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Access

Background

Securing and maintaining access to the public use area (PUA) is crucial to ensuring that the public can continue to use the PUA. State controlled access includes: Maud Road Extension (ADL #206989) and the Jim Lake Parking Area; the downstream side of the old and new Glenn bridges; and, the Knik Glacier Trail (RST 17(ADL#223176)). Access on the south side of the river is primarily from the right-of-way for the Knik River Road and from adjacent federal lands managed by BLM. Many users access from private lands adjacent to the PUA. Aircraft access within the PUA occurs on unmaintained airstrips and shorelands of the Knik River. The most heavily used access occurs from adjacent borough lands via the Pavilion Parking Area located off Sullivan Road and the Sexton and Envy trails. Many users also access the PUA by trespassing on private lands on the north side of the Old Glenn Bridge. Substantially fewer users access from the federal lands managed by BLM on the south side of the Knik River. An access brochure has been produced and is available from DNR.

Approximately 60,000 acres of federal lands managed by BLM in Townships 15, 16 and 17N Range 4E have been selected by Eklutna Inc. and the State of Alaska (see *General Land Status* Map 1-2, pp. 1 - 5). It's likely that Eklutna Inc. will receive title to these lands since native corporations receive priority over state selections. Section 17(b) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 provides for the establishment of easements across Native Lands for the purpose of maintaining public access to adjacent public lands prior to the conveyance of land to Native corporations. Prior to the transfer of these lands 17(b) easements must be established to maintain access to public lands across private lands. The effect of this land conveyance on recreational use within a portion of the PUA may be significant. The wetlands west of Friday Creek are a popular destination for recreational users and hunters alike. A number of user created trails enter this area of wetlands from land that is currently federally owned or is already privately owned by Eklutna Inc. If the federally owned land is conveyed to Eklutna Inc. it will become private land. Unauthorized use of this land off of established 17(b) easement(s) could be considered trespass. Therefore, seasonal access to, and use of, the eastern portion of the Lakes and Wetlands Unit may be limited through actions outside of the scope of this plan.

Goal

- Maintain existing access for all users to and within the PUA, provide for future development of trails and facilities, and secure public access easements from the Pavilion Parking Area and Sexton and Envy trails.

1 **Management Guidelines**

- 2
- 3 • Main access trails should be improved and upgraded to support increased use.
 - 4 • New trails within the planning area should be developed as sustainable trails¹.
 - 5 • New trails and facilities should be sited and designed to avoid or minimize impacts to
 - 6 fish and wildlife and their habitats.
 - 7 • Primary trails accessing the PUA from adjacent MSB lands should be reserved as
 - 8 public easements to ensure future access, in the event that the state does not acquire
 - 9 ownership of these lands.
 - 10 • The Trails Management Process should identify existing primary trails providing
 - 11 access to the PUA and reserve them as public easements. All new trails authorized by
 - 12 DNR will be reserved and designated for specific purposes.
 - 13 • The state will work with MSB to acquire a portion of the Jim Creek parcel which
 - 14 includes the Pavilion Parking area and the Sexton and Envy trails.

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16 **Goal**

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- 18 • Ensure that the number and location of 17(b) easements within areas to be conveyed
- 19 to a Native corporation provides adequate access to adjacent state land.
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21 **Management Guideline**

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- 23 • Prior to the conveyance of federal lands, DNR’s Public Access Assertion and Defense
- 24 Unit will be involved in the process to reserve 17(b) easements. While all currently
- 25 identified 17(b) routes are important for access to adjacent public land, several are
- 26 critical to maintaining access for private landowners and miners and DNR will
- 27 attempt to assert these particularly.
- 28

29 **Goal**

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- 31 • Maintain and enhance access to the PUA on the south side of the Knik River.
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33 **Management Guideline**

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- 35 • DNR will recommend that BLM retain PLO 3324 in federal ownership.
- 36 • DNR may identify private parcels on the south side of the Knik River for acquisition
- 37 for the purpose of enhancing access to the PUA. These lands will only be acquired
- 38 from willing parties.
- 39

¹A trail that conforms to its terrain and environment, is capable of handling its intended use without serious degradation.