecting trail at the end of Plumley Road along Caudill Road to the Sullivan Parking lot for users accessing to/from the Maude/Plumley Trail. Existing trails and new trails should be surveyed and platted to keep them in the KRPUA.

Lands selected by the Eklutna Corporation within the Friday Creek Drainage, to Fall Creek and to the high water mark on the Knik River should be either purchased or traded by the state for lands outside of the KRPUA if these lands are conveyed to the Eklutna Corporation. All -drawn up- 17b easements should be recorded if this land is conveyed to the Eklutna Corporation or if it becomes under the State ownership and in the KRPUA.

Wetlands should be open to snowmobiles and Off Road Vehicles (OHV) as long as there is adequate ground freeze of 2--4- either by frost or ice. This would protect the vegetation as any broken vegetation would be replaced by new growth in the spring. Snow depth in this area is affected by Chinook winds and should not be a factor.

There should be a designated safe shooting area established at the far end of Maude Road, between Mud Lake and Jim Lake. There is a natural backstop at this location with less chance of stray bullets if the targets are pointed toward the mountain. There is only one access point at this location and would be easier for enforcement to access the area in the case of a disturbance.

Troopers should be the enforcement and should be able to access the Knik River Public Use Area with the use of a four wheel drive vehicle, ATV or other trail or water vehicle depending on the situation.

Adequate signage or handouts with a map describing the area for the public to take with them would help to identify the area in the case of an emergency. The -Generally Allowed Uses on State Lands- wordage should also be on this handout so that people are made aware of this law of the land.

Jim Lake, Swan Lake, and Leaf Lake and the surrounding area should remain as a multi use area and not restrict motorized use, such as to airboats, john boats, hovercraft, and motorized canoes. This area should remain open for all OHV use in the winter.

Mental Health Lands that are located closest to the Knik River Bridge on the Old Glenn Highway should be bought or traded by the State to allow for access to the river or the creation of a camping facility.

The KRPUA should not be split into sections or regulated for single use areas. It needs to remain as it was created by legislation, multi use. The Rippy Trail should also remain open from Jim Lake to Leaf Lake for OHV and multi use travel but with a weight restriction the same as is currently on the Maude/Plumley Trail. There should be a bridge constructed on the Rippy Trail where it crosses Jim Creek. The Rippy Trail to Jim Lake could be hardened in areas to prevent any damage to the vegetative mat.

**Comment 100 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Being a 61 year resident of Alaska and a 35 year user of the Knik River by airboat, swamp buggy, 4 wheeler, 3 wheeler, pickup, airplane, snowmachine, I support the use of all motorized access to all areas.

I support the Butte Community Council's 5 resolutions and House Bill 507.

**Comment 101 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I believe there should not be any restrictions on motorized vehicles land or water being that there are already millions of acres in Alaska that exist.

This area should not have fees to use or be restricted form hunting, fishing & trapping.

This area should be open 24 hours a day 7 days a week for the use Alaskan enjoyment.

**Comment 102 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

1. The Knik River Public Use Area has been designated MULTI-USE and is NOT AN ATV PARK as recently & frequently is being advertised! 2. Safety for all users needs to be

considered - including a yield when possible, system of motorized yielding to non-motorized (pedestrians, runners, skiers, dog sleds, horses, bicycles and rafts & canoes on the water). 3. Hopefully designated areas will be available for RV camping . . . & toilets provided near the bridges. 4. Shooting areas (other than hunting) need to be designated for everyone's safety - with elimination of automatic weapons. 5. Fragile wetlands, bird nesting (including eagles, owls & waterbirds), moose calving & salmon spawning areas need reasonable protection. 1. Airboats should be limited to the River itself so as not to impact bird nesting, etc. 2. Trails thru wetlands & soft ground should be protected from ATV & horse use during break-up & severely wet periods. 3. There should be a posted yield system to protect the most vulnerable users from the most powerful (those able to inflict the most damage) I.E. motorized yields to non-motorized when feasible. 4. Moose calving areas beyond Wolf Pt. out on the river bed should be protected from intrusion (these tend to be out in the river bed away from the main channel surrounded by little back waters - brushy areas with little open spots throughout). 5. Knik River ATV Park is a myth to the dispelled with multi-use public use including ATVs. 6. Erosion issues need addressed - old trails 10 years ago level with surrounding ground are becoming ditches.

I usually use the area with family, friends and alone. Number of people with me on average trip: 2-3 Number of trips within the area per year: weekly or more - up to 4 or 5 days weekly What I do in the Public Use Area: hike, ski, ride horseback & canoe. Family also uses 4 wheelers, showmachines, bicycles & shoots - hunts ducks & fishes. I use the Jim Creek drainage & W. Knik R. flats, occasional trips to Friday Creek drainage - several times horseback to Knik Glacier & Metal Creek. I get to the areas I use from my home on foot, skis (not the past 4 yr.) & horseback. Family makes a few trips a year on riverbed with 4 wheelers and snowmachines. I like the Knik River/Jim Creek area because it is accessible from my home - wildlife, use to be quiet, & changing views - good area for horses & I especially have enjoyed the raptors, swans & small birds, some of which we-re seeing fewer of. I don't like the recent trashing, wild parties on the riverbed, rudeness of ATV users (not all) - degradation of the trails. Riverbank trails severely eroded & damaged - muddied up creek crossings - & random shooting. I would like to see designated shooting areas, limit airboats and other motorized craft which does equal damage to waterfowl nesting, plants, etc., to the river itself - a yield .system for trails with the faster & very powerful ATVs yielding to pedestrians, horses, dog teams, etc.

**Comment 103 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I am against any public restrictions on motorized vehicles on the Knik River access. I have helped in several clean ups & rescues. I ride my 4-wheelers & dirt bikes. My dad has a airboat so we have hunted & fished the Knik frequently, and also using the Knik River with my family for the last 17 years, my whole life. I know that it is a safe place to ride, and there is a lot of room for everyone! The access to the Knik has helped me stay out of trouble & has taught me respect environment & help others in need, made many friends with different user groups. I have taken my friends out on the Knik and they loved it, they could not believe how awesome it looked. They were excited to know that access to something so cool was so close to home!

**Comment 104 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Beautiful area. Need a greater emphasis on keeping it clean. Garbage and junk cars seriously detract from the biking/hiking/paddling experience. Make trash cans and fine litterers. A non-motorized trail to the glacier would be great. Something away from the noise and dust of the ATVs. Also, the south side of the river is great. Is there any state land there

for a parking lot and a trail to the glacier or Lake George? In general, I don't feel "welcome" when I'm there. It shouldn't be that way.

**Comment 105 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

As a ATV rider, I do enjoy this area. It is very displeasing to see burned cars, people shooting firearms on the flats. I have many times asked the kids I've come across to take their firearms home, or at least move further back from where people are riding. I have helped the ATV club cleanup this area many times and am willing to continue to do so.

**Comment 106 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

We have lived in the Butte area for 23 years. We enjoy the area year round. We do agree that some regulations are needed to protect the area from many abuses. Obviously, random target practicing, trash dumping & excessive speed by motorized vehicles need to be gotten in check. We also believe a horsepower restriction on boat for Jim Creek itself would be beneficial to stop erosion.

**Comment 107 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

came to Alaska in 1964. My family homesteaded on Knik River Road. As a child, my father and I hunted and fished up and down the river. We provided for the family and learned life's valuable lessons. We also learned respect for wildlife and nature so it will be here for future generations. Well, low and behold, my children were also born on what we call -The Knik- and we hunted and fished both sides of The Knik, -Our Home-, and they too learned valuable lessons and respect for our wildlife and nature. Last weekend I had the pleasure and unimaginable joy of being with my grandson when he shot his first rabbit. Guess what? It was on the Knik. I saw the twinkle in his eye that I had seen before with my own children, and the look on my son's face as he now took the role of teacher and I listened and watched, and knew that this 4th generation of outdoorsmen would also learn valuable life lessons and respect for wildlife and nature and pass them on!

This all would not have been possible without the use of vehicles, 4x4, snow machines, air boat, four wheelers, three wheelers, prop boats, canoe, and swamp buggy. Though I have been up the Knik on horseback and on snowshoes, my age now does not permit me to now even consider these as a mode of transportation. I have other grandchildren with whom I would love to share my knowledge with and take them to the places from where my stories come from. We must keep the Knik River access open to vehicles so that our lives may continue (and hopefully yours) along with the tradition that blossoms into a great appreciation and respect not only for wildlife and nature but also for life itself.

**Comment 108 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

My views on the public use area is that it stays open to every and all user groups at all hours every day of the week with no locked gates, or denied access to certain areas. I believe that all users should be able to co-exist with all types of transportation whether it be walking or driving a 4-wheel drive. This area needs to not be closed down like Chugach or Eklutna, I don't want to see this area turned into a campground where only motorized vehicles are allowed Monday - Wednesday and walkers and hikers the rest of the week. The area needs to be open to all access whether land or water, and no users should be denied any access to any area. All trails should be left open and none should be surveyed because of the constant changing terrain, leading to trails and trailheads changing. I do not want to see speed limits or restrictions for the simple fact of people taking vehicles they built out there and determining top speed. There must be access all hours 24 days a week 365 days a year especially during fishing season. I don't want to see any changes to this area or restrictions on the

traditional uses of this area!

**Comment 109 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

My name is Ande Dreher I have been a Butte resident for twenty-three years and been using the area for many more years. Myself and many others are worried about more regulations, and blocked access to any user group, motorized or otherwise.

The ideas for portapotties should be carefully looked at, mostly the fact of how will they be taken care of, we don't want a turnagain pass situation.

Access of the area should not have limitation on time of day. There should be 24 hr access, so not to limit fishing, hunting, offroading, or otherwise. All our uses have been a given and should not change.

Most if not all problems would go away if the regulations already in force were enforced by the state.

**Comment 110 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I have grown up and been using the Knik area for over 22 years. The Knik River area has been a way for me to stay out of trouble. I use it to fish by boat, four wheeler and even just go away from the city to be in the outdoors. The restriction of this area in my eyes is not only gonna give the youth no place to learn to enjoy the recreational opportunities but I feel it will also cause a lot more youth to get in trouble with the law. ITS NOT FAIR TO THE PUBLIC that use it responsibly. I am against non-motorizing the Knik.

**Comment 111 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I am a lifelong resident of Alaska. I have lived in the Big Lake area for 23 years and we use the Knik River with our airboat for fishing and other recreation. There should be no restrictions of any kind on motorized equipment in this area. We have been involved in clean up efforts and because of the ever changing weather because of the glacier, helped out with rescuing people off the silt bars. All user groups can use this area and work together to keep it safe and have a unique wilderness experience.

**Comment 112 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I have lived in Alaska since 1977. I am now 39 years old, married with three children. We are an outdoors family. We hunt & fish the entire state. We use the best tool to get the job done, that might be by four wheeler, snowmachine, airplane, jet boat, hovercraft, airboat, vehicle, canoe, raft or any other means that I have the freedom to use. The thought of having one of my freedoms or anyone else's freedom taken away or reduced by any amount is unacceptable and a total outrage!

To even consider to take the right of airboater's to run the Knik River is wrong. All of Alaska should be shared and remain open to the public, and not closed to any users.

I have airboated on the Knik River since 1992, my family & my guide business depend on the Knik River to meet our God Given and Alaska State Constitution Rights.

**Comment 113 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I appreciated the opportunity to talk to you at the Knik River PUA focus meeting last Thursday. I would like to provide you with a brief education concerning airboat use of the area. Members of the Alaska Boating Association and other boaters have used the Knik River Jim Creek, lakes and swamps for many years. The first verifiable use of the Jim Creek drainage was in the early 1940s. The Pudicomb family of Palmer used the area for duck hunting via airboats that they constructed at their home in Palmer. Craig Pudicomb lives in

Palmer today in the same house that his father occupied in the 40s. Craig has pictures of the family in some of the early airboats that his father built. Personally I first used the Jim Creek system in 1965. With the help of several friends I dragged a 12 ft skiff and small outboard to the creek to fish for silver salmon. We camped overnight, allowing us to fish for two days. We all caught and brought home all the salmon we needed. We also caught quite a few Dolly Varden. We saw two airboats going up the creek. I think they camped on a rise way up by the last pond that you can get to with a boat. I purchased an airboat in 1996 and have used the Jim Creek system extensively since that time. In fact my first airboat trip in my boat was to Jim Creek. We commonly use the area to take visiting friends and relatives on day long sight seeing trips. The usual outing is up to the glacier on one side of the Knik then back down the other side to Jim Creek and up to the far camp sight for lunch and then back out to the landing at the bridge. The trip provides a fantastic view of Alaska and its wildlife. The builder of the boat, Leonard Hare of Alaska Airboats to this day takes new airboat purchasers to Jim Creek to orientate them to the use of their boat. The steering is somewhat different than water prop driven or jet boat. Boaters are taught to observe all of the visual indicators that tell you who and what else is using the area including: the kinds of trailers that are in the parking area - are there other airboat trailers, skiff trailers, or canoe racks? This may give you an idea of other people that might be in the area. When you get to the creek you shut down at the sand dunes and listen for other boat traffic. If there are people camping there you can ask if anyone is up the creek. We stop at a spot about half way to the lakes and listen again for boat traffic. If a boat is coming down the creek it is best to wait until they pass. If you encounter birds coming towards you watch for approaching traffic as they may have been flushed by other boaters. We try stay as far to the right side of the channel as possible on turns or encountering approaching traffic. There is always a concern that there might be a canoe or small skiff around the bend on your side of the channel. Airboats make very little wake compared to v-bow, deeper draft, boats when they are running on step. If you have to slow suddenly and drop off step the wide flat bow will cause a large wave off the bow. When you run off step it takes much longer to pass through an area. It is also more difficult to keep your prop wash directed away from others on the water or bank. It is better for all to just pass by on step staying as far away from the other users as is safely possible. Air boaters do all they can to not bother or upset other users. We as a group have done much to educate air boaters to be considerate of others on the water. We use automobile engines (usually the same engine that you will find in a Chevy pickup (there are very few aircraft engine driven air boats left in service)). Engines are equipped with 7 or 8 foot exhaust pipes and high performance mufflers. Propellers are continually redesigned to produce less noise. Counter rotator units reduce noise by 30%. Of course all of these upgrades are an added expense. A counter rotator unit with the additional props and boat modifications can cost \$12,000. Today's airboats sell for forty to sixty thousand dollars. Most of these boats are made locally producing jobs and taxes for the community. Airboats have minimal impact upon the environment. They have no under water exhaust or emissions found in outboard or inboard boats. There is no prop drag in shallow water. The driver has an excellent view of the terrain in front of him and is able to steer around sensitive objects. The pound per square foot of downward pressure from the hull is less than that of a humans boot. Airboat drivers are cognizant of water fowl nesting and avoid running over young birds. We usually stop when we encounter birds and wildlife and watch them as they go about their business when they are gone we move on. Airboaters have a well established pattern of use of the Knik Public Use Area we do all we can to be considerate of and respectful to other users. I hope that you will do all that you can to protect the continued use of this area by all users. There should be no ban of any existing use. The state position should be that the area will be used by all existing users within the guidelines of the existing -Generally Allowed Uses on

State land-. If people wish to use the area the state position should be that the area is shared by all. If a particular user or group of users wants to be alone they should go to an existing park or other area where segregation exists. When you consider the population within 50 miles of the PUA it is obvious that there is too much demand to apply a -use but leave no trace- management plan. Your plan must accept some amount of environmental loss. A major effort of your management plan should concentrate on determining how much loss is acceptable.

**Comment 114 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I have been going up the Knik drainage since 1966, I was born and raised here. My father before me was going up there frequently. All of us kids went with. It is now a strong part of my life with my children, and grandchildren. We have very nice times going up a family. There should be no discrimination between air, land, water, 4 wheelers, boats, motorcycles, jet skis, track rigg, hoover craft, swamp buggies, 4x4 trucks, even 2 wheel drive trucks, it is for the whole family and I feel that to close or take any part of this recreation site away would create more problems in other areas for worse, I think the Alaska State Troopers have been doing a fine job. I see them every time I run up, at least twice a month. I ride dirt bike, 3 wheelers, snowmachines, 4 wheelers, swap buggies, 4x4 truck, boats, I hunt up there, camp, I have had no problems in 40 years.

I love the land up in Alaska and respect it to have it total controlled would be crime against all who enjoy Knik and Jim Creek drainages.

**Comment 115 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I am a property owner in the Butte (Smith/Maude Road area). I am a runner and cyclist. I regularly run out the Maude Road extension to Mud Lake and Jim Lake -- all year round. I have seen first hand the devastation which uncontrolled "motorized uses" have in this area. People race, not ride. They "target shoot" in an uncontrolled, unsafe way. I witnessed to my horror one father "teaching" his 7 or 8 year old daughter to shoot -- when he clearly had no idea of safety --shooting over a public road, pointing the gun up into the air when not in use, etc.

There are no toilets -- people urinate and defecate in and around the lakes. They dump their garbage with out regard for the habitat. I personally saw about 20 beer bottles floating in Mud Lake right by the shore. They also light fires even in dry summers when there is a burn ban in effect.

This area is a treasure of migrating water fowl, bear, moose, etc. The way the public uses it is a travesty. There needs to be controls -- if camping is going to be allowed, there should be some toilets and fees charged.

People should not be allowed to ride 4 wheelers all over the place. There should be a boat launch with fees charged. There should be limits on the engine power of boats -- no air boats.

I am also familiar with the area where the bridge crosses the Knik and the Old Glenn. I commute into Anchorage so I see this area on a regular basis. In summer, there is uncontrolled camping -- no facilities no fees. This is a public health hazard in the making -- people who live in the Butte rely on well water and yet there is no control over contamination of the water supply by hundreds of people defecating and urinating into the water table. Air pollution -- particulates-- comes from these people speeding their four wheelers and trucks along the delicate sandy river banks. Why doesn't someone test the air to see if particulate standards are being violated? How come motorized uses trump federal clean air

standards???

This area is a treasure & it is being destroyed.

I realize that the "motor heads" have all the political power in this state, but public health, public safety, and environmental laws need to be put into consideration.

**Comment 116 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Close the area for hiking, cycling, skiing, skating, boating, hunting, ATV travel & snowmachining. I support multiple use as long as it is safe, does not degrade the scenic & environmental quality of the area, or adversely impact other users to an excessive degree. The area needs a good plan to identify concentrations of different uses; sensitive areas (soils, wetlands, habitat); etc. I believe some uses may need to be restricted in some areas (areas where wetlands are being destroyed; excessive erosion; or severe trail damage). I do not favor restricting any traditional use in general - but redirecting or restricting uses where they are damaging or unsafe. The flats and the stable trails are great for ATV use. The wetlands and sensitive or poorly drained soils are not.

Above all the area needs a sound plan, public education, and law enforcement! I am amazed that no one has been killed with some of the current activities, especially unsafe firearm use and unrestricted uses near Jim Creek and the flats.

**Comment 117 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Jim Creek fishing area needs serious clean up of trash and vehicles. There should be signs saying -NO SHOOTING-. Need a safe place to fish created there.

**Comment 118 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Great that such progress has been made! Hope something similar can happen for Sutton.

**Comment 119 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Check out Hunter Creek. Near the fork is a mecca for ice climbing. Classic climbs can be found back in that drainage. Contact AMH in Anchorage for up to date conditions for local area ice climbs.

Check out -Fat City and Urban Ice- ice climbing guide book. I believe there is a blurb about Hunter Creek in there.

**Comment 120 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Prosecute the car burners! Don't build any facilities that will require user fees or parking fees to support. If any user fee is implemented it should only charge non-residents but allow local residents free access. Just like is done in Hawaii.  
**INTRODUCTION** This letter from the Butte Community Council was approved by a motion passed by the general membership of the Butte Community Council at a public meeting on Nov 8th, 2006. This letter is intended to be a part of the public comments for the planning and management of the Knik River Public Use Area and is in agreement with the invitation for comments that was mentioned at the DNR public meeting at the Butte Elementary School on Nov 6th, 2006.

The contents of this letter will hopefully explain the present feelings, intents and desires of the Butte Community residents and others about the management, planning and use of the KRPUA and be a fair and accurate depiction of the intents and desires of the public users of this KRPUA.

We feel that with the collective regulations and restrictions by over 70 agency's, plans, protection acts, etc. and the fact that there is no public record by any valid scientific

organizations that tells of any significant or lasting damage to the habitat or the environment, that we don't need to add any drastic new restrictions on the use of motorized vehicles or boats in the KRPUA.

A partial list of uses and activities that are covered by existing regulations is included in this letter as well as a list of the 70 -agencies- that already have regulations in place that apply to the issues that are of concern to many people.

An explanation of the geology of the Knik River area is included in order to let the public and others know the facts about the continually changing and extensive and varying natural forces in this highly active glaciated area that have a large effect on land forms and have unknown impacts upon the esthetic values and other factors that might effect the health of fish and wildlife populations.

Since the impacts from natural forces are large and varying and cannot be changed, we feel that it is unnecessary to worry about the relatively small impact from human uses of the KRPUA area that the greenies seem to be so obsessed with.

We feel that due to the above facts, and due to the facts that there are already millions of acres set aside in Alaska for non-motorized use, the Knik River area is ideally suited to be an "Off-Road" motorized recreation area unencumbered with unnecessary regulations.

Subject: Public comments submitted to the planning and management team for the Knik River Public Use Area (KRPUA)

Now that the Knik River Public Use Area has been approved by the Alaska legislature, it is time to proceed with the planning and management process.

This letter is structured into 6 parts and is oriented towards obtaining minimal new regulations that would result in restricting and curtailing the present day level of use of motorized vehicles and boats in the Knik River Public Use Area and the restrictions of traditional uses. Our findings that dictate this request are based on the following 2 observations.

There has been no evidence of any significant damage to the habitat, the environment, or to any fish, and game, populations or to the vegetation, that was allegedly caused by the operation of "off-road motorized vehicles and or Boats that was reported by any credible scientific organization that verifies such -damage-.

There are approximately 70 -agencies-, plans, and protection acts that have rules and regulations presently in place that apply to the area within the KRPUA. All lands (private, State, Federal and Native) are covered by one or more of the -Agencies- and no new regulations of any significant are necessary! The above mentioned 70 -agencies are listed in part 3 of this public comment.

The 6 parts of this public comment are:

1. General statements about the Knik River Public Use Area and what we anticipate as the final result of the up-coming KRPUA planning and management process, based on the past record of public testimony and record of historical uses in this area.
2. List of documents, actions and groups that support the KRPUA. Most of these documents contain statements that re-affirm our beliefs that all existing trails should be kept open to the public and that all traditional and lawful uses should be retained.

3. List of 70 government agencies, plans, etc, that already have regulations in place for addressing environmental and ecological concerns in the Knik River Valley.
4. Summary of the goals that we wish to see attained by the KRPUA planning and management team.
5. Law enforcement goals.
6. Synopsis of the geology of the Knik River Valley with references to relevant government publications. (geological reports) The purpose of this essay on the geology of the Knik River valley is so that the public and anyone else concerned with the KRPUA will better understand that this area is very active geologically, and is under a state of constant change that modifies the habitat, the land forms, muddy's up clear water streams, has an uncertain outcome on the environment, the fish and wildlife populations and is the result of the natural forces of nature. Miraculously, with all of this ongoing uncontrolled and unregulated -natural damage-, for thousands of years, the fish and other wildlife populations certainly appear to be in excellent condition.

Part 1. General statements about the Knik River area and what we expect from the planning team.

The Butte Community Council, as an active past participant in the creation of the KRPUA, is now concerned about the ongoing process of planning and management, and wants to remain as an active participant in that process, be involved with, and have some say in the final outcome. We are greatly apprehensive that the final outcome of the planning will not comply with the desires of the majority of people who fought long and hard for the creation of this off road recreation area. We hope that the basic wording of House Bill 307 will be complied with, and that the intent and the original declared purpose of the KRPUA will be fulfilled as completely as possible.

At this time, the language of House Bill (307) as passed, seems to be a fair and accurate representation of our past and present desires and objectives for the creation of a reasonable KRPUA.

We wish to seriously emphasize that during the initial drafting of the KRPUA legislation by our local group, the original wording for this ( House Bill 307), and during the subsequent legislative process, there has been a persistent and non varying direction to our intents, and that is that we wish to retain the existing trails in the Knik River corridor and that we wish to retain the traditional uses of off road motorized vehicles and motorized boats, (including airboats), in the Knik River area. We also included statements in our petitions, resolutions and the original draft of the KRPUA legislation, that the Knik River area should be designated for multiple use and that non-motorized users such as hikers, skiers, and horseback riders will not be discriminated against. Some people at public KRPUA hearings in the past have stated that -4 wheelers- have not been around long enough to be considered -traditional- but it is an interesting fact that -traditional uses- are defined in the Alaska Statutes.

That definition states that any use that has become -popular- is considered to be a traditional use. Alaska Statute (section 38.04.200 traditional means of access).

We hope that the planners understand the main intent and wishes of the "Off Road" users in the Knik River area, and that we certainly are not looking for a freeway to the glacier. Some people want to -harden- the trails and eliminate -mud holes-. Certain dangerous or extensive holes probably need some help, but it should be obvious that the area used for -off roading-

in the past and hopefully in the future is and will remain as a -challenge- for motorized users and a trail with no mud holes at all, is certainly not what we want. There are plenty of maintained roads in the world and what we like is the Knik River area basically just like it is, -bad enough- to keep the motor homes and cars out! The river bottom changes character from day to day and we like that, you never know when you are going to get stuck! We hope that ruts and tracks left by -off roaders- will not be considered offensive as is often depicted by our opponents. They (the greenies) say that the tracks of the Moose, Bears and other wildlife are considered to be pristine, natural and unspoiled, while the tracks of 4 wheelers are considered to be offensive, nasty and are scars on the land.

-It is well to remember that Humans are a natural product of the earth and that any Human marks left upon the outdoors are just as natural as the ones made by the moose, bears, eagles, and other wildlife-.

When and if our opponents complain to the planning team about excessive -off-roading- and too many motorized vehicles in the Knik River area, we hope that the new planning and management team will explain to them that the Alaska legislature has created two areas close to the Anchorage district for outdoor recreation. One is called the Knik River Public Use Area and the other is called the Chugach State Park. They are located right next to each other and one is mostly for motorized activities and the other is for non-motorized uses and has a substantial portion designated as a wilderness area for persons who don't like motor vehicles associated with their -wilderness experience-.

Trails--positive facts about trails taken from the MSB Coastal Plan:

According to the MSB Recreational trails plan,. an -effective, dedicated, well developed, and well maintained trail system- will, among other things-,

-Bolster economic development of the tourism and recreational industries and

Increase the appeal of the area to businesses and prospective residents by improving the quality of life-.

The area included in the KRPUA for motorized use is relatively small compared to the whole state of Alaska which has millions of acres of National Parks, Wilderness Areas, State parks, Wildlife Refuges, etc, most of which are non-motorized. The areas set aside in Alaska for the greenies are so much greater in total area that we think they should appreciate and concentrate on that fact and back off from doing all the complaining about the alleged -habitat damage- and environmental degradation in the Knik River Valley.

Especially since the most prestigious and magnificent areas have already been set aside and designated as National Parks and wilderness areas and we need a locale for motorized recreation.

A report from the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game states that wildlife populations in the Knik River area are in good shape. We could not locate any Fish and Game reports that mention any significant damage to the habitat or the environment that was caused by off-road vehicles.

With the thousands of un-regulated users utilizing the Knik River area over the years you would expect to find some -ruts and tracks- in the sand and gravel bars. This does not constitute significant and permanent damage any more than the tracks from the moose and bears!

We don't think that a daily user fee would be appropriate. It would open up a lot of opportunities for discrimination considering the fact that the area is so large, it would be difficult to control access and to collect fees from everyone equally. There are lots of areas along the perimeter of the KRPUA where people can access the land from private and public property. Also many people fly into the KRPUA and land on unimproved remote airstrips where it would just about be impossible to collect fees. Boats could enter the area from down river outside the KRPUA and would be avoiding the fees. An annual card fee similar to the Federal Parks system might be a feasible alternate to daily user fees.

Part 2. List of documents that support a KRPUA with all existing trails kept open and with retention of established and traditional uses.

This is summary of the groups and individuals that have shown support for the KRPUA. Support is well documented by BCC resolutions, petitions, and statements from other supporting groups and businesses in the Mat-Su Valley and Anchorage. Any hard copy's desired for verification of items on this list, or other items mentioned in this letter, will be made available upon request.

Butte Community Council Board and general membership Butte Community Council Trails Committee The AOAA (Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance), The AOC (Alaska Outdoor Council) The Alaska Trappers Association The Mat-Su Borough The (Mat-Su Trails Council), The Anchorage ATV Club. Senator Charlie Huggins, Representative Bill Stoltze. Mat-Su Borough Assembly person Lynn Woods Several businesses that supported and helped with the petitions and many others

Resolutions of the Butte Community Council supporting the KRPUA

A resolution of the Butte Community Council, (Resolution Number 93-01) supporting continued public access and traditional multiple use of the Knik Glacier / Knik River Valley area for all citizens. (December 1993)

A resolution of the Butte Community Council (number 93-01) supporting an application for public Right of Way R.S. 2477 for the Knik Glacier - Friday Creek, Metal Creek trail, for public access for all citizens. (April 1993)

A resolution of the Butte Community Council proclaiming our right to traditional use of public lands. (June 9, 2004)

A resolution (No. 2005-5 June 8, 2005) of the Butte Community Council supporting a bill, for an act entitled, -AN ACT CREATING THE KNIK RIVER PUBLIC USE AREA.- State of Alaska, House Bill No. HB 307, and Senate Bill No. SB 197, introduced May 7, 2005.

A resolution of the Butte Community Council (No. 2005-10 July 13, 2005) approving the circulation of a State wide petition to gather signatures of Alaskans and other users of the Knik River Valley public lands, that support House Bill No. 307 and Senate Bill No. 197.

A Mat-Su Borough resolution supporting a Knik River Public Use Area. (Resolution serial number 05-068 AM)

Mat-Su Borough easements for right of way access--Jim Creek trail head.

Petitions with over 3,000 signatures supporting open existing trails, traditional motorized uses and the creation of a KRPUA.

The DNR certification of the Knik River Trail Corridor as a an old federal RS 2477 Public Right of Way

List of the several private landowners contained within the KRPUA

Platt's showing mining claims in the KRPUA near Metal Creek.

Part 3. List of government agency's that already have regulations in place for controlling public land use and addressing environmental concerns.

During the public hearings on the KRPUA, many people stated that there were -no regulations- and that users could do 'anything they wanted'. A relatively quick literature search showed that there are many 'agency's' that have rules about land, water and air use in the Knik River area. The result of this literature search is the following list. The purpose of this list is to make available to the public, the vast amounts of rules, regulations, and protections that are already in effect for the Knik River area.

The agencies included in this list have an accumulative effect of many regulations of one kind or another that apply collectively to all lands, private or public, and also apply to the quality of water and air. This list of agency's and the rules and regulations that it implies, dictates that an analysis and study should be done by the KRPUA planning and management team in order to determine just what regulations exist now that already apply to the lands within the KRPUA. We feel that this study is necessary in order to eliminate possible redundancy, and even more complex and hard to understand rules and regulations.

AGENCY'S AND SUB AGENCY'S Below are listed 70 or more -Agency's-, acts and plans, that have -regulations- that pertain to public and private lands in Alaska and the KRPUA.

AGENCY'S AND SUB AGENCY'S Alaska (state general laws and statutes) Alaska Bureau of Wildlife Enforcement Alaska Department of Fish and Game Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Survey Alaska interagency Fire management Council BATF (Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and firearms) BLM (Bureau of land Management) Federal land CNIPM Committee for noxious and invasive plants Coast Guard DEC---Department of Environmental Conservation DNR (Division of Natural Resources---State of Alaska EPA Environmental protection Agency FAA Federal Aviation Administration FBI Federal Bureau of investigation Fire department (Butte area) Fire Fighting Division (State of Alaska) Floodplain management Matanuska Susitna Borough Soil Conservation Service Alaska State Troopers U.S. Department of Agriculture U.S. Water resources Council USASE U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (wetlands) Cook Inlet Intrastate Air Quality Control Region

PROTECTION ACTS AND PLANS Alaska Habitat Management Guide EA DRMP & EIS Alaska habitat management Guide ROF Alaska National Heritage Program EA Alaska Recreation Trails Plan Alaska Regional Haze Strategy ROF Alaska statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan ROF Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Alien Species Prevention Enforcement Act ANILCA Antiquities Act Archaeological Resources Protection Act Asset Management Plan For Borough Owned Land in the Butte Central / Southern Southeast area Plan ROF Clean Water Act Coastal management Plan (Borough) Coastal management Plan (State DNR) Coastal Wetlands Planning , Protection and Restoration Act Coastal Zone Management Act Eagle Protection Act Endangered Species Act EPA (Environmental protection Agency Federal Land Policy and Management Act ROF Mining Law of 1892 Historic Sites Act Management for Anadromous Fish Habitat public and private land Mat-Su Borough Comp Plan Mat-Su Borough general regulations for businesses, etc. Migratory Bird Conservation Act Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960

National Ambient Air Quality Standards National Environmental Policy Act ROF National Historic Preservation Act ROF 1966 (NHPA) National Weed Identification and Prevention ROF North American Wetlands Conservation Act North Anchorage Land Agreement NRHP---National Register of Historic Places Soil and Water Conservation Act, ROF Submerged Lands Act 1953 ROF Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act ROF Susitna Area Plan Endangered Species Act Water Quality Standards---ROF Watershed Protection and Flood Control Act Wilderness Act 1964 ROF

The regulations contained within the above -Agency's- have a diversity of objectives that is quite extensive and covers just about everything. A partial list and sample of subjects covered is listed below. Air Quality Water Pollution Fish and game protection Public endangerment Arson Drugs Fire Trash Eagle protection Act Hunting Heavy equipment permits Mining National heritage program Antiquities act Archeology Endangered species Aircraft operations Migratory birds Wasting fish and game Harassment off fish and game Wetlands Timber permits Guiding permits Trapping permits Trapping cabins Camping on public lands Generally allowed uses on state land Business license

Part 4. Major goals that we would like to see attained by the planning team: (note: goals number 5 are from the MSB Coastal Plan)

What we certainly don't want, is radical regulations and rules such as, gates across trails, limited hours of entry, entry fees, major trails closed, etc, such as some of those proposals that were contained in the Mat-Su Borough -Asset Plan- for borough owned land in the Butte.

GOALS 1. Make sure that all of the existing trails in the Knik River Valley corridor and other areas of the KRPUA remain open.

2. Make sure that motorized vehicles and boats (including airboats) will be able to continue to exercise their traditional access and uses in the Knik River area.

3. Concentrate any new law enforcement objectives on: car burnings, trashing and unsafe shooting (these are the major items that have been a problem in the past and are already against the law).

4. Follow the language of House Bill 307 and the intent of the creators of this Knik River Public Use Area.

Incorporate the goals set forth in the Mat-Su Borough Coastal Management Plan. (page 5) Under the section; To retain public access for adequate easements for trail access across public lands.

The following is from the MSB Coastal Plan (amended April 12, 2005) 4.0 chapter 4 volume 1, page 8 -Public access to rivers, lakes, and streams must be retained as land is subdivided or developed.

Existing, regularly used trails need to be included as a reservation Right of way or easement when land is subdivided or developed.

To retain public access to important recreational areas.

Objective A: inventory, identify, and provide for adequate easements for trails across all public lands within the district.

Objective B: Ensure that Borough wide trail corridors are not lost through public or private

development projects.

Objective C: Develop a public recreational access plan.

#### Part 5. Law enforcement

One topic that we wish to emphasize is that we want to see only lawful and legal activities in the KRPUA and every where else. We believe that any and all activities in the area should be lawful and should comply with all existing and future laws of the State of Alaska and any other agencies that have legal authority in our area.

We certainly admit that there has been some car burnings, trashing, and unsafe -target-shooting, but in general, the habitat damage has been greatly exaggerated by the over zealous greenies in their efforts to curtail ATV activities in the Knik River Valley. There is probably much less serious -lawlessness- here than in Anchorage, just a different type of activities!

We wish to see more law enforcement activities by certified police officers such as the Alaska State Troopers, the Fish and Game, or DNR personnel. Just a simple patrol twice a day, especially on busy week-ends), by well marked Trooper vehicles, would do a lot to curtail unwanted activities!

#### Part 6. Synopsis of the geology of the Knik River Valley with references to government publications. (geological reports)

This description of the geology of the Knik River area is the result of a literature search of many geological reports that were written by scientific organizations such as:

The United States Geological Survey The United States Bureau of Mines The United States Bureau of Land Management Alaska Department of Geological and Geophysical Survey Alaska Territorial Department of Mines University of Alaska Mineral Industry Research Laboratory

The following is an abbreviated summary of the Geology of the Knik River area.

The Knik River Valley is a relatively young area geologically speaking. It is a rugged mountainous area with steep -hanging- valleys- with associated high erosional forces. The Knik River is braided, muddy and highly silted because it is fed by 5 different glacial streams, and many un-named small tributaries, as well as the Knik Glacier. Due to the combination of sandstorms, (Chinook winds), periodic flooding, the former annual -breakout- flooding of the Lake George area and the continual deposition of glacial silt from the many glacial streams there are continual changes and forces that effect the drainage system of the -braided- Knik River valley.

Due to the high erosion rates caused by the natural processes in the Knik River Valley, we feel that a vivid, unbiased, science based geological description of the valley and its on-going changes caused by the forces of nature. So that the public, users, and the new DNR planning and management team will have a base line of information in order to compare the alleged -damage- to the land that is claimed by -greenies- to the actual natural forces that have occurred in the past and are still occurring on an ongoing daily basis. With this information, they will be able to make a comparison and a reasonable decision on whether any new regulations are necessary to protect the habitat.

Records and reports by Government agency's for the last 100 years have well documented

the natural dynamic conditions produced by erosion in the Knik River Valley. The sources of the active erosion are many and are listed and discussed below.

1. Lake George annual flooding (pre--1966) In the past and an event that could happen again is the previous annual -break-out- of the Lake George" glacial dammed lake. This annual event flooded the lowlands along the Knik River, the lakes and swamps such as Jim lake, Mud lake, Leaf Lake and the lands along the lower Knik River below the old Knik River Bridge. The Glacier is still near the mountain just like before and could move a slight amount and cause damming and flooding similar to what happened in the past.

2. Rain caused flooding Periodic flooding caused by large rainfall happens periodically in the Knik River valley. Several years ago there was a flood that caused the Old Glen Hwy to be closed and stranded people up the Knik River. A Matanuska River flood in 1970 tore up the old Glenn Hwy and flooded 100 houses in the Butte area. The overflow from the flood entered the Knik River between the outlet of Jim Creek and the Knik River bridge. Much of the Butte residential area has been classified as a flood zone!

3. Earthquakes The 1964 earthquake is well documented for the damage it did to many areas of Alaska as well as damage to the Knik River Valley. The quake caused local (Butte area) trails to be moved and destroyed and formed many cracks in the earth some of which are still visible today.

4. The Knik Glacier (past history and current status) The previous effects of the main Knik Glacier that occurred over a period of thousands of years are still visible today. The normal effects of a dynamic moving glacier such as terminal and side moraines are some of the signs left from the Knik Glaciers advance many years ago. The glacier, while previously standing for relatively large periods of time at various locations in the Knik River Valley has caused the formation of many -hanging valleys-. Examples of hanging valleys are--- The Jim Creek upper valley, Friday Creek, Metal Creek, Hunter Creek and others. The -hanging valleys- are now a source of flooding with swift water and high erosion rates due to the extremely high gradient of the glacier caused, steep -hanging valleys-.

5. Glacial streams (tributaries) There are 5 main glacial streams that are tributaries to the main Knik River as well as the Knik Glacier itself and countless other small tributary streams that contribute sediments, rocks, and detritus to the lower reaches of the drainage system. The glacier streams are normally silty and muddy in the summer and contribute much sediment to the Knik River Valley on a daily basis.

Many small unnamed tributaries to the Knik River are the source of periodic flooding that sometimes brings large volumes of rocks and detritus down the steep mountain sides and distributes them in the relatively small delta fan areas near the base of the mountains. There are areas in the woods at the base of the mountains where rocks can be seen piled up against trees from the force of erosion, flooding and gravity.

6. Sand dunes (cause blockage and diversion of the natural flow of water) The sand dunes in the Knik River valley in the vicinity of the outlet of Jim Creek and along the north side of the main Knik River Valley were formed by the deposition of blowing sand from further up the Knik River. The dunes past and present location obstructs the normal flow of water from its source along the mountains in the area from Friday Creek to approximately 1 mile east of the old Glen Hwy. For approximately 20 miles, from the Old Glen Hwy. to the Knik Glacier, the unvegetated sand and gravel bars of the -braided- Knik River constitutes a perfect place for the winds to pick up loose silt and sand and to distribute it further downriver to increase the

-braiding- of the river and to form new dunes and continually modify the existing dunes. -Chinook winds- are a reoccurring phenomena in the Knik River Valley and sometimes blow sand continuously for 30 days at a time in the spring of the year. There are other signs of past activity by the Knik glacier. They are the side and terminal moraines that are -leftovers- from the glacier, -pushing- huge amounts of pulverized earthy materials from the river bed and are vivid evidence of past activities of how glaciers scour and erode the terrain.

The linear line of wind blown sand dunes that presently exist along the northern margin of the Knik River in the vicinity of the outlet of Jim Creek have blocked the normal drainage patterns of the waters that normally flow from the mountains toward the main channel of the Knik River. The waters from the mountain streams meander over the flood plain and form creeks, sloughs, and shallow lakes in the area from Friday Creek to near the old Glen Highway. The elevation of the shallow lakes is close to that of the Knik River and the previous flooding caused by the -break-out- of Lake George flooded the Jim Lake area as well as the main Knik River Valley. The erratic flow of waters from Friday Creek contributes to the problem. When Friday Creek (another braided River) changes its course, the diverted waters flow in behind the sand dunes and moraines and then mingle with the otherwise clear waters of Jim Creek. The Friday Creek waters {glacial silt}, when they are diverted, dirty the waters of Jim Creek, Swan Lake, and some other waters in the Jim Creek system. The flowing waters of the McRoberts Creek drainage have been modified by the diverted silty waters from Friday Creek and the normal flow of water appears to be reversed in that drainage area.

7. Snow avalanches and rockslides There are avalanche areas where trees have been sheared off and destroyed by snow slides. One area in particular is the area just west of Wolf Point where a large snow slide covered the main trail to the glacier with trees and snow. That was approx. 20 years ago and the damage can still be observed.

SUMMARY: By now with all of the evidence of the natural -damage- and constant changes to the land caused by the natural forces of the earth, it should be obvious that no new radical or drastic changes are needed for control or for a reduction in the use of 4 wheelers, off roaders or airboats and any actions taken by planning and management should be only for curtailing the things that are currently a problem and are already against the law, such as the car burnings, trash, and dangerous and indiscriminate shooting (target ? shooting).

We feel that our opponents (greenies) have exaggerated and amplified the -evidence- of alleged damage to the habitat by taking pictures of the ruts, tracks, burnt cars, etc. and then by showing professional computerized -power point slide shows- made up from the worst things they could find to any organizations that would watch. They obviously were attempting to make it look like there is a large amount of -damage- and environmental degradation that is way out of proportion to reality and to debase and destroy the use of the Knik River Off-Road recreation area!

We think that the Alaska legislature has done an excellent job in designati

**Comment 121 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family and friends. Number of people with me on average trip: 8  
Number of trips within the area per year: 6 I ride ATVs and do photography in the Public Use Area. I use the parking lot to Wolf Pt or the Glacier. I get to the areas I use by ATV trails. I like the varied terrain, glacier, and other riders around available to help. I wish there was a maintained (meaning marked, not excessively muddy) through Wold Point to permit easier access to glacier.

**Comment 122 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Make road in there so police can get there. Make parking lot back by sand dunes with public restrooms, dumpsters. Groom the trails.

**Comment 123 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Prosecute the car burners! Don't build any facilities that will require user fees or parking fees to support. If any user fee is implemented it should only charge non-residents but allow local residents free access. Just like is done in Hawaii.

**Comment 124 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Thank you for allowing our organization to provide input for the Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan. We recognize that this Management Plan for a Public Use Area is a new concept and direction for the State and DNR in particular; not as regulated as a Park or Recreation Area, but being recognized as something more than open State owned land. The PUA is bounded on the south and east by a State Park and Recreation Area respectively, where the users are regulated as to area and trail availability. The PUA should remain an area where all users are welcome into all areas, on all trails, at all times. We also recognize and support the fact that stopping the illegal activity that physically threatens personal safety and property is the highest priority for all the user groups and the people living in the area. Based on Legislative Intent, testimony given during the legislative process and input received during this scoping process, we assume that DNR shares this priority. We support efforts to stop this behavior while preserving fulltime access for all legitimate user groups.

The statute specifically recognizes recreational motorized use as a legitimate user group within the PUA. Recognized by the US Forest Service as -the fastest growing outdoor activity- ([http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/OHV\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/ohv/OHV_final_report.pdf)), OHV/ATV recreational use within the PUA can be managed to handle the increased use requirements for years to come. In the past ATV/OHV use on state lands in Alaska has been managed as it occurs in conjunction with other activities, most typically hunting, fishing or trapping. These are point to point uses of the vehicles, going to a specific place to do another specific activity. ATV/OHV activity in the PUA historically is both, with the recreational segment solidly established and growing faster.

There are significant differences in recreational OHV/ATV use and use of OHV/ATVs as part of other activities. Following are some common traits/desires of recreational ATV/OHV users:

1. The trail itself is as important as the destination/activity at the end of it.
2. Riders will prefer to make circular trips to out and back trails.
3. Riders will readily explore a new trail if headed in the right direction.
4. Trails leading to or within an area should have differing levels of difficulty.
5. Users will usually be in groups rather than operating alone.
6. There are subgroups within recreational users that look for different factors in choosing trails (i.e. hills, speed, mud, etc.).
7. Some trails have to be tough for many of the users. Tough trails may not be pretty but neither do they by definition harm the ecology.

The Knik River PUA is able to support such a large number of ATV/OHV users only because the entire braided glacial river flats is in effect a very wide trail, interspersed with varying size areas of brush. Using this river bar trail as the backbone with off-shoot trails to areas of interest will allow this area to support more users by creating more of the off-shoot trails to new or the same areas. This allows dispersion of the users to permit a satisfactory experience for all the users of all the user groups. Trips off the river flats (flats include the un-vegetated flood plains in the Friday and Metal Creek valleys) are generally done on existing defined trails. The trails off the river flats areas provide access to scenic views, hunting areas and areas used for other activities as well as recreational ATV/OHV use. This is part of what makes this an excellent recreational ATV/OHV area.

We fully support the KRPUA statute's stated requirement for recognizing existing trails for continued use and the direction to create more trails to allow for more use. The ATV Club look forward to working with DNR to develop more trails of varying difficulty to enhance the recreational ATV/OHV use of the area and create access for all users to different areas within the PUA.

The Alaska ATV Club supported the legislation in an effort to stop the illegal and abusive behavior of a small group of people in the area. We would support DNR making regulations under this statute that make it possible to identify and prosecute the people doing the car burning, littering, unsafe shooting and other actions that threaten the physical safety and personal property of users and neighbors of the area. Any regulations should be considered as part of the Management Plan with the public input and comment that goes with it. I have attached a list of comments generated as representative of the recreational ATV users and those using the ATV/OHVs as tools in their pursuits in the KRPUA. Thank you for your consideration of these comments in drafting the Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan.

Alaska ATV Club Comments for the Knik Public Use Area Scoping process 12-13-06

USES: Who uses the PUA? Alaska ATV Club, as an organization and as individuals, for club rides, rides with family and friends and family activities. The PUA is also part of the area maintained by the semi-yearly Club sponsored cleanups.

How do you access the PUA? As a club, we access the area using ATVs.

Where does your use occur within the PUA? We continually use the trail systems throughout the Knik River, Jim Creek, Friday Creek, and Metal Creek drainages. We use the un-vegetated areas of the Knik Flats as a single trail unit and consider any effort to delineate specific trails across the rocks and sand to be unworkable. We regularly access the glacier itself along its face.

What types of activities do you conduct within the PUA? Group ATV rides as a club and individuals for rides with family and/or friends. Members also use the area for hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, gold panning, dog sled training runs, tourists, family picnics, bird hunting, archery, rock hunting, climbing, cross country skiing.

When do you recreate? We have club and individual rides year around in the PUA. Over the last 5 years we have averaged 7 club rides a year in the PUA, with 6-19 people on each ride. In addition, we have 125-280 people on the Spring Cleanups and 50-100 people on the Fall Cleanup events, in May and Sept/Oct respectively. This year we plan on a minimum of 1 ride per month in the PUA and are working on conducting ATV beginner training there monthly. We will also schedule several rides in the late winter/early spring time frame on short notice through a local ATV web site.

Why do you choose to recreate in the PUA? The KRPUA is a large area with access to a vast array of trails, and is suitable for a wide range of ages, types of riding and riding abilities. It is the only remaining open riding area within the Anchorage - MatSu Bowl.

RESOURCES: Fish & Wildlife populations: The club and its membership enjoys the wildlife and fishing the area presents. Wildlife does benefit from public use because it helps prevent poaching and they use the trails to travel through the area.

Unique, or varied habitats: Enjoy viewing, hunting and fishing the various areas, such as

viewing the glacier, fly fishing, bird hunting, small game hunting, and a good place to introduce people to Alaska's wild areas.

Trails: The various trails present opportunities for a wide variety of riding abilities, as well as a good /safe area for new riders to learn skills. The number of trails and expanse of the open river flats allows riders to avoid other riders and spread out through the area. This lessens the impact on individual trails/areas and is one reason the Club supports creation of more trails within the PUA.

Motorized and non-motorized recreational opportunities: ATV use is the main focus as respects the club's use. The ATV Club has not and will not support restricting any user group from any specific trail or area.

Non-motorized and motorized boating opportunities: Membership uses the area for air boats, and sightseeing with family and friends. The ATV Club has not and will not support restricting any user group from any specific area.

Wildlife hunting and viewing opportunities: Wildlife viewing is a year around activity through the changing seasons. It is a great place to take out of state friends and family to see a slice of Alaska and enjoy some of the activities that we who live here year around enjoy.

Other? Mineral resources - gold panning, rock hunting, fossil hunting, just kids collecting pretty rocks and learning about the area and geography.

ATV Club's views on the identified PRELIMINARY ISSUES:

Access to the KRPUA: The Club supports maintaining all existing unfettered routes of access into the PUA, specifically including access off Sullivan Road, Maude Road and off the Old Glen Hwy bridges. The club also supports developing access and parking areas in the Hunter Creek area. We also will help to develop access trail(s) to Grasshopper Valley.

Facilities promoting access and use of the KRPUA and collection of fees: Collection of fees for developed camping areas would be acceptable. Fees for accessing the area and primitive camping is a State Park model and is un-acceptable for a Public Use Area.

Trails within the KRPUA and adjacent Borough Lands: We are always pro trail development for the recreational opportunities and because additional trails are needed to spread use and access, especially given the expected growth in the Anchorage and Mat-Su areas.

User conflicts with the KRPUA and Borough Lands: Target shooting, vandalism and illegal dumping are the only uses that conflict with recreational ATV/OHV use. We would support defining an area for target practice only.

Impact to bird nesting, brooding and staging areas or sensitive habitat: The swamp areas in and around the Finger Lakes, Jim Lake, Swan Lake, Leaf Lake, and related lakes have existing trails. These existing trails should be maintained to limit damage, and to provide wildlife and bird viewing opportunities for families. For areas where existing trails go through muddy areas, build hardened by-passes paralleling the muddy areas - allowing users a choice of routing. This will stop the widening mud-hole problem while preserving the challenge and historical context of the trail. Motorized access is, in some cases, the only way for families with young children and people not physically able to access the area on foot to visit these areas. New all user trails should be created to provide access to the areas for viewing while protecting especially sensitive areas.

Impacts to Wetlands Existing trails should be allowed to remain. Trails through wetlands should be provided hardened bypasses to provide safe access through and around the areas. Again, trails have a value for more than just going to a destination. Appropriate trails should be added for access through these areas to provide recreational opportunities. Full access across all wetlands for ATV/OHVs should be allowed when ice/frost exceeds 2 inches.

Impacts to fish migration, spawning and rearing habitats: Stream crossing permits should be retained and maintained indefinitely for all creeks in the area. The permitted crossing points are on the lower creek areas where spawning and rearing habitats are not affected. Full access across all streams and lakes for ATV/OHVs should be allowed when ice exceeds 4 inches.

#### Miscellaneous Issues:

Illegal Dumping: Support enforcement of ordinances/laws to prosecute illegal dumpers. Support creating regulations under this statute making easier to ticket and prosecute people who abandon or destroy a vehicle or personal property, or to litter in the KRPUA.

#### Proposed additions/deletions

Land exchange Fully support the entire KRPUA being maintained as a complete land unit as initially envisioned. This exchange/acquisition provision includes lands currently managed by BLM and the Matanuska Borough parcels south of Sullivan Rd. The lands offered for exchange should be parcels not already designated for a PUA

Unauthorized/unlawful activities Support enforcement of ordinances/laws to prosecute illegal dumpers. Support creating regulations within the Management Plan creation process with all possible public input.

Materials Extraction To stand as current and traditional to the area, in accordance with the Generally Allowed Uses Guidelines.

Firewood Collection We support allowing use of dead standing and downed timber and slash for camp firewood to help reduce wild fire exposure and provide foraging growth for wildlife. We feel that allowing use of standing dead wood for campfire use will reduce wild-fire danger in the area.

Knik Glacier We support maintaining full access to and on the Knik Glacier for recreational use, viewing, and family and tourism activities with use of ATVs and OHVs.

Military MOU We support continued use of the area for military training on a non-exclusive basis. This terrain provides excellent training opportunities close to the bases and the military presence helps prevent inappropriate use in the area. A good example is the National Guard helping to pull out abandoned vehicles as training exercises.

#### **Comment 125 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Swan Disturbance in the Knik River Watershed Introduction Thirty (30) comprehensive aerial surveys were flown in the spring, summer, and fall of 2005 to monitor the trumpeter swans in the Knik River Watershed (KRW). The surveys include the important Jim Creek Basin (JCB) where 22 lakes and numerous ponds are located in a wetland environment. Jim Creek empties into the lower Knik River 2 miles southeast of the Butte community. The aerial survey data was recorded in tables and reports were written to document swam temporal and

spatial distribution, nesting success, disturbance to the swans, and other factors. The swans returned to Southcentral Alaska from their wintering grounds on April 7, 2005. Several hundred swans use the lakes in the JCB as a staging area during the spring and fall migration periods in April / May and again in September / October. An aerial survey conducted on October 27, 2004 showed a total of five hundred twenty-eight (528) swans using the JCB. The summer surveys showed a maximum number of nine (9) pairs of swans nesting in the KRW in 2005. Non nesting swans are found in singles, pairs, and / or flocks in the JCB. Non nesting swans averaged approximately fifteen (15) birds in 2005.

**Migrating Swan Disturbance** Swans arriving in Southcentral Alaska in early April seek out the JCB as it usually has the only open water at this time of the year. The open water in early spring is due to the thermal effects on the south slopes of the nearby Chugach Mountains that create warm springs that flow into the lakes. The first open water areas show up as small openings in the ice on the northern end of Mud and Jim Lakes. The swans that use these open water areas in early spring are constantly being disturbed by recreational vehicles (usually trucks) driving the Rippy Trail and parking near the shoreline of the lakes. Activities such as target practicing with rifles or pistols and fireworks displays immediately displace the swans by driving them off the open water. They often relocate on the ice of one of the nearby lakes.

The swans are also being disturbed by motorized recreational vehicles during the latter part of the spring migration period, e.g., in May, after the ice on the lakes has melted. The swans on the lakes are disturbed by air and motor boats that approach the swans at too close a range, by making too much noise at close range, or by traveling too fast in close proximity of the swans. All-Terrain Cycles (ATCs) drive through wetlands in the JCB to lakes where swans are present. Large numbers of ATCs highly disturb the swans.

The swans are frequently disturbed in September and October when large numbers of air and motor boats are frequenting the lakes in the JCB. Swans up to a hundred or more that were displaced from the JCB have been observed on naked gravel bars (no food) along the nearby braided Knik River during the fall migration period.

**Nesting Swan Disturbance** Six of the seven pairs of trumpeter swans and their broods in the KRW in 2005 were continually disturbed during the latter part of the summer and fall by numerous encounters from operators of boats and ATCs pursuing recreational activities. The impairment or harm to the swans by the motorized disturbance is, as follows: (1) Swan families that were forced out of their traditional nesting habitat walked one or more miles to an adjoining lake to obtain relief which was not forthcoming; (2) Swans showed up missing and were assumed to be killed as they were never found on succeeding surveys; (3) Frequent disturbance in the summer months interrupts the swans ability to properly feed and rear the cygnets so that they will be fully developed and capable of flight during the fall migration; (4) The swan pairs which had a mate killed is destroying a life-long bond that results in instability in maintaining swan populations; (5) Six of the seven nesting pairs of swans and their broods were being disturbed to a level beyond sustainability for the swans to successfully raise a healthy brood of cygnets in the Knik River Valley in 2005; (6) The trumpeter swan has been placed on Audubon Alaska's Bird Watchlist in December 2005. It is already on the National Audubon Watchlist as several hundred trumpeters are dying of lead poisoning each year on their wintering grounds in Washington and southern British Columbia. We don't need additional problems affecting the swans in Alaska; and (7) We are educating Alaskans that this irresponsible and misplaced use of motorized recreational vehicles is an acceptable practice as there are no management plans or guidelines for use of ORVs and boats on this State land.

Recommendation First and foremost a recreational management plan is needed. The plan must address swan disturbance issues and include in the plan safeguards and protections so that the migrating and nesting swans can use the habitat in the KRW without the overwhelming disturbance from motorized use. Once the plan has been approved, it will be necessary to have in place Conservation Officers to ensure that the approved plan is implemented to the fullest. A secondary recommendation is to require all hunters who hunt in the Jim Creek Basin to obtain a Hunter Safety Permit. This requirement will provide education on how to hunt in the area without disturbing swans and other sensitive wildlife.

Recreational status of the Lake Fork Knik River needs to be addressed in the new management plan The Lake Fork of the Knik River which empties Lake George will be fully navigable by boats within the next five (5) years due to the rapid melting and retreating of the Knik Glacier. When the Lake Fork opens up and becomes free of glacial ice, boats will be able to travel from the Knik River into Lake George and beyond. All terrain cycles can easily be hauled into the Lake George basin on boats. Policy on the recreational use of the Lake Fork needs to be established now and placed in the new Knik River PUA Plan. Traditional use of state land in the Lake George basin has been scenic flights into the wild country to view the attractive mountains, glaciers, and wildlife. Hopefully, motorized vehicles could be restricted to preserve the wild character and traditional use.

**Comment 126 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

1. A campground - picnic area may help keep the area cleaner - less trash. 2. Trail signs are needed so people stay on the trail - & don't get lost or in trouble. 3. People should not travel to the glacier when wind blows - there is plenty of quartz - which can mean lung problems & silicosis! 4. People should be told to slow down as dust kicked up by vehicles & 4 wheelers is not healthy! Enjoy the wildlife & scenery. 5. Parking area - so people do not have to worry about their vehicles being stolen or items stolen from them.

**Comment 127 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Most of my concerns are for the young families. The men are gone riding - having fun - the mothers, most often are stuck holding down the fort. These are the voters, I mean, people who need help. A place for mothers, and small children to gather, and be safe from the action area. I know we need bathrooms, just like the poor states have. (We can fence off an area for children to play.) We are talking about a hole, dug in the middle of a gravel bar, and covered with a concrete/block -fireproof-, building on skids. Service it every couple years, by digging a new hole, dragging your structure, and back filling! I-I bet the guard would do it for training! Bathrooms are needed! Fire proof of course! Mainly near the fishing areas - state wide probably. Jim Creek - power plant - Knik Bridge - sand dunes - Glacier Mud Lake - Swan Lake. You have people - you need bathrooms! More people means another special built bathroom. I have an idea - that would be bear proof, fire proof, and not much maintenance. A loading dock would be nice for the 4-wheeler people. My area of interest is Jim/Swan Lakes and the waterways connecting them to the Knik River. Safety rules that have been established by the locals, over a period of 25 years - work. Small craft should stay to the inside of a turn - especially when hearing an airboat approaching. All the energy - wave action, and wind, goes to the outside of a turn when operating an airboat. I hope to be involved if needed to, provide signs for Knik River Public Use Area information boards, and provide maintenance for such signs. Near Knik River bridge - facility for groups! To have large gatherings. Cleanup facilities for young mothers with babies and small children. Draw water from Bodenber Creek. Maybe a boat launch, - although - the way it is has worked for my 30 years. It moves around, but it works! Some signs explaining the damage to the

support columns of the old bridge. Ice damage. Something for our visitors to read. I'm of course an air boater! Other than safety rules and courtesy - right-a-way - I think we are pretty good shape. Mud Lake could use a little work! 4 wheeler & bike people need bathroom facilities at the Knik Bridge. Both sides of the highway. A loading platform for pickups and trailers would be nice as well. Maud Road access to Mud Lake and beyond is in need of some work. The area needs some cat work at the parking area and launch pad. I retired from the Alaska Army National Guard in 87. If I can be of any help - call me! The engineers used to do a lot of projects - state wide - of course things have changed in 20 years. I think an information board with a map of the area and some simple rules of the road would do a lot of good!! Especially for folks who don't know anything about the area, and are smart enough to listen. A place for them to register ideas, or complaints, or make a suggestion. Don't forget the Jim Creek safety sign.

**Comment 128 of 255 - received on 01/03/2007 at 07:22 PM:**

As a commercial operator operating within State parks and on other lands I would recommend bringing the commercial use fees from this area into line with fees charged elsewhere. These fees could be used to start to help pay for the management of this area. I also feel that a policy that would revoke commercial operators permits for extreme bad behavior would be in line. This would help to insure that this area has operators who are environmentally responsible.

**Comment 129 of 255 - received on 01/04/2007 at 03:59 PM:**

[These comments have also been submitted via regular mail]  
January 4, 2007

TO: Mr. Brandon McCutcheon Plan Project Manager AK Dept. of Natural Resources 550 W. 7th Ave, Suite 1050 Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Mr. McCutcheon,

I am pleased to hear that the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is in the process of developing a management plan for the Knik River Public Use Area (KRPUA).

In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of the Jim-Swan Lakes area, within the KRPUA, and impress upon you its critical ecological value for birds and other wildlife.

As part of a global project, coordinated by BirdLife International, the National Audubon Society has been working for the last decade to establish a network of Important Bird Areas (or IBAs) across the United States.

In 2006, the Alaska IBA Technical Committee identified the Jim-Swan Lakes area, from Burnt Butte to Friday Creek, as an IBA of state level significance. This designation is primarily based on a well-documented use by migratory Trumpeter Swans, a species considered to be of conservation concern. The National IBA Technical Committee is currently assessing the continental and global significance of the site, and I fully expect that the committee will recognize the Jim-Swan lakes as a top tier site (of global significance) in early 2007.

In addition to globally significant numbers of Trumpeter Swans, the area also supports notable populations of many species of breeding waterfowl, raptors, and landbirds. The recent and extremely high level of motorized use that this area has been subject to, however, has done nothing to enhance its value for wildlife or recreation.

For example,

" off-road vehicle use of the Rippy Trail causes considerable erosion in the adjacent uplands and long-term habitat degradation to the anadromous streams, wetlands, and lakes of the area,

" airboat use causes direct destruction of vulnerable wetland vegetation, and

" all motorized vehicle use in the area causes severe disturbance to birds at sensitive periods when they can least tolerate it - during migration, breeding, and molting.

Thankfully, these problems are relatively easily solved and the critical ecological value of the Jim-Swan Lakes area can be protected through the introduction of a simple, straightforward measure specifically, the introduction of a non-motorized area around the Jim-Swan Lakes, or, at the very least, a seasonal closure (from April through October, inclusive) to all motorized use.

It is worth noting that such a closure would represent less than 5 % of the entire KRPUA hardly an extreme measure in anyones view. Enforcement by on-the-ground patrol, however, would be vital to the success of this measure in fully protecting the habitats in this area, as well as increasing the general safety of non-motorized recreational users.

I look forward to seeing your management planning documents and maps as they become available.

Yours sincerely,

Iain J. Stenhouse, PhD

**Comment 130 of 255 - received on 01/04/2007 at 04:20 PM:**

Within the PUA I believe there needs to be a variety of recreational opportunities, and the area is certainly large enough to accommodate many different types of users (e.g motorized and non-motorized, horse, boat, bike, hiker, etc). However, I believe DNR should, at a minimum:

- 1) NOT allow further habitat degradation -anywhere in the PUA - due to motorized use (i.e. existing trails should be used, with no expansion);
- 2) NOT allow any motorized use in the Jim-Swan Lakes areas during summer(including boats/airboats) except for ADFG fish management activities;
- 3) NOT allow any motorized use on the Rippy Trail during May 15 - Sept 15.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Comment 131 of 255 - received on 01/04/2007 at 04:57 PM:**

Dear Knik River Valley Planning Team,

We are in the process of compiling our recommendations and documentation overall and for specific areas. With the comment period ending Sunday, January 7, we ask that you allow us to get our document to you on Monday, January 8.

We had hoped to meet with you all after having talked to Mr. Dave Griffin last month, and hope that we can get together in the near future for any questions youo may have. We are very interested to be able to participate on a continuing basis throughout the process.

Thank you,

Brit Lively Co-Chair, Butte Area Residents Civic Organization [www.buttealaska.org](http://www.buttealaska.org)

**Comment 132 of 255 - received on 01/04/2007 at 07:01 PM:**

I have been using the Knik River watershed for years to recreate in. It is a beautiful area that needs protection from unlawful use of recreational vehicles, both ATVs and airboats. There is a lot of long-term damage from these machines which may never be repaired. I believe the Rippy trail, Swan, Jim and Mud Lake areas need to be managed for non-motorized use. I often use the area to ride bikes in the summer and winter, canoe the lakes and Jim Creek, hike year round and ski too. Although there is a lot of people target shooting, dumping trash and vehicles, the area still needs to be managed for a place families can go to view wildlife and spend time together enjoying nature. This is becoming more important as the population increases and pressure on these areas close to the cities also increases. Lets plan quiet places for everyone to enjoy for many years to come!!!!

**Comment 133 of 255 - received on 01/04/2007 at 08:15 PM:**

Regarding the future management of the Knik River PUA, I would like to see the area's trails managed with natural resource protection in mind. Allow motorized use only on trails that can sustain it's use naturally or with mitigation. Those trails that are located in wetlands or sensitive wildlife areas should be non motorized. The Rippy Trail and Swan Lake are examples of this and should be kept non motorized.

**Comment 134 of 255 - received on 01/04/2007 at 08:53 PM:**

Consideration for wildlife should be given above recreational needs, and where the habitat has been damaged it should be restored. Then future care must be taken to prevent further damage. Trumpeter swans are big and magnificent, and they get a lot of attention, but tiny birds and plants and fish are also important, and once damage is done to a streambed or wetland, many species suffer. So my request is that first the most complete protections possible be implemented, along with restoration wherever needed. Members of local groups, such as the Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers volunteer to help with restoration projects. Secondly, fragile areas such as the wetlands and Rippy Trail could be best sustained as non-motorized, foot & canoe traffic only. Already mud bogs, eroded areas, and tramped areas get worse each year and sustainability should be the criteria for recreational uses. For at least the first few years, strong enforcement efforts will need to be funded. But I'm aware of other areas that seem to flourish without much enforcement, after they are well-established, so I hope Knik will be that way, too. This will one day be a wonderful, safe & rewarding place to visit. Thank you, Jo Clark

**Comment 135 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 12:00 AM:**

I use the area with family & friends. Number of people with me on average trip: 4-6 Number of trips within the area per year: 25 I ride to Knik Glacier and back. I use the Metal Creek to Knik area. I get to the areas I use by 4 wheeler. I like the scenery and animals. I don't like kids shooting. I would like to see the area kept clean and ATV trails.

**Comment 136 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 09:02 AM:**

I have been using this area for over 30 years. I believe that jim creek should be non motorized boats only. Also off road vehicles should be restricted to the main trail coming in off maud rd. to friday creek and on the knik sand drainage all the way to the glacier. The damage that they are doing to the area by establishing trails in all the swamps is shameful!! Not to mention the constance harassment to the wildlife. In the eklutna park you don't leave the one established trail with motorized vehicles it should be the same for this area. The

main channels of the knik river are ok for all types of motor boats but they should be kept out of all the small creeks.

Lets restore the knik river area to how it was and the reason why people want to come and play here. Thank you John Vinduska

**Comment 137 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 11:00 AM:**

I am in support of protecting sensitive wetlands from ATV use. Thank you, K. Boyle

**Comment 138 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 12:27 PM:**

I have spent much time hiking on the Rippy Trail and 4 wheeling and fishing at Jim Creek. Recently I have been feeling unsafe due to the amount of shooting that occurs at both locations, especially at the Jim/Mud Lakes area and around Jim Creek. I would like to see a ban on firearms use in these areas because they are frequently full of people hiking, biking, riding and fishing. There should be a designated area for target practice and it should be away from these locations, and it needs to be enforced by law enforcement. Jim Lake is also sensitive because it is a spawning ground for many of the salmon that make fishing Jim Creek possible. The amount of litter from shotgun and bullet shells in addition to the bullets themselves is surely contaminating the water. I would like to see some water quality samples taken from the lakes on a regular basis to ensure the quality of the fish. Also erosion due to four-wheeling has got to be controlled. The soils along the river are very fragile and cannot support the continued practice of allowing people to four wheel wherever they please around Jim Creek. The area is already decimated and it will probably take many years for vegetation to reestablish itself. I'm not opposed to 4 wheeling, but it needs to be restricted to designated trails, preferably ones that are separate from hiking or non motorized trails at least up to the Jim Creek area. I think its great what has been done recently to make a new trailhead sign and mark the trail starting at the end of Maud Road. Similar signage should also be placed along the canoe trail that connects the lakes and Jim Creek to make it more user friendly. Also, please consider grooming the Maud trails for skiing, as there are no groomed trails, that I'm aware of in the Butte area, and I'm sure that people from all over the area would use it. Thank you

Mike Campfield

**Comment 139 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends Number of people with me on average trip: 2-10 Number of trips within the area per year: 10-20 What I do in the Public Use Area: fishing, camping, hunting, photography, and riding What areas do I use: Knik River, Friday Creek, Jim Creek, Metal Creek How do I get to the areas I use: ATV, snowmachine What I like: access, trails, hunting, fishing What I don't like: trash and target shooting What I would like to see done: bathroom facilities and enforcement

**Comment 140 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 1-2 Number of trips within the area per year: 2 What I do in the Public Use Area: hunt, fish, ATV What areas do I use: Metal Creek, Friday Creek, Jim Creek, Knik Glacier How do I get to the areas I use: ATV What I like: close What I don't like: trash What I would like to see done: enforcement, no target shooting

**Comment 141 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends & alone Number of people with me on average trip: 2 & 3 Number of trips within the area per year: 10 What I do in the Public Use Area: Ride

ATVs, dirtbikes, and hiking, trail riding and some camping. What areas do I use: Jim Creek drainage, Knik Flats, Hunter Creek, and Grasshopper Valley How do I get to the areas I use: Hiking & hiking & motorized vehicles (ATV, dirtbikes What I like: Open, able to camp and hike, meeting new people like other riders w/the same interests What I don't like: All the politics going on in and around about shutting down the area. What I would like to see done: leave it open to riders, campers, hikers, hunters, and whoever wants to use it!

**Comment 142 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 3 What I do in the Public Use Area: 4x4 and commune with nature What areas do I use: Jim Creek drainage How do I get to the areas I use: 4x4 What I like: good area to get away from Anchorage. Kids can ride bikes & quads. What I don't like: Too many troopers. Too many idiots with guns. What I would like to see done: tables more family friendly.

**Comment 143 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends & alone Number of people with me on average trip: 5 Number of trips within the area per year: 15 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride, camp, walk What areas do I use: all How do I get to the areas I use: walk, wheeler What I like: access What I don't like: What's not to like? What I would like to see done: Keep it as is.

**Comment 144 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends Number of people with me on average trip: 7-10 Number of trips within the area per year: 15 What I do in the Public Use Area: I go camping & 4 wheeling What areas do I use: mainly the Jim Creek area How do I get to the areas I use: I use my pickup, but with the way they've made the end of the trail, you can barely get a standard pickup through. What I like: It's open area, you can camp anywhere & it's very well known so you always meet new people/riders. What I don't like: The main trail to get to Jim Creek is too messed up, needs to be leveled out a little. What I would like to see done: For it to just be left open & for you to stop trying to close it.

**Comment 145 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 6 Number of trips within the area per year: 5 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride 4 wheelers & my mother-in-law rides her QUV and really enjoys the area - along with all my relatives & friends What areas do I use: we ride from parking lot all the way to the Glacier How do I get to the areas I use: truck & trailer then 4 wheeler What I like: great place for all levels of riders. My daughters (2) love to ride in the sand & mud What I don't like: irresponsible people who use it for a dump What I would like to see done: I participate in both clean ups and would like to see it be cleaner

**Comment 146 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends & alone Number of people with me on average trip: 5-7 Number of trips within the area per year: 4 What I do in the Public Use Area: camp, 4 wheeling, recreation What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Knik River & surrounding areas How do I get to the areas I use: Truck or wheeler What I like: great place to ride & enjoy the outdoors, fishing What I don't like: that it might become restricted What I would like to see done: keep open for unlimited use

**Comment 147 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 3 Number of trips within the area per year: 2 What I do in the Public Use Area: hike & 3 wheeling What areas do I use: Jim Creek drainage, Hunter Creek, Grasshopper Creek How do I get to the

areas I use: truck, 3 wheeler What I like: scenic What I don't like: nothing What I would like to see done: restrooms

**Comment 148 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 4 What I do in the Public Use Area: hike w/dogs What areas do I use: Jim Creek drainage How do I get to the areas I use: hike from friends who live near by What I like: open enough to let dogs run without worry

**Comment 149 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 4 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride, camp, cookout/picnic What areas do I use: Finger Lake area & Jim Creek area How do I get to the areas I use: drive What I like: convenient & diverse riding conditions What I don't like: Hate!! The mess left by rude area users. Thank goodness for cleanup but people should pickup their own mess.

**Comment 150 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I am pleased to hear that the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is in the process of developing a management plan for the Knik River Public Use Area (KRPUA). In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of the Jim-Swan Lakes area, within the KRPUA, and impress upon you its critical ecological value for birds and other wildlife.

As a part of a global project, coordinated by BirdLife International, the National Audubon Society has been working for the last decade to establish a network of Important Bird Areas (or IBAs) across the United States.

In 2006, the Alaska IBA Technical Committee identified the Jim-Swan Lakes area, from Burnt Butte to Friday Creek, as an IBA of state level significance. This designation is primarily based on a well-documented use by migratory Trumpeter Swans, a species considered to be of conservation concern. The National IBA Technical Committee is currently assessing the continental and global significance of the site, and I fully expect that the committee will recognize the Jim-Swan Lakes as a top tier site (of global significance) in early 2007.

In addition to globally significant numbers of Trumpeter Swans, the area also supports notable populations of many species of breeding waterfowl, raptors, and landbirds. The recent and extremely high level of motorized use that this area has been subject to, however, has done nothing to enhance its value for wildlife or recreation.

For example: - off-road vehicle use of the Rippy Trail causes considerable erosion in the adjacent uplands and long-term habitat degradation to the anadromous streams, wetlands, and lakes of the area. - airboat use causes direct destruction of vulnerable wetland vegetation, and - all motorized vehicle use in the area causes severe disturbance to birds at sensitive periods when they can least tolerate it - during migration, breeding and molting.

Thankfully, these problems are relatively easily solved and the critical ecological value of the Jim-Swan Lakes area can be protected through the introduction of a simple, straightforward measure - specifically, the introduction of a non-motorized area around the Jim-Swan Lakes, or, at the very least, a seasonal closure (from April through October, inclusive) to all motorized use.

It is worth noting that such a closure would represent less than 5% of the entire KRPUA -

hardly an extreme measure in anyone's view. Enforcement by on-the-ground patrol, however, would be vital to the success of this measure in fully protecting the habitats in this area, as well as increasing the general safety of non-motorized recreational users.

I look forward to seeing your management planning documents and maps as they become available.

**Comment 151 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 6 Number of trips within the area per year: 10 What I do in the Public Use Area: camp and ride ATVs, motorcycles What areas do I use: Pavilion, Jim Creek, Friday Creek How do I get to the areas I use: truck to Pavilion, ATV all off road areas, motorcycles What I like: close area that has small impact on environment when responsibly used What I don't like: local teenage kids burning vehicles they steal or find parked around Pavilion area What I would like to see done: police parking areas, no shooting in pavilion area, direct people to good areas to cross streams

**Comment 152 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends & alone Number of people with me on average trip: 1 Number of trips within the area per year: 5 What I do in the Public Use Area: fish, showmobile & 4 wheeler What areas do I use: all How do I get to the areas I use: ride What I like: terrain can handle motorized usage What I don't like: regulations What I would like to see done: organized for better public use

**Comment 153 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 6 Number of trips within the area per year: 4 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride motorcycle, camp What areas do I use: Jim Creek drainage, Friday Creek drainage, Knik Flats, Metal Creek & Grasshopper Valley How do I get to the areas I use: truck & trailer What I like: open area to play and learn trail riding with my kids What I don't like: gun fire on flats What I would like to see done: prohibit gun play on flats

**Comment 154 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 2 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride bikes / camp What areas do I use: Flats, Friday Creek Drainage, Jim Creek Drainage How do I get to the areas I use: truck / trailer What I like: It is an open area and there is lots to do What I don't like: gun fire What I would like to see done: nothing but prohibit shooting

**Comment 155 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends Number of people with me on average trip: 10 Number of trips within the area per year: 8 What I do in the Public Use Area: camping, riding, fishing, hunting What areas do I use: Jim Creek drainage, Friday creek drainage, Metal Creek How do I get to the areas I use: My pickup, four wheeler, snowmachine What I like: close, fun, done it for 15 years What I don't like: trash dumping What I would like to see done: not to be closed for recreational use

**Comment 156 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 4-5 Number of trips within the area per year: 6-10 What I do in the Public Use Area: camp & ride as far as I can go. Friday Creek is nice. What areas do I use: Friday Creek & Knik Glacier How do I get to the areas I use: four wheelers What I like: sandy & open for miles. You can go for miles in

one day. What I would like to see done: clean-up cars & trash (I see it is being done now)

**Comment 157 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4  
What I do in the Public Use Area: hunting, riding, fun What areas do I use: all the way to glacier  
How do I get to the areas I use: truck What I like: the open area What I don't like: trash

**Comment 158 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4  
Number of trips within the area per year: 30 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride, hunt, fish  
What areas do I use: from the bridge to the glacier How do I get to the areas I use: ride (4 wheeler)  
What I like: wide open easy access What I don't like: junk cars, trash What I would like to see done: keep it clean

**Comment 159 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends & alone Number of people with me on average trip: 1-12  
Number of trips within the area per year: 15 What I do in the Public Use Area: Riding!  
What areas do I use: All How do I get to the areas I use: wheeler, truck What I like: everything  
What I don't like: trash What I would like to see done: restrooms

**Comment 160 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 50  
What I do in the Public Use Area: riding four wheelers, dirt biking, hiking & camping What areas do I use: Pioneer Peak & Friday Creek - but weather permitting, anywhere we can go  
How do I get to the areas I use: by a truck or jeep & haul them in What I like: it is a place close by that we can go & have fun & free ride & that it's free  
What I don't like: the trash that people leave behind - usually when we go we try to clean up the trash we see  
What I would like to see done: let it be open for riding, just clean it up & stop the reckless shooting

**Comment 161 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 3 Number of trips within the area per year: 10  
What I do in the Public Use Area: trail ride 4 wheelers and dirt bikes What areas do I use: the whole area  
How do I get to the areas I use: truck with trailer What I like: it has good access What I don't like: litter  
What I would like to see done: keep it open

**Comment 162 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends Number of people with me on average trip: 3 Number of trips within the area per year: 50  
What I do in the Public Use Area: ride to glacier & trails on bikes & ATVs. User since 1965 What areas do I use: all  
How do I get to the areas I use: motorcycle, ATV What I like: trails, hills, open area, frozen creeks during winter  
What I don't like: irresponsible gun users, trash What I would like to see done: specific area for target practice - hunting open.

**Comment 163 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 3 Number of trips within the area per year: 4  
What I do in the Public Use Area: fishing @ Jim Creek to Jim Lake since late 1960s, ATV & snowmachine trips winter & summer, small game hunting  
What areas do I use: Jim creek up to Jim Lake, Knik Flats, Friday Creek to Mettle Creek Drainages  
How do I get to the areas I use: snowmachine, canoe & ATVs What I like: beautiful scenery, wildlife viewing & hunting, flat openness  
What I don't like: hooligans

dumping stolen vehicles, out of control raging partyers & mostly, unsafe target shooting What I would like to see done: enforcement of more safety rules

**Comment 164 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4-6 Number of trips within the area per year: 4-6 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride ATVs, ride mule, ride motorcycles & ride snowmobiles What areas do I use: All the way back to the glacier when we can cross the last river How do I get to the areas I use: ATVs, mule, motorcycles, snowmobiles What I like: scenery, easy area to ride for beginners, nice areas for picnic, enjoy seeing wildlife & taking pictures What I don't like: when people throw trash out & old cars - recreational riders participate in cleaning it up.

**Comment 165 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 3 Number of trips within the area per year: 4 What I do in the Public Use Area: airboat What areas do I use: Jim Creek drainage, Friday Creek drainage How do I get to the areas I use: airboat What I like: quiet / some areas hard for people to access without airboat What I don't like: litter and people trying to control area What I would like to see done: nothing, its just fine / like it is it confines people closely to Old Glenn

**Comment 166 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 5 What I do in the Public Use Area: fishing & hunting What areas do I use: Jim Lake How do I get to the areas I use: 4x4, 4 wheel What I like: same What I don't like: burnt & left (abandoned) vehicles What I would like to see done: watershed, scenery

**Comment 167 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 5 Number of trips within the area per year: 3 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride on the trails to the glacier, have picnics, sightsee and fish What areas do I use: Jim Creek drainage, Friday Creek drainage, Metal creek and Grasshopper Valley How do I get to the areas I use: drive truck & trailer to parking area to unload ATVs and motorcycles What I like: it's one of the largest areas around and features many different environments to explore What I don't like: it would be nicer if there wasn't so much trash in the area. I would gladly donate my time to help in cleanup What I would like to see done: I would like to see the area designated for motorized off road use

**Comment 168 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 2-3 What I do in the Public Use Area: airboat to the glacier for sightseeing & picnics, fishing, hunting What areas do I use: to glacier & up Jim Creek How do I get to the areas I use: drive What I like: close to home, beautiful area for sightseeing What I don't like: the mess from inconsiderate people

**Comment 169 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends & alone Number of people with me on average trip: 2 Number of trips within the area per year: 15 What I do in the Public Use Area: sightsee, sheep, glacier, camp out for weekends What areas do I use: Jim Creek to Friday Creek to Glacier How do I get to the areas I use: motorhome, 4 wheelers What I like: open area to ride ATVs What I don't like: reckless kids, shooting firearms What I would like to see done: possibly turn into a state park with park rangers monitoring activities

**Comment 170 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends & alone Number of people with me on average trip: 4-20 Number of trips within the area per year: 10+ What I do in the Public Use Area: 4 wheel, ATV, hunting, photography, hiking, airplane/sightseeing What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Friday Creek, Metal Creek, Glacier How do I get to the areas I use: ATV, 4 wheel, airplane What I like: large area, numerous trails, scenery, wildlife What I don't like: vandalism, gun use What I would like to see done: clean up, police, patrol/enforcement

**Comment 171 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends Number of people with me on average trip: 2 Number of trips within the area per year: 14 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride ATV, camp, fish What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Friday Creek, Metal Creek, Grasshopper Valley and Glacier How do I get to the areas I use: ATV What I like: the open area, trails, creek crossing, large trail system What I don't like: people who destroy vehicles and leave trash around What I would like to see done: security in parking area

**Comment 172 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends & alone Number of people with me on average trip: 1-15 Number of trips within the area per year: 15-25 What I do in the Public Use Area: rock hunting, gold panning, fishing, nature watching, exploring, berry picking What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Friday Creek area, Metal Creek area, shorelines of Knik River How do I get to the areas I use: ATV What I like: large vast scenic area with vast trail system with a large variety of natural resources What I don't like: target shooting, burned cars, trash, vandalism What I would like to see done: toilets at the trailhead, enforcement, camp sites set up by Friday Creek & Metal Creek area

**Comment 173 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends Number of people with me on average trip: 5 Number of trips within the area per year: 8 What I do in the Public Use Area: camp, ATV What areas do I use: Knik Flats, Jim Creek drainage, Friday Creek drainage How do I get to the areas I use: ATVs What I like: close to home What I don't like: people shooting, trash dumping, junk cars What I would like to see done: more trails for riding, more policing

**Comment 174 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 20 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride ATV, hunt, fish What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Friday Creek, Metal Creek How do I get to the areas I use: ATVs What I like: Close to home What I don't like: junk cars & trash dumping What I would like to see done: enhanced trail for riding

**Comment 175 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 2 Number of trips within the area per year: 30-40 What I do in the Public Use Area: fishing What areas do I use: Jim Creek How do I get to the areas I use: Truck What I like: the fishing and people What I don't like: drunk people, firearms, fighting, speeding What I would like to see done: more rangers / troopers

**Comment 176 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 10 Number of trips within the area per year: 8 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride motorcycles, four wheelers, drive 4x4s, salmon fish What areas do I use: Old Glenn to Wolf Point, Friday Creek drainage How do I get to the areas I use: Fourwheelers & 4WD pickups What I like: Close to Anchorage, good area for mud, good area for dirt biking, good fishing.

What I don't like: Irresponsible use of firearms & alcohol What I would like to see done: Better law enforcement presence

**Comment 177 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 5 Number of trips within the area per year: 25 What I do in the Public Use Area: fish, camp, ride What areas do I use: I like the fact the family can go and enjoy a variety of things to do & areas How do I get to the areas I use: car or 4 wheeler What I like: I like the access and variety of areas of use. If we want to ride the terrain has it all. What I don't like: people that don't clean up after themselves. What I would like to see done: I would like to see a fish cleaning area with trash cans - more trash cans in area/restrooms.

**Comment 178 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 5-7 Number of trips within the area per year: 2-3 What I do in the Public Use Area: 4 wheeling What areas do I use: Jim Creek & Friday Creek How do I get to the areas I use: 4 wheeler from parking lot What I like: open area, flat surface What I don't like: junk cars What I would like to see done: kept open and clean

**Comment 179 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends & alone Number of people with me on average trip: 2 Number of trips within the area per year: 1-2 What I do in the Public Use Area: fish, hunt, view area What areas do I use: fish in Jim Creek drainage, hunt in Friday Creek & Metal Creek drainages How do I get to the areas I use: ATV What I like: close by, good viewing area, hunting, fishing What I don't like: too many careless & irresponsible people, trash What I would like to see done: no alcohol past pavilion area, keep the racers away from Friday & Metal areas, they should be left for hunting and viewing.

**Comment 180 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends Number of people with me on average trip: 8 Number of trips within the area per year: 3 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride ATVs, fish What areas do I use: all How do I get to the areas I use: ATV What I like: fishing, ATV riding What I don't like: crowds, trash, parties, SNAGGING!!! What I would like to see done: fee area, more patrols

**Comment 181 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends Number of people with me on average trip: 5 Number of trips within the area per year: 24 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride my dirt bike around with friends & build campfires occasionally What areas do I use: from pavilion to passed Jims Creek How do I get to the areas I use: either truck or dirt bike if not accessible by a truck What I like: how free you are to ride where you please What I would like to see done: kept fairly open on riding areas

**Comment 182 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 5-7 Number of trips within the area per year: 3-6 What I do in the Public Use Area: Use our ATVs for trail riding to glacier What areas do I use: from put in to Knik Glacier How do I get to the areas I use: 4 wheelers What I like: family time, families are regular users What I would like to see done: improve access road?

**Comment 183 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 10 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride ATVs What areas do

I use: Jim Creek How do I get to the areas I use: truck What I like: not a lot of traffic, wide open space What I don't like: nothing What I would like to see done: food/rest accommodations

**Comment 184 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 3 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride ATVs, dirt bikes, anything that moves What areas do I use: everywhere possible How do I get to the areas I use: by truck and trailer What I like: open, free, fun, everybody's friendly, no people telling what to do What I don't like: there should be a gas station extremely close. People telling you its wrong. What I would like to see done: To stay free and open.

**Comment 185 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 3 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride 4 wheeler What areas do I use: Jim Creek How do I get to the areas I use: ATV What I like: close to home - open and easy trail riding What I don't like: trash & old cars dumped there What I would like to see done: more policing of area - so not so many junk cars around

**Comment 186 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends & alone Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 8 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride 4 wheeler - view wildlife - take pictures What areas do I use: Jim Creek & Friday Creek & Middle Creek Grasshopper Valley - & up to Knik Glacier How do I get to the areas I use: ATV What I like: vast trail system - abundant wildlife What I don't like: old cars & garbage that people drop off What I would like to see done: more responsible use

**Comment 187 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends & alone Number of people with me on average trip: 2-4 Number of trips within the area per year: 1-2 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride to glacier & also good area to fly airplanes What areas do I use: start at bridge & access all the N. side areas & drainages How do I get to the areas I use: motorcycle What I like: close to town (short commute) What I don't like: outlaw attitude (guns); I like firearms not fools using them unsafely What I would like to see done: Sorry; but no guns; some can ruin it for all. So can car load exhaust systems!

**Comment 188 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends & alone Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 20-30 What I do in the Public Use Area: fish, hunt, ride ATVs, boat & hike What areas do I use: all of it How do I get to the areas I use: Primarily by an ATV. Other options of transportation area boat, canoe, & my own two feet What I like: close to home & the area offers everything, i.e., hunting, fishing, so on What I don't like: Target shooting, trash & junk vehicles What I would like to see done: No target shooting & keep the area open to all types of transportation.

**Comment 189 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 3 Number of trips within the area per year: 12 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride ATV, walk dogs, fish What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Friday Creek, Pioneer Peak, Hunter Creek How do I get to the areas I use: ATV, foot, dirt bike, occasional truck What I like: motorized vehicle usage, camping, fishing What I don't like: Trails should be directional (one way) and should be several. Possibly even a separate ATV / dirt bike / walking system. What I would like to see done: Open all the area possible for riding, mark it, so we still have a place to use in this

Huge state!

**Comment 190 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends Number of people with me on average trip: 10 Number of trips within the area per year: 10 What I do in the Public Use Area: 4x4, shooting What areas do I use: all How do I get to the areas I use: 4 wheeler or truck What I like: freedom What I don't like: nothing What I would like to see done: nothing

**Comment 191 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 15 What I do in the Public Use Area: fish, hunt, recreate with family & friends What areas do I use: from the old Glen to the Knik Glacier How do I get to the areas I use: on foot, dog sled, snowmachine, fourwheelers, pickup, 4x4 What I like: I am an Alaskan since 1961 and like the freedom to go & do the recreation when & where I do so. What I don't like: Nothing at all What I would like to see done: Nothing, leave it as is.

**Comment 192 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends Number of people with me on average trip: 3 Number of trips within the area per year: 5 What I do in the Public Use Area: 4 wheeling, fish, hunt What areas do I use: all but glacier How do I get to the areas I use: ATV, boat What I like: open use What I don't like: trash What I would like to see done: stay open

**Comment 193 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 5 Number of trips within the area per year: 7 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride ATVs, look for rocks, fish What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Jim Lake, Metal Creek How do I get to the areas I use: ATV, boat What I like: close to town. Always open. What I don't like: trash & burned cars. What I would like to see done: open to all.

**Comment 194 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 2-6 Number of trips within the area per year: 6 What I do in the Public Use Area: hunt, fish, ATV What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Friday Creek area, Metal Creek area, Knik River How do I get to the areas I use: ATV What I like: close to Anchorage What I don't like: trash, burned cars What I would like to see done: enforcement

**Comment 195 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

What I do in the Public Use Area: Airboat What areas do I use: Glacier to the bridge How do I get to the areas I use: public access What I like: close - community What I would like to see done: protect recreational rights

**Comment 196 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4-6 Number of trips within the area per year: 3 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride 4 wheelers, sightsee, fish What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Friday Creek How do I get to the areas I use: 4 wheelers What I like: being able to get out and see stuff What I don't like: lots of traffic What I would like to see done: clean it up, enforce speed limits

**Comment 197 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends. Number of people with me on average trip: 7-10 Number of trips within the area per year: 6-8 What I do in the Public Use Area: four wheeling, hunting, camping What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Friday Creek, Metal Creek How do I get to the areas I use: four wheel What I like: easy access What I don't like: garbage

**Comment 198 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family and friends. Number of people with me on average trip: 5 Number of trips within the area per year: 15 I ride ATV and fish in the Public Use Area. I use the areas from the parking lot to the Glacier. I get the areas by riding ATVs and boat. I like the different riding conditions and the fishing. I don't like the gun use. I would like to see no shooting allowed.

**Comment 199 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends and alone. Number of people with me on average trip: 6 Number of trips within the area per year: 12+ I ATV, fish, hunt, rock hunt, sightsee, dog mush and snowmobile in the Public Use Area. I use the Jim Creek to Metal Creek / Glacier area. I get the areas I use by driving, riding. I like the easy access, good ride, everything - ATV TRAILS! I don't like the people dumping stolen cars. I would like to see trails developed, shooting range, improved parking, restrooms, and snow plow lot.

**Comment 200 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends & alone. Number of people with me on an average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 20 I ride ATV and fish in the Public Use Area. I use the areas from the parking lot to Knik Glacier and all points in between. I ride to the areas I use. I like everything about the area. I don't like the dead cars, derelicts, shooting and garbage. I would like to see it cleaned up and keep it clean.

**Comment 201 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends. Number of people with me on average trip: 7 Number of trips within the area per year: 20 I off road ride, 4 wheeler & motorcycle in the Public Use Area. I use the areas from the Old Glenn to Knik Glacier. I get to the areas I use by motorcycle. I like that it is an open area for all to enjoy. I don't like the burnt cars & trucks. I would like to see: allow people to enjoy the area. If there are no areas to enjoy it leads to kids getting in trouble - gangs, drugs.

**Comment 202 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends. Number of people with me on average trip: 4-6 Number of trips to the area per year: 25 I explore, stay on trails Knik Glacier & back in the Public Use Area. I use the Knik Flats, Metal Creek & Grasshopper Valley areas. I get to the areas I use by 4 wheeler. I like the scenery and animals. I don't like the trash, shooting, people speed & stupid people. I would like to see the area kept clean.

**Comment 203 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends. Number of people with me on average trip: 2-4 I ATV, picnic and hike in the Public Use Area. I use the area from parking to the Glacier. I ride my ATV to the areas I use. I like that it is open to all user groups. No fees. I don't like the heavy drinkers & junk. The ATV Club helps keep the junk down. I would like the area kept open, less shooting, more trails.

**Comment 204 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 2-4 I ATV & picnic in the Public Use Area. I use the area from parking to the Knik Glacier. I ride my ATV to the areas I use. I like that it is easy to get to and close to Anchorage, and can use it during the week. I don't care for the heavy partying - with the drinking and trashing the area. I would like to see less firearms and more trails in the area. I would like the wild careless partying with the heavy drinking cut.

**Comment 205 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 15 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride ATVs, hunt, fish, hike, camp What areas do I use: Friday Creek drainage, Wolf Point, Jim Creek drainage How do I get to the areas I use: ATV What I like: location, close to Anchorage & Wasilla, flat, easy access What I don't like: shooting, drunk kids What I would like to see done: day use fee, bathrooms

**Comment 206 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 2 to 3 Number of trips within the area per year: 20 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride 4 wheelers & camp What areas do I use: Metal Creek, Jim Creek, Friday Creek, and the Knik Glacier How do I get to the areas I use: ATV What I like: easy access, close to Anchorage What I don't like: trash, shooting & wrecked cars. Lack of enforcement. What I would like to see done: Public toilets at the trail head, and enforcement of all the land use regulations for this area.

**Comment 207 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 2-4 Number of trips within the area per year: 2 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride How do I get to the areas I use: truck What I like: close What I don't like: trash

**Comment 208 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 8-10 What I do in the Public Use Area: boat, wheeler, hunt, fish, sightsee What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Friday, Hunter, Knik Glacier, Friday Creek, Metal Creek How do I get to the areas I use: 4 wheeler, walk, boat, fly What I like: It's close and has all kinds of recreational uses What I don't like: junk, no good boat launches What I would like to see done: continue to be open to all users

**Comment 209 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 6 What I do in the Public Use Area: boating, hunting, fishing What areas do I use: Jim Creek Drainage & trails, Friday Creek trail, Knik Glacier, Metal Creek, Grasshopper How do I get to the areas I use: 4 wheeler, airboat What I like: it's close to home, good area for recreation What I don't like: junk cars, no good boat launches What I would like to see done: left open to all users

**Comment 210 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 6 Number of trips within the area per year: 20 What I do in the Public Use Area: 4 wheel, fish, hunt What areas do I use: all How do I get to the areas I use: 4 wheeler What I like: open to anyone, open to all types of motorized vehicles, open to shooting & hunting, fishing, etc. What I would like to see done: nothing. Leave it alone.

**Comment 211 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family and friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 3 What I do in the Public Use Area: ride 4 wheel, picnic What areas do I use: Jim Creek, trails, beach How do I get to the areas I use: 4 wheel What I like: close to home What I don't like: junk cars What I would like to see done: develop to better area

**Comment 212 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

What I do in the Public Use Area: 4 wheeler What areas do I use: Jim Creek, trails How do I

get to the areas I use: 4 wheeler What I like: close, easy access What I would like to see done: left open to all kinds of users

**Comment 213 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 5 What I do in the Public Use Area: boating, hunting, fishing What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Glacier, Friday Creek How do I get to the areas I use: 4 wheeler & boat What I like: close to home, easy access. No Fee Areas! What I don't like: trash on the banks, junk cars What I would like to see done: left open to all users

**Comment 214 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 3-6 Number of trips within the area per year: 4 or 5 What I do in the Public Use Area: bird view, rock hunting, riding, camping What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Knik River, Friday Creek, Metal Creek How do I get to the areas I use: ATV - showmachine What I like: close to home, easy access What I don't like: junk cars, trash What I would like to see done: keep it open to all

**Comment 215 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit scoping comments during this first step in the Knik River Public Use Area planning process. Alaska Center for the Environment (ACE) works to protect wild lands, wild rivers, foster sustainable communities, and promote recreational opportunities on behalf of over 7,000 Alaskan members. We are in full support of balanced recreation management in the Knik River Public Use Area.

The Knik River Watershed is a wonderful resource with an amazing variety of biodiversity and numerous recreational opportunities. It is a place that was once nominated for National Park status and probably in any other state would be a prize park. We are happy to see the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) stepping up to take an active role in managing the area.

The Knik is a place in Alaska where you get an interesting mix of outdoor enthusiasts, often times these different user groups have trouble getting along. There are birders, bikers, horseback riders, canoes and kayaks, hunter and fishers, many times next to airboats, ATVs, large 4X4 trucks, mixed with interment gunfire.

In the past the Knik River Valley has been a text book example of DNR's "hands off" approach to the management of motorized recreation on state lands. The consequences have been devastating. Being located so close to Alaska's urban center, with an ever increasing population, there has been intense pressure put on the area and the ensuing conflicts have driven many users to recreate elsewhere. Coupled with DNR's lack of oversight, there has been severe degradation of sensitive habitat and relentless negative impacts to local residents.

Problems with this unmanaged area include altered hydrology and erosion due to multiple stream crossings by off highway vehicles, degradation of salmon spawning streams, disruption of nesting and resting waterfowl in the Jim Lake wetland area, and the infamous, general unlawful activities of the Knik River. All of these problems have lead to the reputation of a "free for all" or "lawless" area, many call the Knik a "Mad Max" zone.

ACE believes that the establishment of a Public Use Area, along with on the ground enforcement is an excellent opportunity to balance the many, and often conflicting, uses of the watershed. With the right plan, locals can regain a high quality of life, critical wildlife habitat can benefit and many types of conscientious recreation can occur without conflict.

ACE would recommend that a reasonable plan: - Establish resource protection - Use science based decision making - Maintain the wild character of the area - Streamline the trail system - Account for growth - Re-establish non-motorized, quiet recreational experiences - Establish a collaborative working group or advisory board

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.

The wild character and dramatic scenery of this valley is what attracts recreationists to the area. Huge, unplanned and mismanaged trail systems detract from the experience. It is important that DNR take a hard look at the current trails that crisscross the area and remove/close down redundant and useless ones.

As stated above the population of Southcentral Alaska is growing, with little sign of slowing. With increases in people comes an increase in recreation. It is important that the plan does not further tax the area. The plan must account for this future demand for recreational opportunities by maintaining an environmentally conservative trail system. DNR should also take into account recreational activities that have not yet been invented. With technology changing every few months, we have machines today that can go places and tackle terrain that we never thought possible.

The planning team must also recognize the need for areas of quiet recreation. The natural sounds of the Knik are an important part of the outdoor experience. Today, quiet recreation is nearly impossible in the Knik River Valley. Quiet living is even impossible; time and time again we hear the stories of Butte residents having to deal with constant motorized noise and the sounds of gunfire. On warm summer nights it has become increasingly difficult for locals to enjoy their decks and porches because of noise and dust. Quiet recreation is not only displaced by noisy machines, but many feel that they are in physical danger of the high speeds of ATVs and collisions with riders, as well as a fear of being hit by bullets from the ad hoc shooting ranges throughout the area.

A working group, advisory board or Knik River Partnership should be considered. Such a group could help get a handle on the management issues that are sure to arise during and after planning. This partnership could share information and work together to assure that decisions that are made make sense for the land and the community. The group could be comprised of land managers from the State, Mat-Su Borough, BLM, along with local citizens, representing all user groups. The group could focus on controlling the damage of heavy recreational use of the PUA. This could be a mechanism for groups and individuals to provide feedback to DNR staff about what parts of the plan are working and what parts of the plan are not working.

We believe that there are two areas of the Knik River Public Use Area that deserve and need the planning team's full attention. The protection of the critical and extremely sensitive Jim Swan Wetlands, including the Rippy Trail, should be a management priority. As well as the areas around the community of the Butte should also be on this list of priority areas.

For decades other land planning efforts have recognized that the Jim Swan wetlands are an important part of the Knik watershed. The Knik Arm Wetlands Study 1981, Southcentral Recreation Action Plan 1984, Susitna Area Plan 1985, Cook Inlet Environmentally Sensitive

Mapping Effort 2002, and the Butte Area Asset Management Plan 2006, all stress the importance of the resources in these wetlands. It is important that this plan define the terms critical habitat or biologically sensitive area.

We cannot stress enough the importance of protecting these wetland areas. DNR has to take a stand and stop the destruction and disruption of these areas. The Jim Swan area should be set aside for non-motorized recreation. These areas are too sensitive for unregulated airboat traffic, ATVs and other motorized machines.

The upland or Rippy Trial areas of the PUA should also be protected from motorized traffic. Allowing motorized use will only enable further abuse along this trail. Springs that feed the wetlands have been ruined, anadromous streams have been destroyed, and ATV traffic has crept into the wetland. This is a place where any reasonable and responsible rider would know not to go.

The local residents of the Butte need and deserve a reprieve from the years of abuse on the Knik River. Areas of no motors and no firearms should be set to buffer residents and their homes, giving locals a bit of peace from the ongoing problems.

ACE also believes that a few steps should be taken immediately to alleviate problems on the ground: - Immediate on the ground enforcement - Ban on all target shooting - Installation of sanitary facilities - Signage - Effective blockades for traffic control

Thank you for the attention you have given the Knik River watershed. We are happy to assist you and your team in any way possible. We look forward to being part of the planning process and hope that the end result is a balanced plan.

**Comment 216 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. For over 50 years, we have pursued this mission by using best available science and a pragmatic, non-confrontational approach to achieve conservation results. In Alaska's ecoregions, as elsewhere, we have conducted rigorous biodiversity assessments to identify and prioritize areas that - if managed to conserve key species - will ensure that Alaska's healthy ecosystems will be passed on to future generations.

The Natural Conservancy of Alaska completed an ecoregional assessment for the Cook Inlet Basin in 2003. The primary product of an ecoregional assessment is termed a portfolio of areas of biological significance. This portfolio may be considered a conservation blueprint - a vision for conservation success - to guide public land managers, land and water conservation organizations, private landowners, and others in conserving natural diversity within these ecoregions. The ultimate goal is to conserve the plants, animals and natural communities of an ecoregion over the long term. The portfolio serves as a blueprint for the Conservancy and other interested stakeholders in setting priorities and developing strategies for conservation.

In the portfolio for the Cook Inlet Basin, we identified the Knik Arm as an area of biological significance for the critical habitat it provides for migratory waterfowl and salmon. The Knik Arm portfolio area includes the Jim-Swan Lakes, which appears to be less than 10% of the total Knik River Public Use Area. The importance of this area for birds has also been noted in other studies. The Knik Arm Wetlands Study (USFWS 1981) proposed that Jim-Swan Lakes be an Area Meriting Special Attention due to its high density use by ducks and spring-fed water bodies that open early in the spring, possibly providing valuable habitat to migrating birds such as trumpeter swans. In 2005 International Birdlife and the National Audubon

Society designated the Jim Creek basin as an Important Bird Area due the high use of the area by trumpeter swans during migration. The Anadromous Waters Catalog maintained by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game shows that Jim Creek, Jim Lake, Mud Lake, and Swan Lake provide habitat for Coho and sockeye salmon. Coho spawn in Jim Creek and rear in the lakes.

These critical habitats for waterfowl and salmon can be sensitive to human-use. Migratory birds are vulnerable to human disturbance while nesting in the spring and molting in the early fall. Studies have shown that motorized vehicles, such as motor boats and airboats, will cause birds to leave their nests if boats come too close. Frequent disturbance leaves the eggs vulnerable to predators and possible abandonment. Salmon spawning habitat can be damaged by stream crossings and inadequate and improperly-placed trails. Disturbance of the stream bottom and sedimentation from run-off can reduce productivity of spawning areas.

The creation of the Knik River Public Use Area can ensure that these critical habitats for waterfowl and salmon are protected while recreational activities continue. We have the following recommendations for balancing the multiple uses of the Jim-Swan Lakes area: - Designate habitat protection as the primary use; - Seasonally restrict motorized recreational use to protect the wetlands, creeks, and lakeshores in Jim-Swan Lakes during critical life stages, such as spring migration, summer spawning, and fall molting; - Improve recreational access (e.g. trails and bridges) so that recreationists on foot, horseback, bicycle, or ATV can avoid wetlands and streams; - Hire sufficient enforcement personnel with the authority to enforce fish and game regulations.

If we can be of assistance in any way to your planning team, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Comment 217 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 2-12 Number of trips within the area per year: 15-20 What I do in the Public Use Area: fishing, boating, hunting, rock hunting, camping, snowmobile riding. What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Boderburg Creek, Friday Creek, Metal Creek, Knik River & Glacier areas. How do I get to the areas I use: ATV, boat, snowmobile. What I like: scenery, trails, resources, access. What I don't like: target shooting, junk vehicles, lack of enforcement. What I would like to see done: toilets at the trailhead.

**Comment 218 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family Number of people with me on average trip: 3 Number of trips within the area per year: 10 What I do in the Public Use Area: ATV, fish, sightsee, wildlife viewing What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Metal Creek, Friday Creek, and Glacier How do I get to the areas I use: ATV What I like: It is close to Anchorage. What I don't like: That people use it as a dumping ground for their trash and wrecked vehicles. What I would like to see done: Monitoring of the area and enforcement of laws.

**Comment 219 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 2-3 Number of trips within the area per year: 3-4 What I do in the Public Use Area: sightseeing, exploring, hunting, fishing What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Friday Creek, Metal Creek area, Jim Lake, Swan Lake How do I get to the areas I use: ATV, boat What I like: close, natural resources What I don't like: trash What I would like to see done: enforcement

**Comment 220 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 3-7 Number of trips within the area per year: 10-20 What I do in the Public Use Area: fishing, hunting, boating, rving, exploring, etc. What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Bodenburg Creek, Friday Creek, Metal Creek, Knik River & Glacier areas. How do I get to the areas I use: ATV, boat What I like: access, relatively close, trails, scenery, terrain What I don't like: trash, lack of enforcement, burned out vehicles What I would like to see done: toilets at the trailhead, enforcement of land uses and laws

**Comment 221 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with friends Number of people with me on average trip: 10 Number of trips within the area per year: 6 What I do in the Public Use Area: camp & 4 wheel What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Friday Creek How do I get to the areas I use: motorhome, 4 wheelers What I like: trails, mountains What I don't like: garbage What I would like to see done: more use for campers

**Comment 222 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4-5 Number of trips within the area per year: 6-8 What I do in the Public Use Area: hunt, fish, sightseeing, camping What areas do I use: Friday Creek, Jim Creek, Metal Creek, Knik Glacier, the lakes How do I get to the areas I use: ATV, boat What I like: close, natural resources What I don't like: trash What I would like to see done: enforcement

**Comment 223 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family & friends Number of people with me on average trip: 4 Number of trips within the area per year: 12 What I do in the Public Use Area: airboat, 4 wheel, camp What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Friday Creek, Knik Flats, Metal Creek, Knik Blacier, Hunter Creek How do I get to the areas I use: Airboat, 4 wheeler What I like: Close to home, remoteness, scenic, wildlife, glacier What I don't like: Junk cars What I would like to see done: Dumpsters, Park Ranger Patrol

**Comment 224 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends & alone Number of people with me on average trip: 8 Number of trips within the area per year: 16 What I do in the Public Use Area: 4 wheel & camp What areas do I use: Jim Creek, Friday Creek How do I get to the areas I use: RV What I like: nice riding What I don't like: people throw garbage What I would like to see done: dumpsters

**Comment 225 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 03:04 PM:**

Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources Brandon McCutcheon, KRPUA Plan Project Manager 550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1050 Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Mr. McCutcheon,

The Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau is the tourism advocacy and marketing organization for the Mat-Su Borough. Our 300 members represent all tourism industry segments including: hotels, B&Bs, sportfishing guides, flightseeing operators, tour operators, and attractions.

The board of directors met recently for a 2-day planning retreat focusing on the future of tourism in the Mat-Su borough. They identified the development of a management plan for the Knik River Public Use Area as an opportunity that will benefit the tourism industry in our area. The Knik River was also identified as a gateway to the Mat-Su Valley for most visitors and that it should be the focus in the future in welcoming visitors to the Mat-Su and the many recreational opportunities available.

We request to be added to your contact list and allow the Mat-Su CVB to participate in the planning process of development of the KRPUA management plan.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Quill Executive Director Mat-Su CVB

**Comment 226 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 04:48 PM:**

I have enjoyed hiking and horseback riding in the Knik River area for over 20 years. Though I understand that motorized vehicle owners also enjoy this beautiful area it is time to restrict their access from critical areas. For instance the Rippy trail and Swan Lake areas and surrounding wetlands at the minimum should be restricted to non-motorized use only. I would support a usage fee if that fee were to go to maintenance of the parking areas and for further enforcement of laws and safety regulations. I would like to see further restrictions of motorized use but am realistic enough to know that that is unlikely.

**Comment 227 of 255 - received on 01/05/2007 at 06:53 PM:**

I wish the Knik River PUA to address the following concerns: Protect the wetlands with designated trails to divert motorized recreation away from protected areas. Designated shooting areas, stop the shooting across the river near populated areas and residences. Trash containers and toilet facilities for users of the area. Fees for use of the area. Armed enforcement to control unruly and destructive behavior by users of the area. More signs designating No Shooting areas and fines for dumping.

**Comment 228 of 255 - received on 01/06/2007 at 08:19 AM:**

Please protect the Jim-Swan and Rippy Trail system from motorized users. These areas contain critical wildlife habitat and need to be protected. Please help protect Alaska's resources for future generations. Thank you for your time. Sincerely, Dawn Bragg

**Comment 229 of 255 - received on 01/06/2007 at 09:02 AM:**

I would like to see certain areas restricted for motorized use. The wetlands around Swan and Jim Lakes are quite susceptible to degradation from ATV traffic, as is the Rippy Trail. I have hiked and mountain biked this area extensively and have to say that even mountain bikes can have a negative impact on these trails if not used wisely. Perhaps a seasonal restriction (winter-use only) would be a reasonable compromise? I would also like to see some kind of control over the day and night gunfire that goes on around the Jim Creek and Mud Lake areas, although I recognize the difficulty in enforcing this. As to motorized use of the Knik River gravel bars, I would like to see that left as it is. Thanks for taking my comments into consideration.

**Comment 230 of 255 - received on 01/06/2007 at 10:34 AM:**

There is already plenty of land in Alaska that is restricted to motorized use. Hikers and other non-motorized users are free to enjoy all public lands all year long. Closing more area to vehicular access would be a real shame, and severely limit the ability of a very large percentage of the Alaskan outdoor community to enjoy our great wilderness.

**Comment 231 of 255 - received on 01/06/2007 at 11:08 AM:**

I am very interested in seeing the Knik River Public Use Area be effectively managed for all users. The difficulties of "multi-use" are enormous in this region, due to the established uses, lack of previous management, and size of the area. I would hope that the management plan fully recognize this difficulty, the value of the area to all users, and comes up with some

compromises that are effective.

Personally, I would like to see Public Use Area focused on recreational uses that do not significantly impact the habitat, or other users enjoyment of the area. Protection of habitat should be a stated emphasis, with such methods as clean boating, size and noise limits, and other management tools put into place. This could be accomplished by allowing different uses in different areas, or selecting days of the week for certain uses. User education is also very important.

While I am not opposed to motorized uses, I think the state should be looking very carefully at the impacts, both to the habitat and other users, of large boats in areas where, traditionally, "anything goes". Parking, launching, speed, noise, habitat degradation and other impacts should be factored in deciding upon where and when larger motors or boats are allowed.

I applaud the State for taking on the management of the area. I have used the Jim and Mud lakes area for years, and look forward to the day that I can go without wondering if it is safe, or if totally unmanaged uses will ruin the experience. Of all the areas in the Public Use Area, the Jim/Mud/Swan lakes area is really a jewel that should receive additional consideration for limited uses, and perhaps additional management. It is accessible to the general public, and offers supreme recreational opportunities. I don't know other areas of the Use Area as well, but I hope that at least a broad inventory will be done to see which other areas may deserve special management.

Thank You for considering my comments.

**Comment 232 of 255 - received on 01/06/2007 at 11:17 AM:**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment prior to drafting the management plan for the Knik River Public Use Area. Im sure its a daunting job that lies ahead of you. Id like to give you the perspective of what the users in the area see as the benefits and purpose of the management theyve asked for.

DNR currently enjoys a unique situation where the motorized users in general are behind the idea of managing one of the most popular areas is use for recreation and subsistence. I say this is unique because motorized users are accustomed to losing ground in the form of restrictions, compromises, time-sharing or other limitations to their activities whenever a management plan is created. The motorized users in the Knik River area proactively recognized that the building reputation of the Knik River would probably result in those limitations. We in fact lead the charge to create a Public Use Area to get ahead of the problems and thus preserve our legal activities.

This is not to say that some of the motorized users are not still skeptical. Im sure you have witnessed this. In fact, some consider the idea of any management plan to be a disaster, citing history. In the past, management plans have always resulted in creating hard feelings with the motorized users. The boating community, for instance, is still reeling from the effects of the Six Rivers Recreational Plan. The Knik River Public Use Area is shaping up to be very different. In fact we hope in the future to use it as a case study where we can prove to the motorized community that we can work with DNR and be happy with the outcome.

The concept that we envision is to first manage the resource and not the people. In other words, there are many management tools that can help the area sustain a maximum number of people doing a maximum number of activities. Weve seen so many other areas where the management concept is to limit what the people can do (manage the people) rather than

managing the resource to sustain the activity of the people. This concept is so important considering the limitations placed on motorized users in most comparable public lands close to Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley. We fully believe in the Alaska State Constitution that states that public resources should be managed to the maximum benefit of the people. We believe the underlying purpose of the Knik River Public Use Area Management Plan should be to achieve that goal. We do, however believe that the people should be managed in terms of enforcing the existing laws. This should be a major part of the management plan.

Furthermore, the concept we put forth to our legislators who subsequently sponsored the Knik River bill is that the Knik River should be one place in South Central Alaska where limiting or compromising one groups activity for the greater benefit of another groups activity should not be allowed. That is perhaps the greatest fear that the motorized users have. Management decisions designed to enhance a non-motorized activity at the expense of a motorized activity would do the most damage to DNRs relationship with the motorized community and set back the progress weve made. Really, the issue goes beyond the Knik River itself.

Considering the environment, fish and game and habitat in the area, first hand evidence and state biologist feedback confirm the area is healthy. This is confirmed by the opportunities in the area. Bird watching, bird hunting, other small game hunting, big game hunting, fishing and other renewable resource related activities are sustained and healthy. Any management decisions where limitations are imposed to better the environment should be based on official state biologist recommendations and not on unofficial antidotal claims. Any proposed limitations should be based on officially documented issues that have a real and significant impact; and only for impacts that are detrimental to the purposes of the Public Use Area as defined in the legislation.

Regarding safety and training, The Jim Creek drainage is an important training area for airboats. The area has sustained airboat usage for several decades with no appreciable detriment to the environment. More importantly a combination of the Knik River itself, Jim Creek and the lakes and marshes upstream of Jim Creek receive extensive use as a training area promoting safety, education and promoting etiquette. Many South Central airboat operators received their only education in this area before venturing in to the less forgiving waters of the Susitna drainage.

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. We ultimately are hoping the Brown Shirts come back and believe that would give us a great option for law enforcement. " 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. " We believe that shooting is one of the sustainable activities, however it needs to be managed to be safe. There should be designated shooting areas. In particular some field research should focus on a safe shooting area downstream of Jim Creek. " The motorized user community is 100% behind the States 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.

Since we've commented extensively about the restrictions we don't want to see in the plan, we've tried to focus the list above on concepts we believe should be addressed in the plan. 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.

Sincerely,

Todd V. Clark, Chairman Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance

**Comment 233 of 255 - received on 01/06/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

My comments address the Jim-Swan wetlands and the forest on the east side of the Knik drainage. This area is quite distinct from the rest of the Knik River drainage; it is comprised of slow meandering streams, marshes and shallow lakes. It is an important nesting area for a variety of migratory and indigenous waterfowl. It supports salmon runs, bears, wolf, coyotes, fox and moose. But it is a vulnerable, easily damaged area, and is not suitable for ANY form of motorized use.

Extensive degradation has already occurred in this area. The forest uplands now have an ever-expanding network of spontaneous ATV trails that have caused extensive erosion, in some cases diverting the flow of small streams from their original routes. Stream banks have also been degraded at crossings, further enhancing disturbance within the forest. In the lower wetter areas, there has been extensive damage to the banks along the lakes and the destruction of swaths of marshland as ATVs travel without regard to the fragility of these areas. Unregulated use of airboats and other motorized watercraft further enhance erosion to lake and stream banks and also disturb the habitat of nesting birds.

The trajectory of degradation is such that without designated well maintained trails, seasonal closures in sensitive habitat areas, and strong full time law enforcement in place, any form of motorized is not appropriate at any time. Many motorized recreationalists will find this to be a radical concept, but this is common practice in many areas of the western United States. Nobody is denied access; this area is easily reached at the end of the Maud road extension, where one can either begin a hike, have a picnic, or launch a canoe. We should be proactive, and not wait until irreparable damage has been done before we institute some regulation.

The Jim-Swan area comprises only about 5% of the Knik River Public Use Area. It is not too much to insist that this vulnerable area be permanently closed to all motorized use, both for the sake of the habitat and the creatures that depend on it, and the people who want to experience a quiet outdoor experience in a special corner of the Matanuska valley.

**Comment 234 of 255 - received on 01/06/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Knik River Public Use Area (KRPUA) management plans.

Alaska Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (ABHA) is a dedicated group of hunters and anglers committed to the long-term conservation of wild places for wild animals and fish that we all cherish and depend upon, and to ensuring future generations have the same opportunities for backcountry hunting and fishing that we have now.

Some of our members live, and/or hunt and fish and recreate, in the KRPUA. These members come from a wide array of user groups, to include those who use atvs, motorized boats, canoes, horses, or foot travel.

We applaud the compromise among various user groups that led to the wording and passage of HB 307, which established KRPUA. We hope the management plans for the area will also recognize the need for future compromise to prevent user conflicts, habitat damage, threats to public safety, and endangerment to any fish and wildlife populations.

Our position on future management plans centers around seven points: 1) Funding 2) Facilities 3) Designation and Protection of Critical Habitat 4) Balanced Management 5) Public Safety 6) Education 7) Enforcement

Funding the Management Plans Perhaps the most important question that arises in discussion about future management of KRPUA is: "Where will the money come from?"

How will we pay for needed trail improvements, bridges, dumpsters, outhouses, parking areas, boat landings, habitat protection, enforcement, and education?

Continued volunteer efforts by various clubs and orgs and user groups are certainly encouraged, and we applaud those efforts at cleanup and trail maintenance, education about proper use, and studying the effects of increased visitor use on habitat and fish and wildlife. We recognize that DNR staff may also diligently apply for any grants that would bring in additional funding, and are thankful to the borough for any monies they may contribute to future management.

However, management of KRPUA can't rely on volunteer efforts and grants alone, or other uncertain funding sources. It was estimated in legislative hearings on HB 307 that adequate management of KRPUA would cost over \$500,000 annually. The fiscal note to provide an enforcement presence will not come close to covering other management expenses.

We therefore strongly support the establishment of user fees in order to fund all the required management plans, as per this Letter of Intent from the Alaska legislature: "It is the intent of the 24th Alaska State Legislature that the Department of Natural Resources evaluate instituting user fees to maintain the long term costs for management and necessary facilities associated with the public use of the Knik River Public Use Area established under House Bill 307. The department should consider such fees as a component of the Management Plan that will be prepared under AS 41.23.190." \*

ABHA recognizes that some user groups and clubs oppose any user fees at all, and specifically lobbied for a Public Use Area-instead of a State Park or Recreation Area-so that no user fees would ever be instituted. We would also like to stress that hunters and anglers already pay their "fair" share via licenses and stamps for prudent fish and wildlife management, to include habitat protections, and that we don't generally support added fees to hunters and anglers to access and enjoy our public lands.

KRPUA is, however, a unique and heavily used area, and visitor/use numbers are high and increasing. User fees are badly needed for new facilities and maintenance, and prevention and policing of the continued abuse to lands and waters, along with the "lawlessness" that has affected all user groups.

Various ideas on user fees and implementation range across the board, from purchasing an annual \$25 "habitat stamp" or "sticker" for all motorized use (ATVs, ORVs, Boats, and Snowmachines) within KRPUA, a day/week/season or annual pass for all users, a higher annual fee (or individual fees for clients) for tour operations within KRPUA, and a parking fee that all users pay equally to fund and maintain parking facilities (including improved boat launches, dumpsters, portable toilets, and visitor information signs and pamphlets).

Adequate funding is key to complying with the statutory mandates of KRPUA designation. Without a secure funding source we, it will be impossible for the Department to manage KRPUA in a way that meets the statutory requirements. Without secure funding, all user groups will suffer, and fish and wildlife habitat and populations will likely suffer as well.

Facilities There is great concern that parking, boat-launching, and toilet and sanitation facilities are needed right now at trailheads where most of the KRPUA access takes place. These facilities are, of course, dependent upon adequate funding.

We recommend that primary access points and needs be identified, and consideration given to establishing and maintaining these facilities as part of the overall management plan. These facilities are also important to any educational and user-fee implementation efforts.

Designation and Protection of Critical Habitat AS 41.23.180(2) states that the Knik River Public Use Area is established to: "protect and maintain migratory waterfowl nesting areas... and other fish and wildlife habitat...."

AS 41.23.190(d) states that: "the commissioner shall 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."

One of the most critical habitat areas in KRPUA is the Jim-Swan wetlands and lakes. Numerous studies over the past twenty-five years have been done on Jim-Swan by various agencies, including DNR, and all of these studies recognize the importance and sensitivity of Jim-Swan as wetlands, and as a waterfowl concentration area, especially during spring when other water bodies are not yet open. \*\* The Jim-Swan uplands that provide the spring-fed water bodies to the wetlands are equally important.

We recommend that these Jim-Swan wetlands and uplands be considered for "non-motorized use only" during periods of critical importance to migrating and nesting waterfowl, or that limits be imposed during this time-frame on the types of motorized use allowed. All of the lands and waters of this small area within KRPUA can be accessed on foot, or by canoe, in just a few hours. Of any motorized trail, Rippy Trail-which would need major and expensive improvements in order to comply with the statutes-seems most conducive to non-motorized designation during sensitive months when most of the habitat damage takes place.

AS 41.23.190(a) states that "the management plan must include provisions for... compliance with the requirements of the plan." As per the above statute mandates, in order to comply with the plan, managers must first identify wetlands within KRPUA and then provide for their protection, as well as the protection of other fish and wildlife habitat.

The part of AS 41.23.190(d) that mandates the Department to "provide for the protection and use [my italics]" of wetlands does not mandate DNR to specifically provide for motorized use of any kind (such as ATV or airboat use) when it is incompatible with providing protections. In fact, the statutes state: "the commissioner may designate incompatible uses."

We ask that the land planners consult with ADFG biologists and habitat specialists, review the numerous available photos of recent habitat damage on, and adjacent to, Rippy Trail, and also review studies that have been done on impacts to Alaskan wetlands by ATV/ORV and airboat use. \*\*\*

While we support multiple recreational uses by various user-groups, habitat and fish and wildlife protections must always have priority over uses that are incompatible with these protections.

Balanced Management All of us have a right to enjoy KRPUA, but no one user group has a right to ruin the experience of other users, put the lives of other users in danger, or damage this public treasure in ways that negatively affect habitat and fish and wildlife populations.

Airboat and other powerboat users deserve the right to enjoy all areas within KRPUA when this use does no harm to fish or wildlife habitat and populations. Conversely, canoeists on smaller bodies of water within KRPUA deserve the right to not have their experience ruined by highspeed motorized boats. The Knik River itself limits canoe opportunities, whereas the Jim-Swan lakes system is one of the few areas within KRPUA that offers quality non-motorized recreational opportunities and access.

We deem all user-group values as important. And we recognize that the majority of those who recreate and hunt and fish in KRPUA do so by motorized means.

But if KRPUA is to "provide an area for the public to enjoy the full spectrum of public uses, including...non motorized recreational opportunities," then certain areas within KRPUA will either have to be "timeshared" among differing user groups, or certain areas will have to be designated motorized or non-motorized in order to meet the needs of all users. In some cases, some types of motorized and non-motorized uses are compatible and can coexist at the same time. This is the best-case scenario, and something to strive for. But in other cases this may not be possible.

In many ways, the statutory mandates of KRPUA are unfair to land planners and managers, for on one hand these guidelines tell managers they must do one thing, while on the other they mandate something that may be incompatible with the first. Essentially, the statutes mandate that planners and managers "please" everyone, while also prudently protecting fish and wildlife habitat. ABHA well recognizes that this is an impossible task.

Planners and managers will therefore have to resolve conflicts and balance the needs of differing user groups-and valid concerns about fish and wildlife habitat and populations-in a way that is most fair to all.

Public Safety AS 41.23.200. (c)(2) states that "The commissioner may not restrict the use of weapons, including firearms, in the Knik River Public Use Area except in locations where the commissioner determines that the use of weapons constitutes a threat to public safety."

We have heard from numerous users of KRPUA that widespread "target shooting" and random shooting in the area does indeed present a significant threat to public safety. There are also concerns about lead deposition from bullets.

We oppose any bans on the carrying or discharging of firearms within KRPUA, but the widespread amount, and real danger, of indiscriminate shooting concerns us.

KRPUA is not a shooting range. Neither do we believe it should become one. The Matanuska Valley Sportsmen's Association has a public pistol and muzzle-loader range in Palmer less than ten miles from KRPUA. In nearby Chugiak, there is public access to the Birchwood Shooting Park, with both a pistol range and a 300-yard rifle range.

There is ample opportunity elsewhere for the public to safely and responsibly shoot at targets, without endangering others or depositing untold amounts of toxic lead in our land and waters.

We recommend educational efforts be used to raise awareness about the dangers (to people and the environment) of indiscriminate shooting, what constitutes safe and legal discharge of weapons on any state lands, and what other public areas are available for target shooting. User groups must also be encouraged to police their own ranks, with their own education and peer-pressure efforts, otherwise in future the "bad apples" will likely force DNR to impose restrictions on the discharging of firearms when not hunting.

Education Education is also key in helping to manage KRPUA effectively, and should take place on many levels, from signage in parking areas and at trailheads, available pamphlets that explain regulations and proper river/trail etiquette, and also provide maps that show private property boundaries where access is prohibited. One-on-one contact in the field with any DNR staff and enforcement personnel is also a large part of education.

Once the management plan is finalized, current KRPUA management information should be made available to various clubs and orgs, so that they can advise their membership of any new regulations or user fees. Public service announcements in the media should also be used.

If managers continue to strive to educate all user groups about proper trail and river etiquette, and to respect other users, it can only benefit all users, as well as enforcement personnel.

Education should also include information about the fragility of certain habitat and the dangers that motorized abuse poses to fish and wildlife habitat and populations.

Enforcement We are thankful to the legislature for providing funding for some enforcement personnel. However, with the growing amount of sheer visitor numbers (and simultaneous unlawful activities) to KRPUA, there will likely never be enough enforcement, so what enforcement we do have will have to be prioritized in certain areas where abuse and vandalism and any unlawful activities takes place.

Plans should include added enforcement personnel during peak-use periods, such as 4th of July weekend and other popular holiday weekends.

We recommend that enforcement personnel have both land and water transportation to adequately travel anywhere within the river and trail systems of KRPUA, and to better provide for public safety.

Closing Comments We would like to also suggest in conjunction with the above that DNR begin recording (to the best of their ability) visitor-use numbers and means of access as part of the KRPUA management plan, in order to establish a baseline to effectively gauge future management concerns and needs.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on the KRPUA management plans. ABHA well recognizes that management planning for KRPUA will not be an easy task for land planners. We thank you very much for your efforts.

\* 24th Alaska legislature, May 4, 2006

[http://www.legis.state.ak.us/BASIS/get\\_single\\_minute.asp?session=24&beg\\_line=00085&end\\_](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/BASIS/get_single_minute.asp?session=24&beg_line=00085&end_)

\*\* The 1985 DNR Susitna Area Plan recommended that "In important waterfowl habitat, activities...producing high levels of acoustical or visual disturbance from sources such as boat traffic...will, to the extent feasible and prudent, be avoided during sensitive periods." \*\*\*  
"Airboat Use and Disturbance of Floating Mat Fen Wetlands in Interior Alaska, U.S.A." - The Arctic Institute, 1998, by Racine, Walters, and Jorgensen.

**Comment 235 of 255 - received on 01/06/2007 at 05:43 PM:**

It is important that the Knik River drainage area continue to be open for public use. For over 30 years I have accessed the area for fishing and recreation. I ride ATV's and fly airplanes in the area every month of the year. I don't want to see my tax dollars spent on studies. The dollars would be better spent on services and up keep of the area.

Increased patrols by the Troopers would help with the underage drinking and vandals. ATV riders do police the area for trash from irresponsible users.

**Comment 236 of 255 - received on 01/06/2007 at 05:59 PM:**

I usually use the area alone, with my dog. I use the area on the average of 1 time per week, year round. I run in the area, I also cross country ski and mountain bike. I primary use the area around Jim and Swan Lakes. I access the area on foot or on my bike. What I like about the area is the beauty, the wildlife viewing (migrating birds), and the solitude (achieved only by going early in the morning before the drunks arise). What I don't like is the uncontrolled shooting, the careening 4 wheelers and snow machines. I also dislike the abuse of the land: 4 wheelers using trails when the conditions are muddy and the machines destroy the trails. I also dislike the fact that people leave their garbage -- bottles, trash, beer cans, etc. Additionally, people camp and leave human waste (feces, etc.). People set fires even when burn bans are in effect. I would like to see controls in this area: public bathrooms, staff who charge parking and other use fees (e.g. boat launching fees). I would also like to see controls over the use of 4 wheelers crossing salmon streams -- this is against state law. "Target" shooting should be banned. Responsible hunting is okay, but most of these shooters are simply firing rounds upon rounds of ammunition in unsafe ways. They also leave shells which are lethal to water fowl. I have personally taken out pocketfulls of shells. Drinking alcoholic beverages should be forbidden. If there is camping, it should be limited to camp grounds -- with facilities -- otherwise, no camping. The legislation calls for multi-use; however, the unregulated use of motorized vehicles destroys the uses for other people. I have seen horses spooked by 4 wheeler misuse -- horse riding is a traditional use in this area and should be encouraged, not made impossible by the motorized irresponsible users. Children should not be allowed to ride 4 wheelers in this area unaccompanied by adults: I personally know one young teenager who was left crippled by an accident riding, unaccompanied, in this area. Motorized trails should be limited to hardened trails with bridges over streams. Need to have staff to enforce the rules. Ban "target shooting" altogether. This area should be used to facilitate activities such as bird watching and nonmotorized boating. If public policy makes this area user friendly for non-motorized users, they will be able to safely enjoy it and protect the fragile environment and wildlife. Thank you, Elizabeth Friedman

**Comment 237 of 255 - received on 01/06/2007 at 06:06 PM:**

I have lived in the Butte area for 28 years, and have ridden my horses out by Knik River countless times. I love the area, and it is a wonderful place to ride! Unfortunately I have not rode out there much the last few years, because it has become too dangerous. The shooting is the worst, I am afraid of accidentally getting shot because of all the random gun shots going off. I also have had close calls with some trucks and dirt bikes that don't slow down as they pass us on the trail or open river bed. My horses are usually good steady animals, but become very nervous with all the noise. It really doesn't make much of a "quiet" nature ride like it used to! Not to mention the unsightly garbage that is dumped out there regularly! I would love to see this area cleaned up and controlled! I think that it would really help not to allow trucks out there at all, and to have separate trails for different purposes. Thank you for your time, Kim

**Comment 238 of 255 - received on 01/06/2007 at 06:06 PM:**

I am a 10-year resident living on the south side of the Knik River. I consider the north and south side of the river to be my neighborhood. My concerns that I hope will be addressed in the Knik River Public Use Area plan are:

1. Indiscriminate weapon use; the whole area is treated as a firing range by said users; I understand hunting can take place in this area; I hope there will be oversight to hinder those who come to the area just to shoot off a "few" rounds.
2. Erosion. What we have on the north side of the river is a Pollock-type splattering of trail-blazing, anywhere one sees fit to ride their motorized vehicle can and does, to the detriment of the plant and animal habitat.
3. Restrooms. Not everybody brings a bathroom with them in their RV or whatever.
4. Trash receptacles. Not everybody takes their trash home with them. In fact, some bring their trash here specifically to dump it.
5. Fires. Accident waiting to happen without any oversight.

That's my input. Thank you for taking comments, and I hope all users of the Knik River will have their rights respected, including those who just go down to walk along the river, or sit by the river, or take photos. We are not all motorized users of this area and please remember to have consideration for us. Carole Henry

**Comment 239 of 255 - received on 01/06/2007 at 10:17 PM:**

I agree with most of the points and recommendations made by both the Butte Area Residents Civic Organization and the Knik River Watershed Group, with some exceptions. It needs to be recognized that the problems, and their attendant solutions, of the north Knik River and the lower south Knik River PublicUse Area are different and more extreme than the situation along the upper Knik River Road. This upper area has limited land access from the south side, as the public use accesses do not have land access to upriver except during extreme low water or in the midst of winter (when cold enough).

I live off of mile 8 ½ Knik River Road, abutting DNR land and surrounded by the Knik River PUA. I have historically accessed the upper Knik River from my home by 4 wheeler and snowmachine to establish and maintain my trapline, for hunting and for other activities such as sighting in my firearms. If the only motorized land access to the KRPUA was to be limited to the RS 2477 Knik Glacier Trail head, I would have to get a trailer, wire my truck, spend money on gas to transport my 4 wheeler or snowmachine more than 15 miles each way, take a long trip up muddy trails along the north side and the majority of the year I could still not reach my upriver camp or trapline. Additionally, I have disabilities that sometimes restrict my

ability to drive that distance. Should I instead make multiple trips about 7 miles upriver from my house, pulling a sled or hauling a load on my back, to transport my camp (including winter stove etc) and heavy conibear traps upriver (I am a 125 pound woman), only to be assaulted by damaging large tire trucks that have crossed the river from the North side?

I would suggest that the PUA be divided into a high use area and the remainder of the PUA. The high use area (HUA) would include all of the North Knik River and the South Knik River PUA up to Mile 5 Knik River Road (or some other recognizable landmark). Certain regulations such as motorized vehicle access points and a ban on target shooting could pertain to the designated High Use Area. Should problems occur outside of this area in the future, the HUA boundaries and restrictions could be adjusted as needed.

While I might find it an acceptable alternative, with permanent benefits that outweighed obvious hardships, to make the whole south Knik River a non-motorized area, I doubt that this would be amenable to other residents, especially those whose properties also adjoin the KRPUA. I would definitely recommend that the area past the Knik Glacier Lake 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, some one will take one, and many will not be cognizant of possible environmental damage.

Another suggestion I would make is that motorized access might be limited to vehicles below a certain gross vehicle weight. I have personally observed that the damage even to dry lands by large, aggressively treaded trucks is far greater than that made by the average 4-wheeler, when sanely driven. These oversized tires on heavy trucks dig into even dry gravel and tear up the top 3 to 6 inches; making ruts that are still visible three years later, tearing up mosses, running over shrubs and small trees. They also dig into streambeds and disturb salmon spawning areas far more than smaller tire vehicles, especially as they are able to cross at many more points. On the other hand, some motorized vehicle limitations might be relaxed during the times when sufficient snow cover is present to protect the groundcover, such as the snowmachine access regulations in place in many Federal and State Parks in Alaska.

I therefore submit the following suggested priorities for the Knik River Public Use Area, heavily borrowed from the Butte Area Residents Civic Organization and the Knik River Watershed Group:

1. First priority should be for a strong, in person law enforcement presence to insure resident and user safety, and prevent further environmental damage, by enforcement of KRPUA regulations and state laws. Law enforcement personnel should be able to enforce all Fish and Game regulations.
2. Target shooting in the designated High Use Areas should be banned until a safe shooting range can be established that does not intrude on local residents safety or quiet enjoyment of their properties.
3. Sanitary facilities (porta potties) and dumpsters should be installed and maintained at Man Made Lake, both sides of the Knik River bridge, near the RS2477 Knik Glacier Trail head, and at the Jim Lake and Mud Lade accesses.
4. Critical Habitat Areas should be created to include lakes, wetlands, alpine transition zones and sand dunes, to prevent further destruction; and 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. Also, the entire KRPUA past and south of the Knik River Glacier should be designated a non-motorized area, except for aircraft access. 5. A central access point for motorized users to the PublicUse Area should be developed at the RS2477 Knik Glacier trail head on state land. This would allow for adequate parking and prevent continued unauthorized use of private lands along the Knik River, protect Bodenbug Creek, and decrease damage, noise and dust pollution to private residences. No other motorized access point should be allowed within the Knik River Public Use Area High Use Area. Vehicles (excepting aircraft) above a gross vehicle weight of \_\_\_\_\_\*pounds are prohibited within the KRPUA. 6. To allow for quiet enjoyment of the Knik River Public Use Area as well as to decrease local residents exposure to noise, dust and vehicle trespass from powerboats, personal watercraft and ORVs, motorized/non-motorized recreation times should be delineated; such as alternate weekends. Existing commercial airboat tour operators and aircraft should be exempted from the limitation. During the trapping and hunting seasons, legally licensed hunters and trappers shall be allowed access.

\*GVW to be determined

We have the opportunity to take a newly designated state recreation area and create regulations that will protect and rehabilitate sensitive environment and wildlife habitat while allowing public access to one of the most beautiful areas of Alaska. We also have the chance to show the local residents that the State of Alaska is not ignoring their plea for relief from the trespasses, severe noise and dust pollution, and actual firearm abuses that have plagued them with increasing acuity. I appreciate the opportunity for citizen input.

**Comment 240 of 255 - received on 01/06/2007 at 11:15 PM:**

It would be a tragedy for folks not to be able to take there ORV's in this area. Many people who use it and respect it now first went with there folks. Many groups and clubs take it upon themselves to provide up-keep including trash pick-up and vehicle haul out ( not cheap or easy). This is a testament to how much we value this area. It should remain open in an Alaskan free sort of way for ORV, rec shooting,boating, camping, hiking ect. Otherwise WE Alaskan's are being thrown out of Alaska and we are here to contribute for the long haul not just some new big project that attracts goldiggers. Thank you for your time, Michael J Wilkins

**Comment 241 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 02:45 AM:**

The Knik Public Access area has traditionally been used as an avenue for ORV access. The area has been an excellent area for ALL motorized vehicle use, including ATV, snow machine, full size OHV, Air Boat, etc.. It is close to the major metropolitan Anchorage area, and provides an excellent outlet for Anchorageites, as well as many other users throughout the state to pursue their OHV hobbies with a multitude of traditionally used trails. Knik should be left open to ALL OHV use, and managed as such. The OHV crowd is the one and only entity in this state that has put together an annual cleanup of the area, including members of several statewide 4x4 Clubs, ATV Clubs, Snow Machine Clubs, and has even gotten the

Alaska National Guard involved for several years running. This tract of Public Land has not only been respected, but sincerely looked after by the multitude of motorized vehicle user groups throughout the state over the years.

Any closure of OHV access to the Knik Public Access area would only lock out the very people who respect it the most, and have done the most towards keeping the area clean and pristine for all other users.

Respectfully,

Eric Berg, President, Emerald Isle Offroad, Kodiak Alaska

**Comment 242 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 07:20 AM:**

Hello DNR Div. of Mining, Land, and Water, thanks for the opportunity to comment.

My interest in this area is access to upper Jim Creek, Friday Creek, and Metal Creek for mountain climbing, and access to the Great Gorge of the Knik for ice climbing. The area on the north side of Knik River has long had a reputation for lawlessness, with burned out cars and shooting. I have been worried about passing through this area (on foot) - concern about shooting. I have also been concerned about vandalism when leaving a vehicle at a trailhead. My comment for management of this area is to prohibit "target practice" shooting, or move it to a controlled area that is safe for people passing through the area.

I would also like to see management to limit natural resource damage (e.g., damage to vegetation, streams, etc.) from OHV use. At minimum, streams and wetlands should be protected. Prohibit OHV use in sensitive areas. Consider delineating off limit areas then meeting with OHV user groups and requesting that they take ownership of some of their impacts and "self-police" other users. Also have the OHV user groups remove trash.

On the south side of the Knik River, I access Hunter Creek for ice climbing. I park at the lot on the east side of Hunter Creek, then hike or ski or snowshoe up the creek to ice climb. I would like to preserve this access. I would also like to see the management plan include and preserve public access to the Knik River on the south side.

Cory Hinds

**Comment 243 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 09:12 AM:**

The KRPUA provides recreation opportunities for many Alaskans. It offers a variety of terrain to experience and it's location makes it convenient for people in the valley or Anchorage. There are groups advocating closing the KRPUA to forms of recreation that are not what they prefer. This is not consistent with the idea that Alaskans are all equal and have equal rights to access our public land. Motorized recreation has a long history in the area and the few troublemakers should not overshadow the many users who appreciate the area. Closing the area to motorized access will not stop people dumping and burning cars. Those people are already choosing to disobey laws. Educating the public of the responsibility we have to care for our land, and enforcing the existing laws regarding littering and underage drinking would curb most issues at KRPUA. Closing the area would move those activities to other areas.

**Comment 244 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 11:20 AM:**

I would like:

to see the area managed for multiple use recreation. Motorized and muscle power coexisting in the same areas. Segregated trails when necessary and where topography permits.

to see a secure, lighted parking area. A camping/parking area developed that is similar to the

one at Eklunta Lake. Facilities for parking large vehicles w/trailers, day use areas, and rustic camping areas for motorhomes and large fifth wheel trailers.

to see major trail development & maintenance projects.

the construction of kids riding areas that are off limits to adults with full size ATVs.

the construction of trails for large OHVs that include the popular technical challenges such as mud bogs, rock climbs and sand/gravel dunes.

to see the Rippy trail and others extended, made into a loops and hardened, accommodating both motorized and non-motorized uses.

to see a couple dozen "duck blinds" built around areas like Swan Lake to accommodate bird watchers in the spring and summer and hunters in the fall.

to see the construction of primitive cabins and campsites throughout the area.

to see grassy wetland/marsh areas during managed like other areas in the Borough.

to see an ATV/pedestrian bridge across Jim Creek and bridges across all salmon spawning beds.

amenties and Mud and Jim Lakes.

to see recreational target shooting areas developed in accordance with guidelines similar to those published by the NRA (<http://www.nrahq.org/shootingrange/sourcebook.asp>).

full-time enforcement by "park ranger" type officers.

I support the development of a fee system.

I would like to see the Jim Creek - Knik River area developed to be a world class recreation area with accommodations for ATVs, OHVs, mountain bikes, horses, boats, canoes, hikers and hunters.

Scott Lapiene

**Comment 245 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on planning for the Knik River Public Use Area.

My comments as part of the public scoping process follow.

**HABITAT** The area of greatest importance is the Jim-Swan wetlands and uplands ecosystem. I enjoy hiking, canoeing and wildlife viewing and specialize in birds and wildflowers. I am a founding member of Mat-Su Birders, lead annual bird walks and hikes in Jim-Swan, and canoe the waterways. I have birded in popular areas throughout the Borough and South/Central Alaska, and while I lack the decades of activity of many users, my experience leads me to two conclusions:

- Because of the narrow transition between multiple habitat zones, Jim-Swan hosts an exceptional diversity of woodland, swamp, and alpine birds. Considering the relatively recent advent of documentation of nongame birds in Jim-Swan, the known occurrence of 120 species in a relatively small area is extraordinary.\* Further, the list of regularly occurring species includes five that are of conservation concern.

- Jim-Swan must be designated and managed with habitat protection and education being

the priority considerations and recreation limited to those appropriate to the natural values.

There is nothing in the statute that supercedes the plethora of regulations, codes and statutes designed to protect wildlife from harassment, harmful disturbance and habitat destruction. Given that Jim-Swan makes up roughly 5% of the entire planning area (approaches 20% if the extreme remote sections are discounted) and is the most sensitive habitat of the area, it strikes me as extraordinarily reasonable that this area be the designated nonmotorized recreation area focusing on low impact activities. Relaxation of the nonmotorized designation in the wetlands during waterfowl hunting season, and winter trapping season may be appropriate assuming there is adequate enforcement presence.

A nonmotorized designation for the Jim-Swan ecosystem would:

- Satisfy your mandate to "enhance" nonmotorized recreation. (Where else would you be able to do that in the PUA?) Birding by ear, and other means of appreciating the wildlife of Jim-Swan is an important consideration and is impossible when airboats are present. Canoeing is very limited in the Knik River and not an enhanced experience.

- Ease user conflicts and safety concerns in the narrow streams.

- Give the many damaged areas of the wetlands and uplands time to recover naturally at considerable cost savings to the state.\*\*

- Satisfy your mandate to protect critical habitat for waterfowl\*\*\* and other wildlife, and for filtering and flood control benefits of the wetlands. Additionally, destruction of nests, and death/injury of flightless waterfowl (hens on nests, fledglings, molting adults) by direct impact with speeding watercraft would cease.

- End the increasing impact of high decibel airboat noise on nesting and feeding trumpeter swans and other waterfowl.\*\*\*\* Identifying, designating and enforcing water trails and quiet zones in the wetlands is not possible.

- Maintain the ability of motorized users to access the river, Knik Glacier, the alpine, and the remote backcountry. The main point of using motorized vehicles is to access distant regions quicker and easier than one can on foot or by canoe. The limited range of a walker/paddler meshes well with the accessible critical habitat of Jim-Swan, and, the ORV user still has access to nearby riverside destinations and remote destinations. Remember also that the motorized portion of Rippy ends at 3 miles; rugged terrain and cliffs restrict motorized travel to remote areas.

Allow easy, low impact nonmotorized access to ALL users on foot and/or canoe to all points of the Jim-Swan area in a half day of travel, or less.

A list of documents evidencing the critical habitat of Jim-Swan follows these comments. Upon completion of the referenced USFWS Coastal Management grant conducting wetlands inventory and damage assessments, I will be sure you receive copies of pertinent material.

PLANNING FOR THE REMAINING PUA:

Balancing Uses, Resident Concerns and Environment. - Address impacts on local residents from shooting along the Knik River and in the coastal dunes as well as high use motocross activities. Quiet time designations (nighttime, alternate weekends, and/or timesharing) should be considered. The timesharing arrangement at Eklutna State Recreation Area is a good model. Establish a DNR/community advisory board that includes balanced representation of

residents and users to improve communication and cooperation between these interest groups.

- Consider timesharing and/or an improved trail plan to ensure safe and designated ORV use to the glacier and upper valley, and safe enjoyable use by horseback riders, mountain bikers and others.

- Environmental impacts: ORV use contributes to accelerated devegetation and erosion in the dunes and on anadromous shorelines: - Increased dust, - Sedimentation into anadromous streams,; - Deteriorating water quality - oil and gas residue, sedimentation, - Loss of dunes [loss of natural protective barrier from wind and flooding], - Accelerated rate of nonnative plant species introduction.

- Solutions: The river and dunes are more easily and quickly accessible for enforcement personnel and should benefit from enforcement of a sustainable trail plan which would utilize user education and the following: - Designated enforced stream crossings and bridging, - Closure of damaging trails and hardening those that can sustain heavy use, - Restoration of severe damage that cannot repair naturally, - Protecting remaining stands of mature trees.

It is a failing of our governments, including the municipality of Anchorage, that adequate appropriate areas are not set aside for motocross - a popular activity. We set aside areas and funding for ball fields, sports arenas, skating rinks and swimming pools, but ORV fun somehow got missed. This does not, however, mean that motocross fans get to pick their spot regardless of impacts. Motocross is an especially high impact type of ORV use - far beyond that of a benign rider on the Knik Glacier Trail - especially considering that the motocross just happens to include crossings of two anadromous streams and is destroying the dunes. That lovers of motocross found this spot and claimed it, does not make it right. Nor should the residents, fellow users and habitat pay the price for this error of selection.

**TARGET-SHOOTING:** Designating a shooting range in the KRPUA is unadvisable given the extraordinary impact this will have on users and residents of the entire area and potential impacts on sensitive wildlife resources. One of many areas currently being used for target shooting is near Jim and Mud Lakes. This site works okay because it is low level infrequent use. Formal designation of the site would see use go up significantly. When target shooters are practicing there, the noise amplifies and reverberates off the mountains and is heard throughout the region - clearly incompatible with the nature of the surrounding critical habitat.

- Solution: Establish non-shooting areas only as necessary to - ensure safety and reasonably quiet quality of life for residential areas, (i.e., would it pass your test of a nice place to live?), - ensure safety for trail users, - prevent lead deposition into the river, streams and wetlands.

**VOLUNTEERISM:** That legislation was written and passed and that this planning opportunity is before you is the direct result of over a decade of volunteerism by valley conservationists and community activists.

Robert Howard began documenting problems in 1988 when the road was put through to Jim Lake. Alaska Center for the Environment began "Creeks Cleanup" at the lakes, Rippy Trail and Maud Road in 1996 and cleanups continue to present day. In 2000, Nancy Moore, a current KRWG member, received a grant. Her and a host of volunteers spent rainy weekends repairing the Jim Lake portage. In 1999, I began 5 years of baseline data collection on Jim Lake as a volunteer borough water quality monitor. In 2001, a presentation was made to Valley Alaska Center for the Environment of the increasing problems in Jim-Swan. VACE Board President Joe LeBeau went to the Butte Community Council. For the next year and a

half, a series of Mat-Su Borough facilitated meetings were held with residents, users, DNR, enforcement agencies and landowners. KRWG formed in 2004 and continued the protracted discussion with agencies, and an education campaign including presentations at 22 public forums inclusive of community groups, all user groups, planning groups, agencies. Concurrently, we initiated talks with Rep. Bill Stoltze who agreed to draft legislation (albeit an abhorrent first writing). We wrote and received a grant and conducted surveys throughout 2005 and 2006. Through the substantial efforts of residents, users, and conservationists, we successfully effected several amendments to the legislation and lobbied for additional funding.

Residents, and users representative of all groups, will continue to substantially augment maintenance of the Knik River Public Use Area. In coordination with Dave Griffin and other division personnel, count on a small army of conservationists to care for the Jim-Swan Ecosystem. We look forward with great optimism.

**FUNDING:** While volunteerism and grants can assist in funding maintenance and projects. It will not be enough. I do not take opportunities to recreate on public lands for granted nor do I expect my enjoyment to be fully funded via public coffers. I support institution of affordable user fees, as stated in the letter of intent from the legislature. This could include an annual or seasonal pass and day use parking fees. Sanitation facilities are of utmost importance at the primary parking areas. Access points should be limited in number to concentrate the need for facilities and maintenance, and to limit disturbance experienced by residents.

**ENFORCEMENT:** The importance of frequency and type of enforcement cannot be overstated. Enforcement and management patrols must be:

- Land-based on trails, - Water-based throughout Jim-Swan, - Daily during high use seasons.

A schedule of enforcement offenses must include criminal activities such as vandalism, polluting and unsafe practices as well as resource offenses, such as crossing salmon streams, damaging vegetation, harassing wildlife, poaching. Developing the offenses schedule for citation, acquiring the authority, and training personnel will take time but is necessary for success.

**SUMMARY:** With planning, the motorized community is almost guaranteed to lose something in the process. Planning happens because population grows and with it the inherent problems that come with too many people. We all lose something in our quality of life and our recreation when growth happens. Motorized users lose more because they cause significantly more impact to the environment, to residents and to the enjoyment of an area by other users. The vast majority of public land in the Mat-Su Valleys remains open to ORV recreation. Recent volunteer and agency efforts to inventory, map, and designate a multiple use trail system ensures continued enhanced ORV opportunities.

Much about the Knik River flats and backcountry are appropriate for high level ORV use, and that use can be enhanced with an improved trail plan, education and management. Much about the KRPUA is not appropriate for high level, or any, motorized use.

You and the planning team have the unenviable task of satisfying statutory contradictions, and, finding reasonable compromise among diverse users and residents. I encourage you and the planning team to ignore rhetoric, correct false information and counsel all to be open to compromise. Personnel with the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation have vast experience sorting out and planning for identical recreational planning conundrums and I hope the efforts of the planning team include consulting with the DPOR. The KRPUA will not

be managed as a state park because it is a PUA, and the regulations developed therein are regulations for a PUA. Surely this area can be a model of shared use, extraordinary recreational opportunity, and a wonderful, beautiful place to live and play all while protecting the integrity of the wildlife and its habitat. I and supporters of the Knik River Watershed Group look forward to working with you and we wish you every success.

\* The Birds of Jim-Swan, A Checklist, 2007, KRWG. Selected reports from the birding community.

\*\* Damage assessments of trails, photographic documentation 2005-2006 Wetlands Inventory and Damage Assessments of the Jim-Swan Wetlands in the KRW, KRWG Opinion on effect of wave action on vegetation of the creeks of Jim-Swan, USFWS Airboat Use and Disturbance of Floating Mat Fen Wetlands in Interior Alaska, U.S.A., Racine, Charles H; Walters, J.C.; Jorgenson, M. Torre.

\*\*\* Maps and waterfowl survey data for seasons 2005 and 2006 Wetlands Inventory and Damage Assessments of the Jim-Swan Wetlands in the KRW, KRWG

\*\*\*\* Buffer Zone Distances to Protect Foraging and Loafing Waterbirds from Disturbance by Airboats in Florida, Rodgers, James A; Schwikert, Stephen T. Ongoing aerial surveys and observations by retired biologist William Quirk. Note: only one successful Trumpeter Swan nest in Jim-Swan in 2005 and zero successful nests in 2006. Habitat and lake size will support several nests.

Studies and plans support the critical habitat assessment of the Jim-Swan ecosystem:

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 DNR and Alaska F&G 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). "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.

The American Birding Association - 2002. (George C. West) Jim-Swan is published in first edition of A Birder's Guide to Alaska .

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".

Birdlife International/National Audubon Society - 2006. Jim-Swan qualifies and is designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) because of high use by migratory Trumpeter Swans.

**Comment 246 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this planning process. I am one of the founding members of the Knik River Watershed group, a volunteer through the former Valley Alaska Center for the Environment (VACE) that organized a concentrated effort to repair the portage between Jim Lake and Jim Creek, a participant in annual spring cleanups and coordinator for the grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to evaluate selected Baseline Ecological values of the Jim-Swan Lake and wetland complex. The report will be completed before the end of January and will be sent to you.

My initial involvement as a community activist was prompted by the physical degradation to the lake - wetland complex and the abundant wildlife resources found in the area. To my surprise, this area comprises only 5% of the entire Public Use area. Given that the legislation recognizes non motorized use as one of the recognized uses for the area, this portion of the entire area should be designated as non motorized. A non motorized designation would allow minimally damaged areas to recover, would slow continued degradation, would reduce harassment of wildlife, and be responsive to the legislation.

I will not repeat the history of the area, the listings of previous studies or provide documentation of damages; I will allow the final report from the grant provide that information which will be provided to you upon completion.

Key points for the planning process:

- Habitat protection needs to be the primary consideration for the critical habitat of the Jim-Swan complex. The area contains many springs, the water opens early in the spring and

provides resting area for early spring and late fall waterfall migrants. The area has been designated by Audubon as an Important Bird Area because of the large numbers of Trumpeter Swans found here in the spring and fall. In addition 30 species of birds, moose, brown and black bear, fox and coyotes are also found in the area. Sheep are found in the uplands. - Sanitation facilities are critical to the management plan for the entire PUA. - Enhanced recreational opportunities should be secondary to habitat protection. If campgrounds are developed as has been suggested by some, they should be developed well away from the shorelines of the lakes and creek. The shoreline is public space and is important habitat. - The Jim Swan lakes and wetlands and the adjacent uplands can be accessed by canoe and on foot. The area should become non motorized as part of the efforts to protect habitat and provide a non- motorized experience. It is recognized that this area is important for hunting and a balance needs to be sought to protect habitat and provide for those experiences. Motorized access to non wetland areas could be allowed during hunting season. - One huge concern is the dying vegetation along the creeks and the profile of the streambed which suggests damage from boat wakes. A letter from a USFWS hydrologist discussing this will be provided at a latter date. The streams are narrow and are not well suited for motorboats, especially airboats. A non motorized designation could be lifted during hunting season and a speed limit and motor size should be enforced. Safety is an important consideration for boating on the narrow winding streams and motorized boats especially airboats increase the hazards for non motorized users. I personally have had mixed experiences while canoeing in the area. Some boaters are respectful and others act like they are mad because you are in their way. - The Rippy Trail which exists in the uplands adjacent to the Jim Swan wetlands crosses anadromous streams. One stream is severely damaged. The trail has several springs that have turned into muck holes because of the motorized activity. These problems support the need to make the area non motorized. - Enforcement of existing laws including Fish and Game regulations is critical. - The ad hoc shooting ranges need to be managed and or eliminated. Safety and lead pollution are important concerns. Shooting around the Lakes and the Rippy trail endanger and diminish the experience of other users in the area. For example, on a spring visit to Jim Lake to view swans, the swans that had been there were gone. Instead there were 4 men shooting clay pigeons. They were friendly and when we asked about the Swans, they indicated there had been about 30 birds there when they first arrived. The birds left when the shooting began. The fellows were apologetic, but this experience demonstrated the need for education and appropriate areas for shooting. - Shooting is a problem for the entire Public Use Area and adjacent areas, including residences. Perhaps a designated safe shooting zone could be established within the Public Use Area or outside it. Addressing lead pollution, safety for local residents and users of the area is paramount. The management challenge is huge. - The Knik River Floodplain is the most suitable area for motorized use. Non motorized users, horseback riders and bicyclists also use this part of the PUA. Perhaps a schedule could be established that designates days for motorized or nonmotorized use much like the one that is used at Eklutna Lake. - Planning should provide solutions for suitable crossings of Jim Creek and other streams. The mouth of Jim Creek has spread out, become shallower and less defined over the 10-15 years that I have been in the area. Fisheries are an important part of the Public Use Area and the streams need to be protected to maintain these fisheries. - Loss of vegetation on the dunes is increasing. These plants became established years ago and provide stability to the dunes. Wind blown sands increase as the vegetation is destroyed. Some balance needs to be achieved that allows recreationists to challenge themselves and their machines without totally destroying the dunes, the vegetation and the habitat. - It is obvious that enforcement will be critical to managing any plan. I hope additional funding can be obtained to make good enforcement possible.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments; I look forward to delivering the report for the grant which I hope will help you in your planning process.

**Comment 247 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Here are my concerns regarding public use area legislation for Knik River. I shall support the reason for these comments separately with documentation and photographs.

As a long-time resident and user of the area I have seen many changes and have experienced the erosion of traditional recreational activities in the Knik River Valley starting the day I had to make my horse jump off the trail when a three-wheeler came racing around the bend. That was in the early seventies.

We used to take our kayak up Knik River access powered with a 2 horsepower motor until we got into Jim Creek, where we cut the motor off and paddled up the creek into the lakes. One time we were put on hold by a moose and baby 4 feet away for 1 ½ hours - we paddled into the lakes that were so thick with salmon that you'd feel you are riding a wave of dark red bodies. We'd like to lean the kayak against a sweeper, fishing for trout. We saw plenty of beaver and muskrats. After we got scared by an airboat flying by as if we were not even there, we stopped that.

When we saw the remnants of poaching by net and glass from liquor bottles littering the creek bed, we stopped going to the area completely.

Not far from our house there's a trail where, in the winter, we saw nothing but tracks from a dog team. We met one of these mushers at one of our Butte cleanups who said that the snowmachines and ATVs had scared him and other mushers off the trails back in the mid-seventies.

We used to ride horses on the trails to Jim Creek. Some of these trails are so rutted that the ruts are too deep for a horse and the center of the trail is too high and too narrow for a horse to walk. When it's wet, we've had a horse spread-eagle over the trail.

We often encountered Mr. Bill Ezai (Walking Bill Ezai) from Eklutna on the Old Glenn and on the trails, pulling a sled on his way to and from the traditional Ezai hunting and fishing area.

My children used to run from our house to Jim Creek to practice track and cross-country. We would not let them do this now.

Any time we hear shooting, we cannot go on the trail behind our house, because it's unsafe, especially since a tree next to our house got shot at, and we had to scream at a group of shooters not to shoot through the trees at our house.

Neighbors, whether on horses or fourwheelers, have had bullets fly by in front of them.

Even if we did dare take a hike along the river or the trails on the weekends, the noise from airboats, dirtbikes, ATVs, trucks nearby, the danger from a fast four-wheeler or pickup not being able to stop, the dust and the danger from shooting have totally disenfranchised us and other like-minded friends and neighbors from using this beautiful area.

We have high hopes that this legislation will restore the area and the peace. Here are my recommendations.

- Controlled access points to the area on state lands at primary access points to protect the legitimate user from the resulting actions of those who abuse the area. (see map). (The

legislation does allow for user fees).

- 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, and will protect residents from noise and dust.
- Immediate strong and on-the-ground law enforcement to ensure safety of residents and users.
- Immediate ban on target shooting pending the Commissioner's determination of an area where shooting is not a threat to public safety. Any shooting range being considered needs to be in compliance with federal and DEC standards regarding "no shot shall be discharged in a watershed" and will have to be out of earshot of residents and recreational users.
- Immediately place and maintain temporary sanitary facilities and dumpsters at the following locations: Man-Made lake off Knik River Road, upstream and downstream of Knik River Access, Pavilion Parking Lot on Sullivan road (which is on borough property), RS 2477- Knik Glacier Trail (Jim Creek Trail0 access, Jim Lake/Mud Lake Access.
- 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. Jim Creek is currently on the high priority list for DEC stream quality.
- Restore wetlands and revegetate dunes.
- Prohibit airboats from traveling in anadromous streams, the wetlands and all lakes due to documented harassment and disturbance of waterfowl and other wildlife. Create a horsepower limit for all other watercraft, and do not allow motorized boats and recreation vehicles.
- Because DNR lands on the north side of the Knik River from the Knik River Access are constrained to the river banks only and are bordered by private lands at the high water mark/permanent vegetation 5 miles to the south and 1.5 mile to the north, and because these lands cannot be traversed during high water, these lands should be designated as non-motorized. Dust, noise and dangerous traffic in regular size vehicles and ORVs on the river banks, the non-motorized trail along the Old Glenn Highway and the powerline on private property between Knik River and Republican Road, add to health issues of residents and disenfranchise them from enjoying peaceful weekends.
- Traditional use goes back at least to the use of those people who have recreated the old-fashioned way and have used motorized vehicles for logging and hunting, not for the sole purpose of recreation as is being done now. ORV and other motorized activity has caused "traditional ABUSE" which has started and accelerated since the early seventies and has disenfranchised the traditional recreational user. Rippy Trail used to be a hiking trail. While the trail was originally created as a logging road, by the time the three and fourwheelers came along, the logging trail was overgrown, but was an excellent single track, the use of which had no negative impact on wildlife, swans, the streams and the springs.

Thank you for considering my comments. My documentation will also include descriptions of negative incidents other residents have observed.

**Comment 248 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I'm a life-long Alaskan, grew up in Delta Junction, have lived in Butte since 1990 and own property off the Old Glenn Highway, approx. 1 mile north of the Knik River Access; and 1 mile south-west of Sullivan Pavilion Parking lot.

I am also co-founder of the Butte Area Residents Civic Organization, and was on the board both as an officer and as president of the Butte Community Council several years ago, where had worked toward a cooperative management plan for the Knik River public lands. This effort had come about in 2001 when the Mat-Su Borough facilitated several public meetings with Butte residents and representatives of public land owners with the intent to stop ongoing abuse and dangerous behavior on the public lands near our homes. Residents placed emphasis on "Education," "Multi-Use Recreation," and "Law Enforcement." I have also participated in the first Butte "Neighbor-to-Neighbor" cleanup and have worked with other council members to identify by GPS local trails and the location of wrecked vehicles to facilitate the first Alaska National Guard cleanup.

As co-founder of Butte Area Residents Civic Organization I have participated in the legislative process and in the publication and distribution of educational material to make ORV users and target shooters aware of illegal or unsafe practices. (See Flyers: "Can You Target-Shoot Safely in the Butte?" and "Dear Visitor to Our Neighborhood.") I have also financially participated in the production of a half-hour video, "Bodenburg Butte in Knik River Valley - Beauty at our Back Door," produced by 3DAudio-Video which presents the outstanding scenic and historic qualities of Butte in hopes that residents, visitors and public land managers work toward high-end visitor opportunities with accompanying economic potential for area residents and the Mat-Su Borough in general.

Now that the public use area legislation is in place, I hope that my comments and suggestions, based on my first-hand experience and extensive documentation of increasing abuse, will help restore and protect this beautiful recreational area for the enjoyment of all users, and will rehabilitate fish and wildlife habitat for the benefit of all Alaskans. (Documentation submitted separately).

My concerns, observations and documentation demonstrate the disregard not only of the importance of the Knik River Public Use Area, but also the violation of many of the State of Alaska's existing statutes.

Because of violations of state statutes and health and safety to residents as listed below, I advocate the following:

- Controlled access points to the area on state lands at primary access points to protect the legitimate user from the resulting actions of those who abuse the area. (see map). (The legislation does allow for user fees).
- 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 Bodenburg Creek and its salmon and waterfowl habitat from ORV damage and harrassment, and will protect residents from noise and dust.
- Immediate strong and on-the-ground law enforcement to ensure safety of residents and users.
- Immediate ban on target shooting pending the Commissioner's determination of an area

where shooting is not a threat to public safety.

- Immediately place and maintain temporary sanitary facilities and dumpsters at the following locations: Man-Made lake off Knik River Road, upstream and downstream of Knik River Access, Pavilion Parking Lot on Sullivan road (which is on borough property), RS 2477- Knik Glacier Trail (Jim Creek Trail access, Jim Lake/Mud Lake Access).

- 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. Jim Creek is currently on the high priority list for DEC stream quality.

- Restore wetlands and revegetate dunes.

- Prohibit airboats from traveling in anadromous streams, the wetlands and all lakes due to documented harassment and disturbance of waterfowl and other wildlife. Create a horsepower limit for all other watercraft, and do not allow motorized boats and recreation vehicles.

- Because DNR lands on the north side of the Knik River from the Knik River Access are constrained to the river banks only and are bordered by private lands at the high water mark/permanent vegetation 5 miles to the south and 1.5 mile to the north, and because these lands cannot be traversed during high water, these lands should be designated as non-motorized. Dust, noise and dangerous traffic in regular size vehicles and ORVs on the river banks, the non-motorized trail along the Old Glenn Highway and the powerline on private property between Knik River and Republican Road, add to health issues of residents and disenfranchise them from enjoying peaceful weekends.

1) Violations on, in and near Bodenbug Creek and Jim Creek at Knik River, in unnamed fish-bearing channels and tributaries of Knik River and on Rippy Trail. a) Fish & Game Crossing Permit specifies crossings are only allowed 100' below the permanent vegetation. b) State of Alaska statutes regarding erosion and stream bank destruction when ORVs and 4x4 pickups drive up and down the creeks. c) Winter crossings of anadromous streams are only allowed on ice. d) The western stream bank of Bodenbug Creek has been lowered by too much 4x4 and ATV traffic, allowing Bodenbug Creek to overflow and search its old channel, forming pools and possibly eroding the Knik River bridge embankment. e) Harrassment and destruction of wildlife. I have observed ATVers crushing a duck nest in the vegetated portion of Bodenbug Creek, killing the drake who was patrolling and displacing the hen onto the middle of the Old Glenn Highway. Two weeks later, when another pair nested, I put up signs cautioning people of the duck nesting areas. These signs were taken down several times. Signs which were repeatedly put up by DNR Habitat Division advising of stream crossings and salmon stream designation were also routinely torn down. f) Shooting of raptors, poaching of moose and salmon, and kids chasing salmon on ATVs trying to squash them at Bodenbug Creek. We have found a shot raven and unknown species of raptor on the banks of the Knik River. We have found numerous moose hides; a "trappers' cache" was dumped, and friends with their 11-year old visitor, along the Sexton Trail, have found a shot moose with a burned-out belly. g) Dumping of burnable construction material, including pallets, for bonfires and campfires. While bringing firewood onto public lands for campfires is all right, these materials have been toxic and contain nails, staples and other fasteners and brackets, which stay and are a hazard to people, horses, wildlife. h) Pollution of anadromous streams by submerged vehicles at Bodenbug Creek, Jim Creek, Friday Creek and in Knik River. i) Pollution of anadromous streams by trucks crashing into the ice when

trying to cross or drive on the streambed. j) Pollution at Bodenbug Creek when boats on trailers are driven into the creek so the owners can clean the props etc. k) Airboats in Bodenbug Creek, Jim Creek, wetlands, disturbing waterfowl and preventing the public from traditional uses of the Jim -Swan Lake Canoe trail. Airboats take off on the southside of Bodenbug Creek, even during spawning season crossing the mouth of Bodenbug Creek as well. Jet skis, wave runners, snow machines, and hovercraft roaring up and down the creek. l) Severe rutting of trails which were traditionally used by people riding horses, mountain biking, and hiking. m) Destruction of the wetlands by airboats and ATVs. n) Erosion of natural flood barrier along Knik River from Knik River Access to Jim Creek Dunes due to ATV and trucks and ATVs cutting trails into the river banks. o) Erosion along banks and dunes exposing root system of vegetation. p) "Holes" in continuous vegetation along Knik River from ATV use. q) Because of the heavy ATV and truck traffic on the river bank of Knik River, there is no opportunity for any new vegetation to take hold. Compare the state of the vegetation along banks with the river islands which are not being used by ATVs. r) Destruction of public property by ATVs "highmarking" the embankment of Knik River Bridge.

2) Public Safety Issues These issues are documented by 'incident maps and descriptions' from approx. 10 residents and users, including the Fire Chief and Mat-Su Borough public safety department. (Documentation will be submitted separately). a) Uncontrolled shooting and explosions day and night, including automatic weapons, disturbing the peace and putting residents and visitors in jeopardy. Shooting across trails in high and low use areas, shooting trees. Several residents have had their homes shot at. A home-made rocket launched on the northside of the river landed next to a home on Knik River Road. Bullets landed on a swing set next to another resident's home. b) Burning of cars, fireworks and campfires. c) Dust, noise, air quality, trespass of private lands at the Knik River Access by ORVs, shooters, campers, 4x4s, air boats, dirt bikes on public and private lands.

Thank you for your consideration. Again, please note that I shall send you a separate packet of documentation.

**Comment 249 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

I usually use the area with family, friends and along. Number of people with me on average trip: 1-6 Number of trips within the area per year: 20 What I do in the Public Use Area: hiking, horse back riding, fishing & hunting, canoeing, skiing, photography & camping. What areas I use: Knik River bridge to Knik Glacier, to Mud Lake, Jim Lake, McRoberts Creek, Jim Creek How do I get to the areas I use: hike, canoe, horseback What I like about the Knik River/Jim Creek area: Scenic view, wildlife, proximity & accessibility What I don't like about the area: 4-wheelers, fires, junk cars, garbage, no control or respect to use of firearms What I would like to see done: Set designated trail or use areas. Not common use that are well marked & enforced

**Comment 250 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 01:00 PM:**

Testimony HB307 Senate Finance My name is Kurt Marshall, my family has been in Alaska since 1934, when my grandparents settled in the Butte area of Palmer, as colonists. Our family is outdoors and recreationally oriented and while we would like to continue using the Jim Creek, Knik glacier area as a family retreat, the increase of family danger due to vandalism, gunfire and chaotic behavior prevents our continuing to do that. Because my family still owns a 171-acre farm near the Butte, I am very concerned about the continued degradation of the area. We have watched in frustration and horror as uncaring individuals have claimed the area as their own to systematically destroy. We urge you as the chairman of the House Resources Committee to act quickly to enable the Department of Natural

Resources (DNR) to develop a short term education and enforcement plan to head off a situation which is rapidly deteriorating as the days warm and summer recreation increases. I am aware of numerous environmental studies and land use plans for the area, among them the Susitna Watershed Plan; there are numerous solutions offered therein. High among my family's concerns is the reckless abandon of many ATV riders tearing up the beautiful countryside with apparent disregard for those who enjoy an unspoiled trail and quiet time. It saddens me to see what has happened to this beautiful valley. Clearly, as the Valley population grows and more Anchorage residents find the Valley as a recreational area, the impact and pressure on the remaining wilderness area will continue to grow as will the abuse. Our family has hoped that the ongoing destruction would eventually gain the attention of land managers who would act to address the critical problems here. We have asked at public meetings for an area plan that could sustain multiple use with a strong emphasis on law enforcement and public safety. Ideally as a special recreational area under Alaska Statute 41.21, however, a bill introduced on behalf of the motorized community by Rep. Bill Stoltze and Sen. Charlie Huggins essentially hands this area over to ORV recreation.

**Comment 251 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 01:08 PM:**

I canoe the Mud through Swan lakes system during summer and ski the Rippy Trail area in winter. I'm concerned mostly for the preservation of the wetlands in this area. Each summer I find campers at the Jim Lake put in with trash and human excrement strewn about the area, and not back in the trees but right in the campsites and driveway. This can be found any day, any week of the summer. A well constructed and maintained camp ground is essential for the preservation of this area. This campground does not need to be large, maybe 10 to 15 sites would be plenty, hopefully located back up in the woods away from the shore and to include toilet facilities. The campground MUST be well maintained and patrolled or it is likely to be trashed within a month. In the overall picture a larger well maintained and regulated campground located near the Old Glenn Highway and the race track would go a long way to help the situation there too.

**Comment 252 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 01:16 PM:**

First, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Knik River Public Use Area. Growing up in the Butte area, I have had enjoyed a variety of recreational activities such as horse back riding, running, camping, fishing and site seeing. It is an amazing area that deserves preservation while still allowing responsible use of it's recreational opportunities.

I have witnessed both responsible and irresponsible use of the area. Everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy it without being in fear of their life or having to see the trash left from irresponsible users. I support the following recommendations:

- 1) Immediate strong and on-the-ground law enforcement to ensure safety of residents and users.
- 2) Immediate ban on target shooting pending the Commissioners 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 RS 2477 -Knik Glacier Trail access, Jim Lake Access and Mud Lake Access.
- 3) 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.

4) Restore wetlands and revegetate dunes.

5) 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 Bodenburg Creek and its salmon and waterfowl habitat from ORV damage and harassment, and will protect residents from noise and dust.

6) 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.

Again, Thank you for taking these points into consideration,

Dara Lively

**Comment 253 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 02:12 PM:**

As a fisherman and a hunter, I'd like to see our fish-bearing creeks, streams and rivers protected from the bank erosion, oil and gasoline contamination, and changed water courses caused by 4-wheelers and dirt bikes. I recently was told, "Use the quads God gave you", and I think that is a great statement which applies to the Knik River Public Use area. I know many hunters (even well armed with .30 caliber and larger rifles) who don't feel comfortable going into the Jim Creek area with all the vehicles burned and the hell-raising and vandalism. Please increase the law enforcement presence to prevent handing our children a "Mad Max" scenario! Thank you for allowing my input on this great area. Let's protect this wilderness for future hunters, fisherman, and hikers and canoers. A final thought, I don't think airboats are compatible with the beautiful lakes and creeks in the Knik PUA. I believe you can hunt ducks and moose and bear very effectively with a boat with a small quiet motor or canoe.

**Comment 254 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 03:03 PM:**

Dear DNR planning team,

First of all, thank you for working on this plan. Its outcome will have a lasting and valuable impact on what the character of our backdoor wild country will be. I am a resident of the Smith road area and visit the Jim and Swan lakes region on an almost weekly basis. I have canoed, walked, and ridden my bicycle on the lakes throughout the different seasons of the year and really hope that we can designate some of this area to non-motorized use.

" PLEASE MAKE THE RIPPY TRAIL NON-MOTORIZED! The wheelers are tearing it up. This trail is one that I would like to be able to walk on with my family, yet it is being turned into another valley muck hole from the atv use.

" Please make HABITAT PROTECTION A PRIORITY in the JIM/SWAN LAKES area. All the boats ripping around are disturbing the nesting trumpeters. The roadside access makes this fragile wetlands extremely susceptible to damage

" The Knik watershed group brings up a good point when they state on their website that this Jim/Swan lake area is only 5% of the use area and that it would be a great place to designate non-motorized. This is a place where people want to take their families for a canoe or walk, but we are walking through trash and listening to gunshots reverberate off the mountain walls.

" PLEASE CLOSE THIS AREA TO SHOOTING! On a recent frosty Sunday afternoon, I rode my fat tire winter mountain bike from the Knik bridge back to my house. I ALMOST GOT SHOT! I took Jim creek up to Swan lake, traveled on another slough over to Mud lake and coming up the from Mud lake some unthoughtful individual was target shooting out towards the lake. His .22 practice shots from his truck were aimed at a cup on top of the weekend party trash pile that faced the lake. PLEASE CLOSE THIS AREA TO SHOOTING AND GIVE THE ENFORCEMENT AGENCY THE ABILITY TO TICKET.

Please take these comments to heart, I live in this area and am sincerely concerned about the damage that the Jim/Swan lakes area is undergoing. With each season we are losing more and more to trail and habitat damage. Please do something before it is too late.

Respectfully,

Mike Sinclair Danz 17000 Borealis Ct. Palmer, AK 99645

**Comment 255 of 255 - received on 01/07/2007 at 04:16 PM:**

I am writing to provide my comments on the Knik Public Use Area.

I have recreated in the area since 1989 with family and friends. I have camped, ridden ATVs, and driven off-road (modified highway vehicles) in the area.

I would like to see the area managed for multiple use recreation, with an emphasis on motorized, especially in the river bed area and the trail to the glacier. I enjoy going out "on the flats" as well as on the trails through the wooded sections.

Trail developments and looped trails would be beneficial.

A secure, lighted, parking area would benefit all user groups, by providing a safe location to park cars, trucks, trailers, etc.

I would not be opposed to the construction of trails for large OHVs that include the popular technical challenges such as mud bogs, rock climbs and sand/gravel dunes.

to see the Rippy trail and others extended, and hardened where needed, accommodating both motorized and non-motorized uses.

I support increased enforcement for purposes of cutting down on stolen vehicles, dumping of trash, burning of cars, and careless shooting.

Thank you, Scott Hala