

Planning Process

The Eagle River Nature Center, in cooperation with the the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, initiated the Master Development Plan planning process in 2006. Public participation in the planning process was instrumental in creating a site plan that meets the needs and concerns of the community. A series of open houses and presentations were conducted from August 2009 through March 2010. During this time the division collected and processed comments by members, neighbors, and other agencies.

Part of the outreach also included media releases, a project webpage, and over 200 postcard mailers that were sent to neighbors inviting them to participate in the planning process. The project webpage enabled those interested to track the planning process and receive updates. Maps, concepts, and comments were posted throughout the process to keep the public informed.

The following timeline includes key events in the planning process. See Appendix A for an overview of public comments received.

Timeline

2005

- Friends of Eagle River Nature Center was awarded a 25-year contract from Alaska State Parks to continue operating the center

2006

- Friends of Eagle River Nature Center was awarded a HUD (Housing and Urban Development) grant to produce a Master Development Plan for the center

December 2007- November 2008

- Information gathered, including visitor surveys, vehicular and pedestrian counts, and examination of the center's operations

Fall 2009

- Prepared proposals for possible site locations and evaluated alternatives
 - Prepared four possible site locations for a new facility that met criteria based on community's interests. Each location was assessed for its potential impacts
 - Public comments were gathered at the following meetings:
 - August 10 – Chugach Advisory Board meeting
 - September 10 – Friends and neighbors project introduction
 - September 17 – Open house meeting at the nature center
 - October 10 – Eagle River Chamber of Commerce meeting
 - October 14 – Eagle River Valley Community Council meeting

Winter 2009

- Posted public comments and prepared Draft Master Development Plan concepts
 - The planning team created three draft master site development plan concepts that reflected resource values and public and agency goals. The agencies reviewed the first drafts and addressed the community's concerns based on comments received

Winter 2010

- Public review of Draft Master Development Plan for Site Location "B"
 - Held a second series of public forums to allow community members the opportunity to comment on the draft master development plan and to identify concerns:
 - January 25- Friends of Eagle River Nature Center Board of Directors meeting
 - February 8 – Chugach State Park Citizens Advisory Board review
 - February 11- Friends of Eagle River Nature Center & neighbors meeting
 - March 4 – Community open house at Eagle River Nature Center
 - April 2nd – Public Comment for site concepts closed

Spring - Summer 2010

- Prepare final plan - reviewed agency and public comments and revised the plan as needed

December 2010

- The chief of the Design and Construction section for Alaska State Parks signed the Final Master Development Plan on December 28, 2010