

Knik River Public Use Area Planning Update #2

March 2007



Overview

The Department of Natural Resources (Department) has completed the first phase of the planning process for the Knik River Public Use Area (KRPUA). The public scoping process ended on January 7, 2007. During the scoping period the Department held three public meetings (one each in Butte, Anchorage, and Wasilla) at the beginning of December. The purpose of these meetings was to solicit public input on use, resources, and issues within the KRPUA. Members of the KRPUA planning team met, and continue to meet with, community councils, stakeholder groups, and individuals with interest in the planning process.

In addition to the input received at scoping meetings; individuals, groups, and organizations were encouraged to submit written comments on the KRPUA. The Department received 255 written comments. This planning update will summarize the comments received during the scoping period. Some comments were specific to an issue or use within the KRPUA while others were more general in nature. The summary provided below groups comments under headings used during the scoping meetings.

What we heard

Uses

The issue most commented on by the public was motorized/non-motorized use opportunities in the PUA. Many comments suggested the Department should maintain access for all users including motorized, while many others suggested the Department restrict motorized use to some degree. Examples of the comments received include:

“I support all uses of the Knik area, I think it is a wonderful piece of Alaska for the public to enjoy.”

“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.”

“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).”

Issues

In general, the majority of comments received on issues were directed at unlawful or undesirable activities, discharge of firearms, and fees. Access to the KRPUA and impacts to habitat were issues that drew less public comment. Comments indicated that many people would like to see illegal dumping, burning, and reckless shooting addressed in the PUA. Some commenter's indicated that they would be willing to pay a fee, if the funds were used in the management and enforcement of the PUA. Examples of comments received include:

“For a long time this area has been considered the area for the reckless, where individuals need have no concern for others.”

“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.”

“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 else where. These fees could be used to start to help pay for the management of this area.”

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

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

“Habitat protection should be the DNR's primary consideration for Jim-Swan area.”

Facilities

Comments received on facilities generally emphasized a need for sanitation facilities, campsite development, and trail and/or road development. Some individuals commented that there was also a need for designation of a shooting area or range, and for the development of parking areas.

“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.”

“Camping facilities at the trailheads would be appreciated by all user groups.”

“A non-motorized trail to the glacier would be great.”

“There should be more motorized use trails created on State Public Lands.”

“I would like to have a location set aside to target shoot with rifles, pistols and bow & arrow.”

“A secure, lighted, parking area would benefit all user groups, by providing a safe location to park cars, trucks, trailers, etc.”

Management

The majority of comments received regarding management of the Knik River PUA suggested increased law enforcement and increase management by the State.

“I feel that enforcement of the law is also necessary in this area as it has been a freeforall for some time.”

“What I would like to see done: Monitoring of the area and enforcement of laws.”

“Immediate strong and on-the-ground law enforcement to ensure safety of residents and users.”

What happens next?

The Department will hold a series of public scoping meetings in Butte, Wasilla and Anchorage in the near future. The purpose of these meetings will be to solicit public input on Proposed Management Actions/Preliminary Alternatives for management within the KRPUA. Dates for these meetings will be provided through public notice and via the KRPUA website.

How do I become involved in the process?

It is not too late to become involved in the planning process for the Knik River Public Use Area. You are encouraged to:

- Familiarize yourself with the information provided on the state website for the KRPUA web address: www.knikriver.alaska.gov;
- Submit comments online at the KRPUA website or mail them to the address provided below;
- Enroll yourself or your agency on the contact list to receive updated information by email;
- Attend public meetings, and;
- Review information, maps and draft planning documents provided for public review.

For information related to the planning process please contact:

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You can also visit the KRPUA website at www.knikriver.alaska.gov to get information on planning, management, and upcoming events related to the KRPUA.