

DNR - Mining, Land & Water Online Public Comment

Nancy Lake State Recreation Management Planning

Topic: Public Scoping Comments

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Comment 1 of 86 - submitted on 11/06/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in last night's scoping meeting for the Nancy Lake Management Plan. At the meeting, a number of attendees expressed concern about the state's public notice method and its primary focus on landowners who have an investment in the growing ORV traffic in the park. That concern reflects a much larger fear that the state, having issued ORV permits and encouraged the construction of an ORV trail in violation of at least the spirit of the Nancy Lake plan, might find it convenient to make the issue go away by quickly and quietly amending the plan to allow a use that most of the public objects to.

Regardless of the validity of this fear, from a good government perspective it is essential to make sure the public has faith in the state's process and good faith. I therefore urge the state to make the plan revision process as inclusive as possible. In particular, I urge you to make an effort to reach the large number of Nancy Lake area users who have a stake in its management but are not land owners. One obvious way to accomplish this is to do a survey of summer and winter users. The state expressed some reluctance to go that route last night. If you choose a different path, it is essential for public confidence that you find some way of giving the many folks who care about the Nancy Lakes area but have not purchased property there a voice.

I look forward to participating in a constructive process that results in an even better park.

Thanks.

Comment 2 of 86 - submitted on 11/05/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Motorized ORV access is inappropriate in Nancy Lakes. The use will broaden rapidly as more lots are developed and the park will lose its tranquil nature. I strongly urge the park to eliminate its permit program - which is clearly not working - and forbid ORV access.

Comment 3 of 86 - submitted on 10/27/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I do not support the usage of any motorized vehicles in this area. So many accessible spots in AK are now blemished by the use of these machines. These areas will take years and years to recover. It seems that no matter what is said and done regarding rules for the use of ATV's, those rules are not followed and our wilderness gets ruined. Again I support the management plan as it stands now for the Nancy Lakes area and do not support a change for motorized vehicles to be used.

Thank you.

Comment 4 of 86 - submitted on 10/27/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Nancy Lake State Recreation Area is one of the few non-motorized areas readily available to the majority of Alaskans. Changing the management plan to allow ATV

use would be very detrimental to the area. I have yet to see where ATVs did not damage wetlands. Plus with the shortage of state funds for parks, opening the area to ATV use would require more patrols needing more funding of which there is very little. It only makes sense to keep this area non-motorized. Thank you.

Comment 5 of 86 - submitted on 10/28/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I am opposed to opening Nancy Lake to ATV use. They will make the trails so boggy that hiker/bikers can't use them and there will be noise, an increase of trash, and "Jim Lake" type activity. The current management plan needs to be enforced. I am tired of areas that are designated as off limits to motorized use being used anyway by motorized vehicles because the rules aren't enforced and of the constant threat of opening these areas to motorized use.

I would appreciate not having Nancy Lake SRA opened to ATVs.

Comment 6 of 86 - submitted on 11/18/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I am a property owner on Nancy Lake.

I am requesting to be added to the mailing / contact list for notices & updates regarding the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Management Plan.

Of particular concern for me is access to the lake. My property has no road access. I previously used the Nancy Lake Marina, but as you know that has been closed down and the property sold. I found your name thru the Nancy Lake Home Owners Association website, but too late to attend the previous scoping workshops you have hosted.

Thank you for your time.

Comment 7 of 86 - submitted on 01/23/2009 at 12:00 AM:

We would like to submit the following comments, to be considered during scoping for the revision of the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Management Plan. We own property just off Delyndia Lake, in Adams Subdivision #1, Block 2, Lot 1. We purchased our property in 2005, and since that time we have been frequent users of the SRA, as we cross the SRA when accessing our property. In general, we go to our cabin approximately 25 weekends a year. In the spring, summer, and fall, we access our cabin either by ATVing along Lynx Lake Road and Butterfly Lake trail to Butterfly Lake, where we have a rowboat with a motor, or by driving along Lynx Lake Road to the church camp, and then hiking the Butterfly Lake trail to the boat.

We support the current practice of allowing ATVs to be used on the Butterfly Lake Trail by landowners accessing their property, by special permit from the SRA manager. We go out to our cabin most weekends in the summertime, and having the flexibility sometimes to be able to make the trip on the ATV rather than always hiking in makes a big difference to us. We are fortunate that we are currently both in good health, but the availability of the summertime permit for the ATV trail was an important consideration for us when we purchased our land. Using the ATV allows us to bring guests to the cabin who would not otherwise be able to hike for such a distance. Additionally, we use the ATV to bring in extra supplies over the summer months when we are frequent users. There are property owners on Butterfly and Delyndia who rely on the ATV use on the trail to be able to access their properties at all, due to issues of ill health. We do not want to see people forced to sell their properties because the ATV access on which they rely has been taken away. We have all made a considerable investment in our properties and in ATV equipment, based

on the premise that for years it has been the accepted practice of the SRA managers to allow ATV use on the trail by special permit. ATVs are not used recreationally on the trail; for the most part, they make one journey in at the beginning of the weekend, and one out at the end. Also, only on holiday weekends are there many people who are using the trail; mostly in summer, there are only a handful of cabins that are occupied on the lakes on any particular weekend, and some of those cabins are accessed by floatplane.

It is my understanding that ATV permits, under the current system, are only available to landowners with property in or adjacent to the SRA. Landowners have a vested interest in conserving and sustaining the Nancy Lake SRA. The reason that we buy land in and around the SRA is because we enjoy the beauty of the SRA and its resources. Landowners in the area are the sector of the public that most frequently uses the Nancy Lake SRA, and so we are the ones who will suffer most if the SRA is degraded. For this reason, the property owners have, in several successive years, contributed their own funds and time to rent equipment to improve the Butterfly Lake trail and ensure that use of the trail does not adversely impact the surrounding environment. We, as property owners, have in the past and will continue to contribute time and money towards improving the Butterfly Lake Trail and the trailhead so that it meets environmental standards for ATV use. During the inspection of the trail that occurred in summer of 2008, the inspector noted that the work that has been done to date has been successful at improving the trail to accommodate ATVs. While there are still sections that need to be improved, and work needs to be done on the trailhead, the property owners have demonstrated a commitment to making sure that work is done properly.

At the public hearings, there were a number of comments made about the condition of the Butterfly Lake trail. From our experience, traversing the trail most weekends in summer, we have never noticed there to be a problem with trash on the trail. While there may occasionally be a piece of litter on the trail, we, and other property owners with whom I am familiar, make it a point to stop and pick up any litter we see. Again, we are the most frequent users of this part of the SRA, and it is in our best interest to maintain a clean and pleasant environment. Additionally, one of the comments we heard at the public meeting was that since the use of ATVs on the trail, there is no longer any evidence of moose or bear along the trail. My only guess may be that the person who made this comment was one of those property owners or recreational users who mainly goes out to the SRA on holiday weekends. There are certainly some weekends in the summer where signs of wildlife are more scarce, because many people have traipsed through the area - for example, over Memorial Day or July 4th weekends. This is not a consequence of the use of ATVs on the trail, however, as much as a product of the influx of people. On weekends where there are fewer people out, even if we are driving in by ATV, we regularly see moose and bear, as well as grouse, rabbits, and squirrels, on the Butterfly Lake trail.

We understand that there are property owners on Butterfly and Delyndia Lakes that object to ATV use on the Butterfly Lake trail because they feel their experience of hiking in on the trail is degraded because of the ATVs. As we are also regular hikers on the trail, we understand the issue. It is worth noting, however, that the trail is always safely passable for those on foot, if it is at times very muddy. The trail passes through some swampy areas, and during rainy times there will always be a problem with mud. The property owners have already spent time and money on

improving the trail, and in those sections where the trail has been worked on, the trail is much more pleasant to traverse by foot. The property owners who use ATVs have already committed to spending more money and time to continue improvements.

If the State still believes that more needs to be done to address the needs of the hiking community, we would like the State to consider the following options:

1) The State could consider establishing a set of standards for the trail. The property owners could then prepare a plan for achieving the required improvements, and the State could withhold the special permits if the plan's timeline or target goals are not met. The standards could be based, for example, on the inspection that was conducted last summer.

2) Investigate the possibility of establishing a parallel but separate trail that is only for hiking. The Butterfly Lake trail used to follow a slightly different path. Perhaps some of this trail can be reformed as the hiking trail, separate from the ATV trail.

Although the majority of our comments relate to the Butterfly Lake trail, we also have one other comment about the management of the SRA. We would like to see better mapping available to the public of the facilities available in the Nancy Lake SRA. We have been enjoyed accessing the recreational opportunities available in the SRA for many years, long before we bought property in the area. One way in which the SRA could be made more accessible for the public is to provide better maps of the area, to include clearly marked trails and particularly areas with campfire rings which can be used by campers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. We hope that the State will provide another opportunity to comment on draft revisions to the management plan before it is finalized.

Comment 8 of 86 - submitted on 11/26/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Sirs, I have attended, I believe, all the meetings concerning "the trail" since about 20 years back. I was there when the Park rangers gave us permission to put in the Butterfly trail. I helped build it. The impression I get, is that in the eyes of the park administrators now, that things have gone to hell in a basket since the original regs were written. As I look around, over the 30 years or so I've been using my cabin on Butterfly, not much has really changed. At least not to the bad. If one could take an high aerial picture from 25 years ago and over lay it on one taken today there would be few changes. Nothing that can't be fixed easily. No environmental destruction, no contamination, no shoreline damage of any magnitude, in fact the people have taken pretty darn good care of it. Do know there are less trails being used today then 5 years ago!

Are you aware that since the Butterfly trail went in, people are no longer using the old trail (marked "trail one" on attached map) that comes in from the winter trail, goes west over the hill at Skeetna and curves around Skeetna on its west end, and then crosses the creek coming out of Butterfly, and connects back in to the size trail going to Delyndia lake? Or the trail (marked "trail two") south of Candlestick lake (an extension of the original trail coming from the lynx lake road) that went up the hill to the west before turning south and passing by the old cabin (falling down and rotting one) and continued on to the Parks cabin on the point at Butterfly? That trail

then also continued on pass the point cabin going west- southwest to delyndia lake. Both of these trails where used by ATV's extensively years ago because the original trail from Lynx lake road was virtually impassable even on foot.

My wife and I are both 76 years old and unable to walk into our cabin, carrying our food, our fuel, and necessities, or carry out our refuse going out. Please do not cut off our only affordable access. To us it is a matter of safety in an medical emergency.

Map attached.

Comment 9 of 86 - submitted on 10/24/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I recently became aware of the increasing use of motorized vehicles in the Nancy Lake area. This has resulted in significant damage to the trail that is intended for non-motorized use only, and increased litter and debris that unfortunately accompany motorized off-road travel. It is my understanding that there is a prohibition on motor vehicle use throughout the park. I feel that these restrictions should be continued, particularly since there has been inadequate public notice or solicitation for public comment for these unwanted changes. Inviting and accepting input only from land owners around the lakes is inadequate.

The Nancy Lake System is a unique area. It is the only canoe system within a reasonable drive of Anchorage. There is private property on 3 of the lakes, but most of the park is undeveloped and pristine. Having extensive trail damage and the disruptive noise level of illegal, motorized travel negatively affects a wilderness experience, and is totally unacceptable when it is supposed to be prohibited. It shows total disregard of existing regulations, and seems to cater to the wants of a select, selfish few at the expense of other Alaskan citizens. The Nancy Lake Recreation Area websites is clear about motorized vehicle use in the park: "Motorized vehicles cause lasting damage to vegetation and trails; they are restricted to maintained roads and parking areas."

There are very few areas left on the road system that are designated for non-motorized access and activities. Please do whatever it takes to keep Nancy Lake among these few special areas, and prohibit any future vehicle encroachment on the Nancy Lake park and trails.

Comment 10 of 86 - submitted on 12/04/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I started canoeing in the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area 30 years ago. I loved the remoteness and quiet of the area as well as the glassy lakes to paddle through. I enjoyed the region so well that I bought a cabin on Butterfly Lake in 1983. One of the biggest attractions to me was that the lake was bordered by the park and that there was no road access which would keep the lake free of crowds, busy boat launches and traffic. These features also made the property slightly harder to access but it was well worth it to enjoy the peace and solitude. I knew the property only had remote access when I bought the cabin.

Even though access is remote-it certainly is not difficult. The hike into Butterfly Lake is slightly more than a mile and takes between 35 and 40 minutes to walk. When the weather is wet it takes longer only because of the muddy, slippery conditions caused by the churning up of the trail by ATV's.

The ATV's are only a detriment to the Park. My cabin has been robbed and

vandalized multiple times by persons on ATV's. My boat was vandalized (the gas tank emptied and refilled with water and the oars were stolen). I later found my oars on one of the Delyndia ATV barges. The trail to Butterfly from the Lynx Lake road has been torn up and deeply rutted by ATV's. The permits issued by the Park that allow ATV's require that any damage be repaired yet the Park has not issued one citation or required anyone to fix any of the damage they caused.

Property owners on Delyndia can access their property. They can hike the 35 minutes to Butterfly and take a skiff or canoe to their private landing area on the southwest side of Butterfly. They could store their ATV's at that site and drive to their cabins from there.

I attended both of the "public" hearings related to the change of the Management Plan. Only property owners on Butterfly Lake and Delyndia Lake were given direct notice through email. The property owners of the three largest lakes in the Park, Nancy Lake, Lynx Lake and Redshirt Lake had to find out for themselves. Had actual users instead of only property owners who travel through the Park to access their property been properly notified, you may have received more input along the lines of what was said on page 47 of the current plan which states "People who attended the public meetings and responded to the questionnaires placed strong emphasis on retaining one quality of NLSRA above all others its quiet natural beauty." At the last public hearing Mr. McCutcheon stated that the existing Management Plan did not address ATV's in the park. A participant at the hearing countered him citing passages and page numbers from two different sections in the existing Plan, "The plan does not recommend any ATV improvements or access" (page 88) and "An area for summer use of trail bikes or three-wheelers will not be built in NLSRA. The use of these bikes will be encouraged to take place outside of the park, at some other more appropriate location in the region" (page 41). Then Mr. McCutcheon went on to say, "I guess we will have to agree to disagree." His statement troubled me in that it appears he has a predisposition to support ATV's in the Park. No one at the hearing offered any positive reasons why ATV's should be allowed in the Park other than it would be easier for them to access their cabins.

If ATV access is allowed to Butterfly Lake, what will be demanded by property owners on other lakes bordering the Park? Will Red Shirt Lake property owners now require a motorized access to their lake? Will Cow Lake property owners want motorized access off of the south end of Red Shirt Lake? Will canoers want motorized access through the canoe trail system? Will the Park end up being a maze of unregulated muddy ruts?

The Park does not have the funding to monitor or police its current abuses. Opening the Park to ATV's will only accelerate the unregulated damage that is being caused.

The Nancy Lake Area State Recreation Area is a beautiful place that needs to be preserved as a park especially considering the population and commercial growth in the region. The current Nancy Lake Area State Management Plan does an excellent job of addressing its valuable assets and preservation of them. Please do not allow ATV's to tear up the park anymore. Please do not alter the plan to change it from a parkway to a roadway.

Comment 11 of 86 - submitted on 11/05/2008 at 12:00 AM:

The management plan established in 1983 has done a good job of preserving the park - if properly enforced. Other than addressing new docks - leave the plan alone.

Comment 12 of 86 - submitted on 11/02/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I am a property owner on Butterfly Lake. My husband and I have enjoyed our cabin since the early 1980's. Hands down the most enjoyable aspect of our property is the tranquility and remoteness of the location. When we purchased the cabin we did so knowing that a portion of the lake was within the park and that there wasn't motorized vehicle access to the lake. We enjoyed our canoe trips into the lake, the peace once there, and the wildlife we see there. We know that this is the primary attraction for most of the property owners on Butterfly.

A few years ago that tranquility was altered. We started noticing a constant flow of barge traffic loaded down with ATV 4-wheelers most of which were crossing Butterfly to get to DeLyndia Lake. We learned that special permits were issued by the park superintendent to allow the ATV's to cross park land to get to the lakes. Knowing that the current management plan of the Nancy Lake park area didn't allow motorized traffic we initially assumed that this would be allowed for a short time to allow building materials to be transported into home sites. We expected this to last a few weeks or possibly a summer season. Unfortunately, this was not the case. After a number of years the hiking trail has been destroyed and the North shore of Butterfly Lake now looks like a dumping ground for a various assortment of platforms, motors, trash and ATV's. We have grown accustomed to the unsightliness of this area but we can only imagine how disappointing it would be to stumble upon this mess or have to maneuver out of the way with a canoe overhead as an ATV attempts to pass on the trail.

The management plan should not be modified. There are many lakes that have motorized access and very few that preserve the pristine tranquility that the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area was designed to protect.

Thank You for your consideration.

Comment 13 of 86 - submitted on 11/13/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I wanted to comment on your plan to revise the NLSRA management plan to consider allowing motorized access, i.e. ATV's, motor barge, & float planes which is not allowed in the current management plan. I am absolutely against this revision to allow motorized usage as it will affect the experience that children attending our camp have while out multiple days in the NLSRA, hiking, canoeing and camping. One of our goals is to instill in each child Leave No Trace ethics while outdoors experiencing nature. We have worked hard to not have any impact while in the NLSRA so that future generations of Trailside Discovery campers and the general public can enjoy the park in it's quiet and pristine atmosphere. We are concerned that allowing motorized usage in the park during the summer will ultimately change to character of the park and not give our campers the much needed break from media, noise and pollution. All children need down time like all of us -- time they can explore, think freely and go out into nature. That kind of time encourages creativity; fosters emotional, social, physical and intellectual development; counters stress; and has even been shown to decrease the symptoms of children with attention-deficit disorder. To allow motorized usage in the park would degrade that experience and give us a reason to no longer use the area I urge you to not change the management plan allowing motorized usage in the NLSRA.

Thank You.

Comment 14 of 86 - submitted on 12/02/2008 at 12:00 AM:

When we first bought our property we wanted to be at the end of the canoe trails. We imagined ourselves canoeing into our cabin in the summer and snowmachining in the winter. Then Scott had surgery on his ankle and now has a steel plate and several screws holding his ankle together. Portaging a canoe is out of the question. Scott also has degenerative disk disease which makes carrying a canoe impossible. We can only access our property in the summer with our Polaris Ranger. Neither one of our parents are able to get in and out of an airplane, so the only way they can access the cabin is through use of our Polaris Ranger.

We have been very supportive of the trail improvements --the trail work done in the summer that has made the trail more solid. It has made better accesses to the lake for hikers and ATV users alike. The improvements were made with no cost to the state. Improving the trail does not increase the access to Butterfly because access is still limited by the gate. Only the homeowners have a key to the gate.

We appreciate the state allowing owners to stage parking and dock access to our cabins. A possible solution to the problem would be to have the barge owners construct a dock to be used by all to load their rafts. The homeowners have been conscientious about policing litter along the trail and loading area. With the continued upgrade of the trail by the owners, hiking the trail is a nicer experience. The trail is a far cry from what existed in 2002 at the Park Service Trail conditions meeting in Wasilla.

Comment 15 of 86 - submitted on 12/02/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I would like to comment on the NLSRA Management Plan Revision during this scoping process. These comments are mine and not associated with my membership on the State Parks Citizen Advisory Board.

To me, the intention of parks and managed recreational areas is to set aside unique natural areas for public enjoyment of those same unique qualities. On the NLSRA revision web page, you state that due to rapid development of private property within and around the NLSRA calls for a revision of the 1983 management plan. I certainly hope that State Parks is not saying that development within the SRA should keep up with that development. On the contrary, I hope the revision keeps the core purpose of the SRA, that is the public enjoyment of a unique natural area. To do otherwise would only make the NLSRA just like the area around it and not unique at all.

Butterfly Lake access trail and barge area:

The second paragraph of the 1983 management summary states, "The plan guides a continued expansion of facilities, trails, and management within the area while maintaining the quiet, natural beauty..." Clearly, quiet and natural beauty are some of the unique characteristics for the SRA and why there is a non motorized restriction during the summer.

It is my strong opinion that the plan revision should retain this motorized restriction. The use of conditional use permits was mismanaged for years leaving property owners a sense of entitlement for motorized access. I don't have to clarify

the resource damage that this has caused to the Butterfly Lake Trail and to the shoreline of the lake itself. Inholders were guaranteed access, not necessarily motorized access. Property owners in and outside the SRA have access via foot, bike, airplane and snowmachine in the winter.

It would set a very bad precedent to allow a permanent motorized access because of mismanagement and illegal use. Further, it would undermine the unique qualities of "quiet and natural" that the public expects of the NLSRA.

Dock permits:

Safety, property rights and environmental considerations are the reason dock permits are needed. For example, permitting will allow oversight over docks going under water, docks blocking neighboring property owners views and preventing contaminants into the lake. Each lake should have it's own dock requirements as each lake has it's own uses.

Red Shirt Lake winter access:

I think it could be reasonable to find snowmachine access to Red Shirt Lake in low snow conditions. Let's see how this winter's policy works for the use of the East Red Shirt Lake trail during the low snow months. If there is abuse then this should not be an option.

Summer and winter trails:

I would hope future management of the NLSRA includes development of summer hiking/biking trails such as the East Red Shirt Lake and Chicken Lake Cross-Park Trails. These two trails would also be excellent winter trails for snowmachine, skiing and dog mushing.

Mushers have long used the Parkway road for training during the fall and early winter. I hope there is mention of this in the plan revision and accommodating mushing within the NLSRA. The SRA is located between two major winter recreational trail systems, the West Gateway Trails and Big Lake Trails and so can be an important focal point for winter recreation.

Comment 16 of 86 - submitted on 10/29/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Please enforce the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Management Plan. No ATV use should be allowed in the NLSRA. The canoe trails in this area offer a slice of peace, quiet and tranquility that is becoming increasingly hard to find. Please protect this unique area.

Comment 17 of 86 - submitted on 10/24/2008 at 12:00 AM:

My family and I have been frequent users of the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area for the past thirty years. In recent years, the Park Service has apparently allowed the use of four wheelers in the park. This change was inconsistent with the management plan. Little or no opportunity was provided to the public to comment on this policy change. Historically, there has been a policy of no motorized vehicle use in this park, which contains the only canoe system within a reasonable distance from Anchorage. The recent use of four wheelers has resulted in considerable damage to the park and has benefitted only a few private property owners, most of whom do not own property in the park. The litter that has been left behind by these users is

appalling. My understanding is that you will be considering an amendment to the management plan that will authorize continued or further use of four wheelers in the park.

We are very much opposed to this. We hope that you will consider the broader public interest when this comes up.

Thank you.

Comment 18 of 86 - submitted on 11/28/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Thank you for the effort you have put into gathering public comments during this plan revision process.

We are supporters of the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area. As a child I regularly went to Midnight Sun Bible Camp on Lynx Lake. We have camped at several of the camping areas in the recreation area and canoed through many of the canoe trails. We have also skied and snow-machined through the area in the winter. I love canoeing and have a nice, light, easy-to-portage canoe. We have traveled to Minnesota to canoe and do volunteer work on the portage trails in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, but our favorite area is the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area.

We have three young boys (3, 6, and 7 years old) and are excited to share this area with them. Four and a half years ago we bought a piece of property on Butterfly Lake. For several years we have been building a cabin on our property. We chose this property from many other options mainly because of its location by the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area. We like the recreation opportunities in this area such as snow-shoeing, canoeing, waterskiing, snow-machining, or just being out at the lake. We enjoy all the people that we meet and see out in the area. We also chose the property based on the ways in which we could access it. My parents are able to fly out to our cabin in their airplane. We are also able to store a boat at the north end of Butterfly Lake and ride an ATV or walk to the boat. Another option is to canoe in via the Little Susitna River or via the canoe trails and portages from Lynx Lake. We can also ride mountain bikes down the Lynx Lake road in the summer or snow machine from Nancy Lake in the winter. We have used all of these access options except for the Little Susitna River route which we will do as soon as our boys are older.

We know that there is some current controversy over the privilege of using an ATV on the Butterfly Lake trail. We have greatly appreciated the ATV access over the last several years. Bringing in cabin construction supplies, having very small children, and some struggles with health conditions have made it indispensable to be able to use an ATV to get to our property. We also understand the importance of preserving the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area. We agree that there need to be some restrictions, for example the ATV access in the past is not recreational and is only meant to access private property within a permit process.

We would like to see a compromise reached where controlled boat storage can continue in small areas on Red Shirt and Butterfly Lakes, where limited ATV access is allowed for property owners on the Butterfly Lake trail, yet where the majority of the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area is maintained for quiet recreation. We support the conservation of the existing canoe trail system which includes several lakes with no development and no motorized access, yet we also support motorized access to Butterfly Lake.

Thank you for considering all of these issues as you work to revise the plan and thank you for allowing us to submit these comments.

4 photos attached.

Comment 19 of 86 - submitted on 12/03/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I have been hiking into my cabin on East Butterfly Lake since my daughter was 3 and my son was 8. They are now 16 and 22. I cannot begin to describe in this letter the amount of joy my family has received from this area throughout the years.

I am a single mom. I purchased this cabin in 1994 with a small divorce settlement. With my daughter in a backpack and a Bernese Mountain dog carrying a load, the 3 of us would hike in on weekends with various other cabin owners from East Butterfly. I fondly remember the narrow trail that wound up over the ridge after Echo Ponds. I remember the marshiness of the bog. I remember Wayne Blanc (one of my lake neighbors) telling me about a shortcut through the trees and the three of us actually finding it. I remember the quiet, and the feeling of remoteness. I used to proudly tell my friends over the years that the two major reasons I purchased this particular cabin were--- no jet skis allowed on the lake, and no ATVS.

It never dawned on me that a park authority with a regulation banning ATV use would rescind the ban. As the years have gone by it makes more and more sense to protect this area and preserve the wildness, the quiet, the remoteness of it. Now, more than ever we need a sanctuary to fill us up so that we can keep facing the frantic pace of our daily lives. Families need a place to have a wilderness experience with their children.

As we walk in to our cabin lately, the experience is changing. The trail resembles a freeway. Most days the hum of an ATV can be heard coming or going. Many times, my children and I have jumped back into the bushes to avoid an ATV as one comes around the corner. The trail and the "marina" at the end of the trail no longer discretely exist in the forest. They are a blight to the eye. They rudely announce themselves with culverts, deep ruts, ATV tracks, pieces of styrofoam, and beer cans. As the trail get used by ATVS and the center gets filled with water and ruts, the ATV users expand out to the sides and cut new routes. Or they abandon the center and cut the trail even wider with new ATV tracks. It is a no win proposition.

My wilderness experience needs to be protected by enforcing the existing plan. Please protect the "...natural appearance of all portage trails and canoe launch/landing sites". Certainly a single mom with two children can counter any justification for needing an ATV to access these cabins. Over the years my children and I have hauled in repair materials, tools, food and other supplies on our backs. And when our rubber Zodiac was destroyed by the black bear, I called up another woman friend and 2 more teenagers and we carried in a metal boat with motor. None of us will ever forget that.

Please preserve our family experience and keep out the ATVs. A few property owners wanting to transport in on machines surely can not outweigh the many, many park users looking for a quiet, remote hiking/canoe experience.

Thank you so much for listening.

Comment 20 of 86 - submitted on 01/22/2009 at 12:00 AM:

This letter is to provide input into the planning process for the Nancy Lake Recreation Area (NLRA). There are approximately 30 lots on the north west side of Nancy that either border the lake or the recreation area. These lots are served by Hardship Lane which is a private road maintained by the property association. The purpose of the association is to provide for snow removal, road maintenance and general communications for protecting our property interests. The property owners on Hardship Lane have an interest in the future planning in the recreation area. The planning interests that may affect members of our group have not been discussed in detail, so this letter is to provide a preliminary list and start of communication. A preliminary list includes:

1. The 1983 planning report by the NLRA indicated that the state planned to purchase additional lots on Nancy Lake to expand the recreation area. Since that time several of the lots have been developed. What is the status and planning for this earlier objective.
2. The State has one lot (vacant) on Nancy Lake that could be served from Hardship Lane (located at the mouth of the "no wake cove"). Since Hardship Lane is a private road with restrictions established by private easements through 4 lots, we are concerned as to future State plans not fully understanding these restrictions for access.
3. There is an approximate 30 acre parcel located in the NW1/4 of NW1/4, S33, T19N, R4W, S.M. that contains a small lake (Cindy Lake) and borders the NLRA. This land has been evaluated by DNR for future use because it is isolated from other state lands. We would like this open area to be preserved and would like to know the status of this planning and how it fits into the NLRA plans.
4. The location of a portion of Hardship Lane is within the 30 acre parcel discussed in item 3 and my records indicate that a dedicated easement was not created when the road was built in the 1970's. This easement needs to be established to prevent misunderstandings in future years. The NLRA planning may not be the proper place to deal with this issue but it is a place to start.

Please include these concerns in your planning and provide communication to me so I can alert our group.

Comment 21 of 86 - submitted on 12/04/2008 at 12:00 AM:

On June 25, 2008 I made written inquiry by e-mail to the state and asked why a permit is needed to operate an ATV within the NLSRA, and I asked if permits were available equally to all citizens, and if not, I asked for an explanation of the State's basis for discrimination. On June 27th Wayne Bissell replied by e-mail exactly as follows (this is a direct quote):

"I am about to send out a letter to all interested parties regarding the permitting of ATVs on the trail. It will have some history included. Therefore I'll try to briefly answer your question. The park is closed to ATVs as a rule, but a special exception (special use permit) was made many years ago to allow their use on this trail for land owners within and adjacent to the park to access Butterfly Lake. Limited access is also true for Lynx Lake in-holders since they use the (gated) Lynx Lake Road for accessing their properties as well. Permits are only issued to landowners and are not issued for recreational purposes. Therefore the general public is excluded from

using ATV's in the park, but NOT excluded from pedestrian passage. This permitting practice is under review at this time and we will be holding public meetings this fall to seek input on whether ATV use on this trail should be permanently allowed, or not, in the future. Are you a park in-holder? Regardless,

I will be happy to include you on the mailing list for updates. Please feel free to give me a call if you have other questions, 745-8935. Regards, Wayne" After checking the borough's land ownership records, I replied to Mr. Bissell that same day stating: "I believe that you have incorrectly characterized those who own nearby property as "in-holders". Those who short-cut across the park to more conveniently get to their nearby properties, which properties have other legal access, are not "in-holders." Indeed: it appears that there are no so-called "in-holders," only nearby property owners who want to "short-cut" on ATVs across the NLSRA. "Short-cutters" is a more apt description than "in-holders," from here on, let's all use the term "short-cutters" for the NLSRA ATV permit holders.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough land ownership records and the NLSRA documents do not appear to show that there are any "in-holders" whatsoever. In reality, those persons who short-cut across the NLSRA driving ATVs and small six-wheeled trucks, to more conveniently get to their nearby properties, which properties have other legal access, are not "in-holders," rather; by way of example, what they do is akin to cutting across the lawn of a house on the corner of a street, rather than walking around the corner, to save a few extra steps and a few extra minutes, at the expense of the homeowner whose lawn becomes the worn by-pass of the "short-cutters". "In-holder" has developed special meaning in context of park administration; a prior legal dispute and between the federal parks service and in-holders in Denali National Park, is an example. Unlike Denali National Park, there are no "islands of private property" within the NLSRA- State DNR has not identified one single in-holder in the NLSRA- using the term "in-holder" which has special meaning in the jargon of public lands administrators, puts a distorted spin on the facts in this case.

To me, inquiry by the State as to whether or not I am an "in-holder," meaning "do I own nearby property" and thereby implying entitlement to special privilege and special use of the NLSRA, is clearly unacceptable management of the NLSRA: the NLSRA is a public resource and should not be managed for special interests groups. If there are no "in-holders," then the state's position that permits are not available to the general public has no merit, is not supportable, and runs contrary to common understanding of fairness, public policy, and state law.

With regard to any changes or reaffirmations of the NLSRA's Master Plan: I request that the State and DNR to clearly and specifically define whether or not permits are available equally to all citizens, and if not, then to explain and define the state's basis for discrimination. If the state determines that there are so called "in-holders" who will be allowed permits to build or to maintain roads and to operate ATVs in the NLSRA, then I request that the state specifically identify each and every legal parcel, by legal description and by Matanuska-Susitna Borough tax parcel identification number, and to list and enumerate each and every legal parcel within the NLSRA Master Plan as modified or reaffirmed, stating that those are the "in-holder" parcels; the owners, occupants, leasees, guests, and invitees of which are entitled to ATV driving, barge operations and road building and road maintenance permits.

For many years I've owned recreational property in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough in areas where ATV access is common, and I understand and can relate to the logistics, time, and expense of getting to places that are off the road system. However, choosing to own a property off the road system does not entitle the owner to shift the time or expense of getting to that property to others. Cutting through the NLSRA by ATV and small six-wheel trucks, over land, and over the lakes and tributaries of spawning streams using motorized vehicles and motorized barges, shifts that expense to the citizens by consuming or diminishing the amenities of the NLSRA: all citizens are beneficiaries of the NLSRA. It belongs to the people. Fortunately, the drafters of the NLSRA Master Plan had the foresight to create a motor-vehicle free area near to the major metropolitan cities of South Central Alaska. The NLSRA is, or was before it was recently corrupted, a pristine like area located near to population centers, and the area is usable by a wide spectrum of people. These kinds of areas are becoming fewer and more difficult to get to. I recall one fall day, 42 years ago, I was 7 years-old, fishing with my dad on the Kenai River, and not seeing another boat. Today it's bumper-to-bumper boats. The summer before last, my dad, 75, and I, canoed the NLSRA with my two nephews, ages 9 and 14. It was a great trip, everyone had a good time: the NLSRA appealed to users from 9 years old to 75 years old. For a number of years I volunteered in various capacities for the Boy Scouts including serving as the Activities Chairman for the Denali District; that chair position has the daunting task of organizing events that involve, literally, thousands of youths. Selecting venues for those events is more challenging each year. Likewise, logistically viable locations for camping, canoeing, and outings for smaller community groups are also tougher. Scout and church groups also use and enjoy the NLSRA; I've accompanied groups with as many as twenty teens, paddling and portaging the NLSRA. The NLSRA is appealing because it is close to population centers, it is readily accessible, it is mildly challenging but doable by just about everyone, and importantly, because it has a remote, tranquil wilderness quality, and fish and wildlife.

What notice was made to the users of the NLSRA or to the public? To the youth groups who are repeat avid users, as example? To the Mat-Su Borough Assembly? Whether or not a citizen has ever, or will ever set foot into the NLSRA, does not mean that their opinion is any less important, or that they have less standing in the public process; the Master Plan decisions still affect them and their families, and many individuals will want to have their input, whether they are living in the Pioneer Home in Palmer, or in Juneau, Bethel, or Fairbanks. Mr. Bissell reported that: "I am about to send out a letter to all interested parties regarding the permitting of ATVs on the trail." It isn't reasonable to think that the state has a mailing list of all interested parties, or that it's practical to send a letter to everyone in the state. Permitted ATV riders aren't the only interested parties. I contacted the state because of the ATV issues that I became aware of in the NLSRA, the state did not contact me. Notices must be published. It strikes me that the State's proposed process to modify the Master Plan failed to provide adequate notice to the public.

With regard to any changes or reaffirmations of the NLSRA's Master Plan: I request that the State and DNR re-notice the public process and demonstrate that adequate notice has been made to the public.

When looking at the impact of the state permitted ATV road building, barge

mooring, and vehicular traffic, a number of things come to mind. The first among them is wetlands regulations. Were the ATV roads built through wetlands? Was the U.S. Corps of Engineers or other qualified person consulted with regard to wetlands determination prior to road building? If so, are the reports available to the public? If not, why not?

With regard to any changes or reaffirmations of the NLSRA's Master Plan: I request that the State and DNR demonstrate, and explain, compliance with wetlands regulations.

Will the state maintain the ATV roads? What will it cost? Is there a budget for that and for resolving wetlands issues? Has the state done a cost benefit analysis of allowing rogue road building and four-wheeling in wetlands without wetlands determinations or permits? How will the costs of these proposed changes impact the budget for the remainder of the NLSRA? More now than in past years, today's economics require the state to be frugal and just with its budgets, and to maximize the benefit of what we have.

With regard to any changes or reaffirmations of the NLSRA's Master Plan: I request that the State and DNR demonstrate, and explain, the costs, benefits, and budgetary considerations of allowing ATV road building, barge operations and ATV traffic in the NLSRA.

Are any of the ATV and barge permittees: guides, outfitters, or tour operators? What steps has the state taken to determine if permittees are running business operations? Nothing in the state's adhoc ATV permit program appears to prohibit commercial uses by so called "in-holders." If guides, outfitters, or tour operators are allowed permitted uses, are these vendor opportunities available on a bid basis too? What is the state's procurement process for this?

With regard to any changes or reaffirmations of the NLSRA's Master Plan: I request that the State and DNR demonstrate, and explain how vendors may obtain ATV and barge permits to transport sports, clients, and guests through the NLSRA to lodges, tours and eco-sightseeing destinations beyond, near or adjacent to the NLSRA.

The NLSRA does not exist in a vacuum. I'd like an opportunity to hear from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's departments and Assembly, as well as our State Representatives. I think that it's an important enough issue that they would appreciate a chance to learn more about it and to share their thoughts about it, before a decision is made without their input in the public process.

I appreciate your consideration on behalf of the state's department of natural resources. Thank you.

Sincerely.

Comment 22 of 86 - submitted on 11/05/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Comments on access related issues: There seems to be a large push from non-motorized and aircraft user groups on Butterfly Lake to close motorized use of the Lynx Lake Trail. I am specifically opposed to closure of this access, not only for this trail but for similar trails near the cities of Anchorage, Palmer and Wasilla. We have plenty of natural wide open areas within Alaska. Closure of this trail will inhibit

access to elderly and young people who could not access the park by any other means. Motorized access also provides for provisions as NEA(?).

Other comments: With(?) the Park Service and/or DNR provide an area for proper winter storage of boats and/or barges on the lakes within the park. There has to be a way to accomodate user groups in conflict. Access to Butterfly Lake along the Lynx Lake Trail is an issue that needs to be solved. I will be happy to personally serve on any ad hoc committee or advisory panel to solve this issue.

Comment 23 of 86 - submitted on 11/03/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I wanted to reinforce with both of you how important it is to my family and me to keep the Nancy Lakes Rec Area as it was intended in the 1983 plan. We hope that you will stop all issuances of ATV permits and keep the non motorized status as before. We have traveled to our property on Skeetna by canoe since 1983 and have made the portages with all gear and needed supplies. Carried in and carried out. We have truly enjoyed the walks in the woods, the paddling the various lakes, the coming down the Little Su and walking over. We have appreciated your many improvements in this special canoe trail. We have so many fond memories of our quiet trips. We very much appreciate when we can still enjoy this quiet. I was a single mother of two boys, 9 and 10, when we first began. They learned so much from our many trips and time in the park and enjoyed so much of the beauty this area brings. We could start out from home at midnight in the summer and safely travel the 10 lakes while watching the animals watch us. I feel that our time spent in this park has done so much to make them the adults they are today with their love of nature. We appreciate having such a park with its very special properties so close to our home. Please stop ATV permits so the trail can go back to what it was. Please keep your additions to the trails in the same manner as past, as natural as possible. Please remember that this is an amazing canoe trail that needs preservation. Please remember that this park belongs to the people of Alaska, not to a few in holders. I am aging, as we all do, and am not able to make it in as often as I used to but the preservation of this area as I have known it is of utmost importance to me for those generation to come. Thank you for all the help you can give to add to the preservation of the Nancy Lakes Rec Area as it was intended in the 1983 plan and enforcing the intent even better that it has been before.

Very Sincerely.

Comment 24 of 86 - submitted on 11/23/2008 at 12:00 AM:

As a fairly frequent user of the ATV trail that goes to Butterly Lake from Lynx Lake, I am compelled to voice an opinion about the notion of closing it to ATV use now, in the name of environmental concern.

In retrospect, I would hope the State of Alaska would consider the merits of either including an entire lake within a controlled-use park boundry, or excluding that same lake completely from the confines of the park. The tug-of-war that precipitates from a split-use scenario is complicated by the differing mind-sets of the users in persuit of their individual pleasures.

That being said, it is clear that the impact of allowing ATV use on the Lynx-Butterfly trail is the heart of this issue now.

Interest, and consequential usage for Butterfly Lake has grown. With the allowance

of ATV usage on the trail, opportunities were created that allowed people to finally stop carrying everything to Butterfly Lake via the canoe trail. As you know, the canoe route involves five other lakes.

In the name of lessening environmental impact to Nancy Lake State Park, and giving all users the quiet seclusion they desire, consider this:

Let's say Lynx Lake, both Echo Ponds, Candlestick Lake and Buckley Lake had one party of two people in a canoe on each of them on any given day. Now let's say that five parties of two people each desire to go to Butterfly Lake or beyond on that same day. If these Butterfly users were to take the old way in, via canoe, then in the end, 100 people would take in the visual impact and audio impact of 100 other people. (5 x 2 going through to Butterfly, 5 lakes, 2 people each = 10x 10, or 100)

In addition, instead of a total of 10 people using the portages, each with their inherent impact on vegetation, the root system of the trails, and the potential for improper waste disposal, we now have sustained the same damage from 20 travelers, or double.

In this day and age, most remote canoeists relish being able to go to work on Monday boasting that they "didn't see a soul" all weekend. To that end, what possible good could come out of creating the need for the Butterfly Lake folks to take to the canoe trail once again? Please don't tell them they can "walk" the ATV trail instead of use ATV's. One good-sized family cooler and a little gear for the cabin does, in fact, mean that they will be on those canoe trails again.

Nancy Lake State Park is famous for its water system, not its woods. Anytime one has the opportunity to lessen the impact on a water system and its associated portage trails by allowing a good number of users to reach a lake that is not, in and of itself, a prime destination within the park, it would be foolish to do otherwise.

This issue cannot be viewed as a "Butterfly Lake problem". If there are concerns over environmental issues, let those concerns focus on the park as a whole. Butterfly lake was never destined to be like any other lake within the system, by virtue of its proximity to the boundary line. Why would we now take this influx of people told they had access via ATV on the trail, and disperse them onto the same trails and waterways which are already showing signs of fatigue?

I say that the use of ATVs to access Butterfly has had a positive impact by removing those people from the network completely. Remember...many of those people only use the ATVs when they simply cannot get their load in on their backs. I have walked it far more times than ridden on an ATV.

IF the environment is the concern here, the rule is to move the most people with the least permanent damage to the system. Most canoeists of the system in reference don't even know the trail exists, but to force Butterfly users back to the five lakes involved in the canoe trip to Butterfly will have much more impact to the current and future canoeists of that system.

This is a no-brainer, ecologically speaking. If a four wheeler passes through the woods and no one is there to hear it, does it still make a sound? OR If all the old and NEW Butterfly owners take canoes around again, and everyone else is there to hear them, will anyone really want to go there to "not hear a sound?"

Respectfully.

Comment 25 of 86 - submitted on 11/02/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Thank you for your interest in making sure the Nancy Lake Recreation Area is kept in good order and accessible for all who would like to enjoy it. I am very concerned about the negative publicity the access trail to Butterfly Lake has received from the Alaska Center for the Environment. I have been using that trail to access my inlaw's cabin since 1982, and I now have had a cabin of my own on Butterfly Lake for the past few years. My family and I enjoy our cabin and the recreation the park provides immensely. My friends and I have used the canoe trail and the ATV trail to cross the park and to access different portions of the park for over 25 years. For most of those years, my family and I have walked in on the ATV trail. I have watched the ATV trail expand and have assisted in cutting the existing trail that skirts around all of the marshy areas. In all those years, I have not seen any negative damage done to the canoe trails that exist in the park. The one thing I can say is that much has been done to better the trail system for the ATV's, but not much has been done over the years to keep up the canoe system. Many years ago all of the canoe system from Lynx Lake out to the Little Su were well maintained and boardwalks were installed for the users of the system. If you walk those same boardwalks today, you would find much of them torn up and in disrepair. The canoeists themselves have done nothing to help keep them up. I have on many occasions picked up their alcohol containers and trash they have left behind. On the other hand, I have seen yearly maintenance completed on the Butterfly Access trail. Landowners have taken it upon themselves to cut trees out of the way that have fallen over the trail, they have kept the devil's club from overgrowing the trail, and they have trimmed head-high branches from the trail. Other people have sought permission and gained it to better the trail by using machinery and have installed piping where needed and built up the trail in other areas to keep it high and dry.

I realize the use of ATVs on the trail has caused rutting in some soft areas and there are many places where people must walk on the side of the trail to keep from being in the mud and puddles, but it is still an improvement over the old trail that skirted Buckley Lake and went through three different swampy areas. Currently, I use one four wheeler sparingly to bring in materials during the summer, and I sometimes use it to carry a large cooler of food for longer weekends. Most of the other time, I walk in to Butterfly Lake with my family. I would truly hate lose the option of coming in on a four wheeler if I need to. I know many of the landowners on Butterfly Lake use ATV's to access the lake because it is no longer feasible for them to walk in or fly in as they have in the past. Because of some current health issues, I may not be able to access my cabin without the use of a machine for a while (I am having knee surgery and back problems). I am not sure when I can return to walking in. Please don't take the option of walking or riding in to the cabin away from me.

In the 25 plus years I have been crossing park land, I have thoroughly enjoyed the fishing and hunting it has provided. I have fished for pike and bowhunted for spruce hens and moose for many of those years. The existing trail has not had an effect on either the fishing or hunting in the park. Most of the people I have seen on the canoe trail and the atv trail over the years have been landowners around the park. Please don't let outside agencies such as the Alaska Center for the Environment use their negative influence on you when making a decision about park usage. What is

there currently is working for many people. We as landowners can and will do a better job of keeping things in order on the trail.

Comment 26 of 86 - submitted on 11/24/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Apparently, ATV and four-wheeler users have constructed trails through the park, during the time that this is and was against the current Master Plan. To sanction their use now would be a sanction of illegal activity and a "taking" from the People of Alaska, as this is a State Park. To change the Master Plan to favor their activity would sanction this "taking" and it would adulterate the very theme and reason for setting up this nonmotorized Park. I suggest that this would be a terrific mistake and a loss to the People of Alaska, all of the quiet, nonmotorized users of Nancy Lakes in particular.

I have walked, canoed, and cross-country skied in this Recreation Area, and have noticed and been bothered by the loss of quiet due to ATVs. ATVs are not traditional-use equipment in Alaska, and are well-known for tearing up decent trails and habitat. There is no place for them in a nonmotorized Alaskan Park, and there is no good reason to change the Park's Master Plan in order to allow their use. By changing the Plan to allow motors, you would be "taking" one of our last quiet areas and opportunities for quiet recreation (traditional Alaskan experience) on state public land. There are plenty of other places to run ATVs.

I doubt you have the enforcement potential at this point to enforce proper use of ATVs, once allowed, and to restrict them to trails or from new-trail creation. In case you hadn't noticed, where allowed, they stampede like frightened cattle between every tree and through every wetland. This happens in many other places here in the Valley. Let's keep Nancy Lakes protected from this kind of damage, and enforce against illegal motorized use. You should have been doing the latter in the first place, but I doubt you had the enforcement personnel to do it. Holler when you need a letter in support of that, please.

The fact that ATV users spent their own money on their machines and trails already is moot and irrelevant; many of us have invested in our time and nonmotorized equipment with trust in State protection and enforcement for our future use in the area.

Keeping an unspoiled open space for public recreation here for future generations was considered a necessity in the creation of this Recreation Area, and relinquishment of same should not be allowed. "Unspoiled" refers to trail condition, pristine habitats (wetlands included), natural quiet, and even the lack of gasoline-powered exhaust.

Finally, in an era in which this entire nation recognizes the need for conservation of oil and reduction of gas-engine exhaust, why promote and create new allowances for needless gas combustion and pollution in the very Parks where we go to escape the same?

Please do not allow ATV use here, and continue to protect our rare opportunity for quiet recreation. I might suggest that you also require the perpetrators of the illegally built trails to remove and revegetate them-perhaps by requesting the help of NLSRA quiet users, who might likely show their support for the area and reach across the internal combustion barrier to share the work and the enjoyment of the

area.

Comment 27 of 86 - submitted on 11/05/2008 at 12:00 AM:

As a 17 year Alaskan Resident and a user of the Nancy State Park closest to where I live in the Mat Valley, I want to ask you to uphold the original intention of the process of granting limited and I emphasize "limited use" permits for ATV use. If you believe that motorized use is permissible in the preservation of the park for future generations as in has become during non-winter seasons in these last few years, I want to shed some light that I feel that it will cause irrefutable damage going forward and must be held in check.

Thanks and I hope that you can make a difference.

Sincerely.

Comment 28 of 86 - submitted on 11/06/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I wanted to express my gratitude to you both for your willingness to let everyone voice their concerns at last night's meeting. The issue of Butterfly Lake trail access is clearly a very emotional matter for many of us. It is unfortunate that ATV access was allowed within the park and that private individuals have made substantial financial investments based on a privilege that they have been allowed but never guaranteed for the future. Although I do not share their opinion about specialized permitting, I was interested to learn from the people who access their property by ATV that we have one thing in common. I do not believe that anyone involved wants the park opened to ATV access by the general public. I am sure that the conflict here is apparent to you, the park is owned by all but a few seek a privilege that they would prefer to reserve only for themselves.

NLSRA seems to be close to every one's heart, and I don't think that anyone wants to see it change. I doubt any landholder bought a remote property because they wanted a Big Lake experience, and yet allowing ATV access brings us ever closer to that change. I believe that in every one's heart is the desire to continue to enjoy a truly amazing park as it is, however sometimes our desires and our actions are incompatible. I understand that many of the ATV users are unable to access their property on foot, I can understand the sadness that they must feel at the thought of being able to visit such an exquisite place less often. The day will come for all of us when our bodies are unable to take us where we desire. I wonder if perhaps the ATV users have not thought of how they are changing the place that we all cherish, and that it will continue to change until it is unrecognizable. Opening the NLSRA to ATV's will no doubt be the end of the park as we see it today. Opening a small area of the park to a handful of ATVs has already caused significant damage, and changed the experience of visiting Butterfly Lake.

I do not believe that it is too late to right this situation, revoke the permits. People possess quite a bit of ingenuity; the people who truly love the park will find a way to continue to visit without causing damage. Future generation's right to experience the NLSRA as it is will be taken from them if we do not set a precedent now that a state park is a place for people to be nature's visitors, not its destroyers. The responsibility to provide private landowners access to their property is not, and should never be that of the state. I hope in your consideration of the new management plan, you will hold the interests of the park's land and animals above those of any private landowner.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Comment 29 of 86 - submitted on 10/29/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I am writing to weigh in on the NLSRA management plan. I want to save this Park as it is. I want to know that when we are all gone this Park remains as it is. We owe it to future generations. The Park needs to get back to basics and its original purposes and spend time and money maintaining the canoe chain, the portages and landing facilities, and to establish more designated camp sites along the canoe chain. You should also consider a public use cabin for winter cross-country skiers. This is a one-of-a-kind recreation area and the prohibition on motorized use needs to be enforced.

We are fortunate that the original planners of this recreation area voiced their concerns and reasons for setting aside this area; a quiet, peaceful, pristine place, free of motorized traffic. They also recognized that the surrounding area would become crowded, and there would be pressure put on the park for change. The original planners actually make it easy for NSLRA to maintain its integrity. They recognized the exact situation we find ourselves in today, and there is every reason to continue the management plan as written.

This park was set aside for the public, not for private landholders. The public is the exact group you have neglected to "notice" of the changes being contemplated to this area. With your thinking that only "interested parties," not the "public," for which this park was dedicated, should be noticed, the owners of land on DeLyndia Lake should not be notified. DeLyndia Lake is not in the NLSRA. That said; you need to do the right thing and notify public users of the changes to this area that will affect them. It is only right. You would have the broad based support needed to protect this Park and to say no to motorized use.

There is no justifiable reason, and it runs counter to public policy, to provide special classes of users in the NSLRA. You will not be able to restrict ATV use to property holders in a state park meant for the public, not for land owners. I find it unconscionable that special permits have been issued for ATV use, and private citizens have been allowed, to destroy public property. The proper agencies were not notified, wetlands have been filled, the muddy mess in one area has been drained into Candlestick Lake. This is not what the drafters of this park had in mind. I wish the Division of Parks would spend more time and attention to maintaining the integrity of the Park.

People who bought land surrounded by the NLSRA, with no motorized access, knew the rules, and have no more "rights" than any other park user. They can get to their property the same way we have for 25 years, canoe or hike (less than 2 miles). On our hikes over the years, before ATV use, we would see ptarmigan and the occasional moose. We no longer see signs of bear and we haven't seen moose or ptarmigan in the last few years.

Butterfly Lake now looks like an armed compound with all the ATVs, barges, barrels, and trash. If I had seen this when I canoed to Butterfly Lake years ago, I would have been appalled. Now, I'm just heartsick. A beautiful park, a beautiful lake and a wonderful recreation area are threatened with destruction by a few for their own personal purposes. Apparently, they will not be happy until NLSRA looks like Big

Lake. But in this instance, they want the public to pay for it (one more reason you need to notice the public, not just interested parties)! It is ridiculous to expect the Division of Parks to pay for a special road for private property owners' exclusive rights; and even more ridiculous, with its potential legal ramifications, to allow private citizens to build or maintain any sort of facility within a public park.

Those of us who love the Park the way it is actually have more of a right to expect the quiet, non-motorized, peaceful, pristine park, than those who want to change the Park for their own personal motorized use. Because those are the very values with which the Park was dedicated, as well as to maintain the park for future generations. The drafters understood the demands that would be placed on this Park. They are to be commended for the foresight. I have heard the word "progress" many times from ATV users -- the very thing the Park drafters voiced and the reason the Park was established to have one place that "progress" passes by.

You must realize that if you open the Park to ATV use, it is not any leap of the imagination to know that it will become an ATV playground. Trails will mean nothing all your time will be spent policing the Park. There is evidence of ATV use off the main trail; and we have seen ATV users camped at Candlestick Lakes. I also envision ATV rental shops right outside the Park.

This park will be destroyed in a few short years unless you put a stop to motorized use in the Park now.

Thank you.

Comment 30 of 86 - submitted on 11/06/2008 at 12:00 AM:

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II. THE PARK SHOULD BE MANAGED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC AND THE USERS OF THE PARK

III. THE PUBLIC AND THE USERS OF THE PARK SHOULD RECEIVE ADEQUATE PRIOR NOTICE OF ANY PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE PLAN

IV. THE PRIVATE MOTORIZED ACCESS EASEMENT IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE PURPOSES OF THIS PUBLIC NON-MOTORIZED PARK

A. Motorized traffic and barge storage are inconsistent with the purposes of the park

B. A private access easement is inconsistent with the purpose of a public park. There is no present right to ATV access, and none should be created

C. Amending the plan to permanently authorize ATV use will eventually result in severe damage to the park. Once ATV use is established as a "right" it cannot be limited to current users

V. UNSUPERVISED PRIVATE WORK ON PUBLIC LAND RESULTS IN UNPLANNED, POORLY EXECUTED, AND POTENTIALLY ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTION

VI. THE PROPONENTS OF THE ATV TRAIL HAVE NOT DEMONSTRATED THAT THE PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PARK SHOULD BE CHANGED TO BENEFIT THEM

A. ATV use can only be allowed if the purposes and objectives of NLSRA are changed. The proponents of change should have the burden of demonstrating that change is necessary and appropriate

B. There is still a need for quiet, non-motorized recreation in an unspoiled setting within a reasonable driving distance of Anchorage and the Valley

VII. CONCLUSION

I. STATEMENT OF POSITION ON AMENDMENT OF MASTER PLAN

The NLSRA is proposing to amend its Management Plan.

The primary factor driving the proposed amendment is that private parties have constructed an ATV/ 4 wheeler trail through the park to access private property. This activity is prohibited by the current master plan. In addition, the 4 wheelers have constructed barges to transport the ATVs across Butterfly Lake to their private party. The barges are parked year-round, on parkland. This activity is also contrary to the current plan. The 4 wheelers want the plan to be amended to permanently sanction these activities.

We understand the Division of Parks is also considering amending the plan to regulate construction and use of docks on lakes within the park system.

We do not think that the proponents of ATV use within the park have shown that creating a permanent private motorized access easement through the undeveloped and non-motorized areas of the park is consistent with the purposes of the park or that it is in the best interests of the users of the park. The Plan should not be amended to sanction this activity.

We agree that there should be appropriate regulation of dock construction and use to protect park values. We do not see that amendment to the Plan is required to deal with the dock issue. We believe the issue can be adequately addressed by clarifying and enforcing existing park policies. If our belief is incorrect, and this issue can only be resolved by an amendment, we do not oppose the amendment.

II. THE PARK SHOULD BE MANAGED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC AND THE USERS OF THE PARK

NLSRA is a state park. It is owned by, and was created for the benefit of, the public. It should go without saying that the park should be managed for the benefit of the public generally, and in particular, for the users of the park. The park should not be managed for the benefit of private parties who own land outside the park.

III. THE PUBLIC AND THE USERS OF THE PARK SHOULD RECEIVE ADEQUATE PRIOR NOTICE OF ANY PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE PLAN.

We are concerned that there has been little effort to notify the general public or the park users of the proposal to grant a permanent private motorized easement through the park. It appears that notice has only been given to property owners in the area, and a few other people who have learned about the issue from property

owners and who have contacted the Division of Parks.

The property owners are the very persons who will benefit, financially and otherwise, from the proposed privatization of public land. While they are entitled to be heard like any other citizen, to the extent they are simply advocating for their own private interests, their opinions should be given little weight.

NLSRA is a public park, not a private park. The planners should be focusing on input from those who represent the public interest, particularly those members of the public who use the park. The only way to get meaningful public and user input is to be sure they have been notified of what is going on.

The drafters of the current plan emphasized making contact with park visitors. Among other things, they distributed hundreds of questionnaires to park visitors. Based on the number of individuals who attended the public meetings (approximately 190), there must have been notice to the general public as well. We believe that similar notice is required here before there are any substantive amendments to the Plan. Both park users and the general public should be notified if the Plan is going to be changed.

IV. THE PRIVATE MOTORIZED ACCESS EASEMENT IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE PURPOSES OF THIS PUBLIC NON-MOTORIZED PARK

A. Motorized traffic and barge storage are inconsistent with the purposes of the park.

There is private land on Nancy Lake and three lakes within NLSRA. Most of the rest of the park is undeveloped and relatively pristine. In the summer, only nonmotorized (i.e., canoe and foot) traffic is allowed in those areas. Motorized traffic is specifically prohibited. This is because motorized traffic is entirely inconsistent with the purposes of the park.

The following statements from the existing Management Plan, and the park's website, set forth the purposes of the park:

"In 1967, the original master plan for NLSRA was prepared and identified the necessity 'of providing future generations with unspoiled, open-space recreation of a natural character' as a critical fact of NLSRA, a concept we are still in agreement with." (plan, p. 6)

"The most frequently given reason for coming to NLSRA [by park visitors] to enjoy the quiet natural setting." (plan, p. 28)

"The five most frequently mentioned existing qualities of NLSRA appreciated most were natural beauty, open space and quiet; campgrounds; easy access and convenience; canoe trails; and good maintenance." (plan, p. 28)

"Nancy Lake State Recreation Area is different from most Alaskan park areas. It is one of the few flat, lake-studded landscapes in Alaska preserved for recreation purposes. The recreation area's clear waters are ringed with unspoiled forests, and provide tranquil settings for canoeing, fishing, hiking and camping." (Website)

The above statements establish that a primary purpose of the park is to provide a quiet, tranquil, natural setting for recreation. Motorized traffic is clearly inconsistent

with the purpose of providing quiet, tranquil recreation. The current ATV traffic is also causing significant damage the terrain, and is inconsistent with the objective of preserving the natural setting. The photographs attached as Tab A detail some of this damage.

Park visitors clearly stated their objection to motorized use in the original Plan: "The five most frequently mentioned facilities or activities considered inappropriate for NLSRA were motor boats; commercial establishments; snowmobiles; more roads; and motorized vehicles." (plan, p. 28)

Because summer motorized access is inconsistent with the purposes of the park, the park has adopted a clear policy that such uses will not be allowed:

"Motorized vehicles cause lasting damage to vegetation and trails; they are restricted to maintained roads and parking areas." (Website) (Note that snow machines are allowed, but only "when there is sufficient snow cover to protect vegetation.")

"ATV use in the park is closed by park regulations and any changes in these procedures require the Director's approval. This plan does not recommend any ATV improvements or access." (plan, p. 88)

It is clear that ATV use within the park is inconsistent with the purposes for which the park was established. This fact has been recognized for at least forty years by everyone associated with the park.

In addition, the ATV riders have constructed "barges" and a landing area to store them. The landing area is on parkland. Storage of vehicles on parkland is prohibited by state law. 11 AAC 12.220(b).

The landing area is directly adjacent to the canoe portage and is the first thing park users traveling north to south through the canoe chain see when they arrive at Butterfly Lake. The area is depicted in the photos attached as Tab B. Trash left at the landing area is depicted in Tab D. This is not the "natural setting" that users of the park are led to believe they will experience in the park.

B. A private access easement is inconsistent with the purpose of a public park. There is no present right to ATV access, and none should be created.

At the risk of stating the obvious, there is no public purpose served by granting an easement to private parties across public land. Only the private parties benefit from this.

Certain access rights to private property were established and predated establishment of the park, ie., the Lynx Lake road. But there was no pre-existing right to ATV access through the park. Until very recently, anyone caught using an ATV in the park was given an expensive citation.

The Division of Parks has recently issued permits to ATV riders to access their private property. The permits specifically provide that they expire every year, are "a privilege, not a right" and that the Division of Parks "reserves the right to close the trail completely to further ORV use" if the event of significant damage to park resources. Such damage has clearly occurred and is continuing. See, photos at Tab A. The General Stipulations to the permits state that "No rights of renewal or

preferential rights for renewal or of a proprietary interest in the lands are attached to this permit," and that they can be revoked at any time at the discretion of the director. The permits clearly do not create any continuing, much less a permanent, right to operate ATV's in the park.

ATV users who participated in the October 27th scoping meeting advanced several arguments as to why they should be given a permanent right to ATV access through the park.

The ATV users pointed out that they had already created the trail "footprint." Based on this, they argued that the damage has already been done, and there is now no reason to stop the ATV use. The Division cannot allow a party to acquire vested private rights in the park by damaging the parkland. This would set a terrible precedent. Furthermore, the General Stipulations provide that "all activities shall be conducted in a manner that will avoid or minimize disturbance of park resources including drainage systems ...", and that the Permittee "shall pay the state for any damage resulting from negligence or from the violations of the terms of this permit." The Permittee is also required to "fully repair all damage, other than ordinary wear and tear, to state park roads and trails caused in the exercise of the privilege authorized by this permit." The ATV users have caused substantial damage to the park trails, resources, and drainage systems, as depicted in Tab A. This damage may justify sending them a bill, but certainly does not justify giving them a permanent private easement through park property.

The assertion was also made by a Delyndia Lake resident that he had been driving his motorcycles and ATVs through the park since the 1980s. This activity was clearly illegal until the park started granting permits in 2001. Prior illegal use cannot create a "right" to future legal use. Again, accepting this argument would set a terrible precedent, by encouraging and rewarding illegal activities within the park.

The assertion was made that ATV use must continue because ATV users spent their own money on the trail. The results of this activity are depicted in Tabs A, B, and D. This activity has clearly degraded and damaged park resources, not improved them. The construction was done under the terms of permits which stated that the Permitters were not to damage the park.

For all these reasons, the prior illegal use, the permits that have been granted the past few years, and the trail construction do not give the permit holders a continuing "right" to use public parkland for their private benefit. The question before the planners is whether to create a new, vested right to ATV use that did not exist before. Taking this step would be contrary to the concept that public parkland should be managed for public purposes.

C. Amending the plan to permanently authorize ATV use will eventually result in severe damage to the park. Once ATV use is established as a "right" it cannot be limited to current users.

The Division of Parks first granted permits for construction of the ATV trail and operation of ATVs in 2001. Since that time, the damage depicted in the photos at Tab A has occurred. In addition, there have been ten barges constructed and stored on parkland. See Tab B. There are probably at least two ATVs for every barge. The barges are an unsightly addition to the park. They are illegally stored on parkland.

They are also unseaworthy and present an obvious danger of dumping ATVs, and their fluids, into Butterfly Lake. See photos at Tab B.

Ten barges, used by probably twenty or more ATVs, now transit the trail and the lake. All of this has occurred in only seven years, with no public notice, and with no guaranteed ATV access.

Property owners on Butterfly are now advertising their lots as having ATV access. Tab C. There are approximately 30 cabins on Butterfly. There are probably at least 50 undeveloped lots. There are probably at least an equal number of cabins and lots on De1yndia. If guaranteed ATV access is established through the park, ATV use is almost certain to grow at a rate faster than ten barges and twenty ATVs every seven years. The park simply cannot tolerate dozens of barges and scores of ATVs. But that is almost certainly going to be the result if the trail is authorized.

This scenario assumes that the trail will remain a private easement across public land and that the park will continue to exclude the public from the trail. This is a dubious assumption. We know of no authority for the state to give away an interest in parklands to private parties. At some point, ATV enthusiasts and other members of the public are going to demand the same ATV access rights that the landowners have been given. There is no reason in logic that such public use can be restricted to the Butterfly trail. There are numerous seismic lines and trails throughout NLSRA that, with a little brushing, would allow ATVs to pass. Moreover, the Division of Parks allowed the De1yndia/Butterfly ATV group to cut new trails through the park. Other ATV riders will eventually demand the "right" to cut new trails to areas they want to access with ATVs. Since the De1yndia/Butterfly group has been allowed to do this, the Division of Parks will be hard pressed to deny other groups the same "right", resulting in disturbance to more and more areas of the park.

The Division of Parks does not have the resources to police ATV use in the park. ATV users are notorious for not policing themselves. The "next hill" syndrome is pervasive among ATV riders. In the long run, there is no way that the Division will be able to confine ATV riders to designated trails once they are let in. They have already started to use alternate trails off the main Butterfly Lake trail, even though their numbers are currently very limited and they know their permits can be revoked at any time. See last picture, Tab A.

The proposal to amend the Plan to formally allow ATV use in the nonmotorized parts of the park represents a watershed event. Enormous pressure is now being brought to bear on the Park Service by the relatively few current ATV users. If ATV use is formally sanctioned, it will continue to grow at a rapid rate. It will be impossible to resist further expansion, and the character of the park will be changed forever. There will be no way to restore the park to its former status of a quiet, serene, and undeveloped area.

V. UNSUPERVISED PRIVATE WORK ON PUBLIC LAND RESULTS IN UNPLANNED, POORLY EXECUTED, AND POTENTIALLY ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTION

Private parties were allowed to bring heavy equipment into the park and to construct a trail through the park. To the best of our knowledge, no plans were prepared for this work, no surveys or locations for the trail site were approved, and no permits were obtained. The result of this unplanned, unsupervised construction is depicted

in the photos attached as Tab A.

In addition to damaging state parkland, the private construction activity may have violated the law. Tab A depicts fill placed on what appear to be wetlands. It also shows drainage of dirty water into Candlestick Lake, an anadromous fish source. The Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction over certain wetlands. Filling those wetlands without a permit is most unwise. The State Department of Fish and Game has jurisdiction over anadromous fish waters, and activities in those waters require permits under certain circumstances.

We do not claim to be experts on permit issues. We do not know if legal violations have occurred. Nor do we know whether the State can be held responsible for violations that it allows to occur on its land. We raise these issues to point that there are risks involved in turning private parties loose to do unsupervised construction on State land.

VI. THE PROPONENTS OF THE ATV TRAIL HAVE NOT DEMONSTRATED THAT THE PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PARK SHOULD BE CHANGED TO BENEFIT THEM.

A. ATV use can only be allowed if the purposes and objectives of NLSRA are changed. The proponents of change should have the burden of demonstrating that change is necessary and appropriate.

For the reasons set forth above, it is clear that the ATV trail and access proposal is inconsistent with the stated purposes and objectives of NLSRA. Those purposes and objectives have been recognized by all concerned for over forty years. Because the proposal is inconsistent with those purposes and objectives, the Plan can only be amended to accommodate the proposal if those purposes and objective are changed.

We believe the proponents of change should have the burden of demonstrating that the purpose and the philosophy of the park should change to accommodate them. We do not believe they can make such a showing.

B. There is still a need for quiet, non-motorized recreation in an unspoiled setting within a reasonable driving distance of Anchorage and the Valley.

The original Plan, adopted in 1967, "identified the necessity 'of providing future generations with unspoiled, open-space recreation of a natural character.'" The population of South-Central Alaska has exploded since the original Plan was adopted over forty years ago. Can any rationale person say the need for unspoiled, open-space recreation has declined since then? Most of the Valley was considered rural or even Bush Alaska in 1967. The amount of unspoiled open space has been dramatically reduced since then. In our view, these changes make preservation of this unique area in an unspoiled condition more important than ever.

NLSRA is a special and, to our knowledge, a unique park. We know of no other area within two hours driving time from Anchorage where Alaskans can enjoy overnight canoeing in a quiet, unspoiled area without motorized traffic. There are scores of lakes in the Valley that are accessible by ATV and/or automobile. Those who want motorized transportation have multiple options. There are few, if any, options comparable to NLSRA for those who want a traditional experience. That is why the park was created in the first place. The proponents of change have not

demonstrated that the sole option available to non-motorized users should be taken from them, when there are so many options available to the motorized users.

The driving force for the proposal to amend is the request for ATV access. This request is coming from a few property owners in the area. We are aware of no public demand to change the purposes and objectives of the park. The longstanding philosophy and purpose for an entire public park should not be changed to accommodate the wishes of a few individuals with a personal interest in the outcome.

VII. CONCLUSION

NLSRA was created to preserve part of the Valley in its natural state for the benefit of all Alaskans. The original planners had the foresight forty years ago to save the land in an unspoiled state for our benefit. We have an obligation to follow their example and look forty years, and more, into the future.

Imagine what the park will look like in forty years. The population of South-Central has more than doubled in the last forty years. There is no reason to believe that growth will slow over the next forty. The park will be surrounded by development. All the private lots on Butterfly and Delyndia will be developed. If ATV use is allowed, there will be hundreds of ATVs transiting to those two lakes alone. But it wouldn't end there. If Delyndia residents, who are not within the park, are allowed to use the park for access, why wouldn't all the surrounding property owners? Why wouldn't the same "rights" have to be given to Red Shirt property owners, and all the land that will be developed to the West of Red Shirt? If the principle of private motorized access easements is established, how can this stay an unspoiled, non-motorized park?

The property owners who are insisting on ATV access through the park are good people, but they are incredibly short-sighted. They remind me of the frog placed in cold water on a hot stove. The frog eventually cooks without ever noticing it is getting hot. Here, the ATV users are fouling their own nest and destroying the very values that presumably caused them to buy their property in the first place. But the destruction is gradual and unnoticed at this time. If motorized access is allowed, I predict that in ten or twenty years they will be asking themselves "What was I thinking?"

We should continue the wise policy of those who created the park. We should preserve the park as it is for future generations to enjoy as we have enjoyed it. We should not permanently degrade the park and its resources for the convenience of a few.

Comment 31 of 86 - submitted on 01/18/2009 at 12:00 AM:

In reference to the update of the NLSRA management plan I have several areas for comment:

One: Many of the private lots within and or bordering the NLSRA were patented before the Area was established and even before statehood. The Area boundaries were gerrymandered to include all the water surface of lakes such as Nancy Lake and Red Shirt Lake. That action seized lake access rights from property owners who had enjoyed traditional use.

Any management plan should grandfather these properties the continuation of rights they had when the property was patented. To impose by requiring permits to construct or repair a dock or float is nothing more than a government organization usurping owner's rights. Restrictions on watercraft usage or hours of operation should be with consensus of the surrounding property owners, NOT a state decision.

Two: As in one above, access to properties has been restricted by Area regulation and or management decisions.

The management plan should guarantee continued and unrestricted use of traditional access routes and closure of the routes only be considered if there is a demonstrated history of significant damage being done outside the corridor of the traditional routes or trails.

I have traveled the East Trail to Red Shirt. Though it is undeveloped, it is passable. However, it may never be suitable for hauling any loads of materials over it. So, no matter what, the traditional Winter trail must remain open to Red Shirt users.

Four wheeler use of the summer hiking trail should continue to be by permit. However, permits should be issued only when the trail conditions are dry. This includes Ranger and Staff usage as well.

Three: Under Federal land management, all section lines have a 50 foot public access easement on each side. What is the status of these easements within the NLSRA? Have they been vacated or are they still open?

Four: The Red Shirt landowners financed and constructed a park host cabin for the use in recreation area management and security. A tie down cable was put in so landowners could secure their boats and equipment. The working agreement between the landowners park authority has resulted in fewer break-ins and less vandalism.

It has been traditional for landowners to keep boats and canoes at the end of the trail at the lake. Before the host cabin, boats and canoes were kept at the North end. We have been using the host cabin site now for more than 15 years.

Five: The park host cabin has been a great benefit to both landowners and other visitors to the Area.

This needs to carry on. We have enjoyed hosting the Hosts showing them how to catch the Pike and having them to our cabins for parties and dinners.

Six: In writing the plan please think of Rotary International's FOUR WAY TEST.

Is it the TRUTH? Is it FAIR to all concerned? Will it build GOOD WILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS? Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

Thank you.

Comment 32 of 86 - submitted on 12/05/2008 at 12:00 AM:

* organized activities on Nancy Lake and in the park will be held at what cost to event organizers.

* require surveys for dock permits; In the case of a dock built by a landowner in

front of another upland owner's property, what should be the recourse

- * handle existing non-conforming docks- those with copper treated preservative members in contact with the water and those supported by friable foams - should not be 'grandfathered' in.
- * create responsibility for those dock owners whose docks have left their anchorages
- * encourage compliance with Park regs by Park users and how to encourage enforcement of Park and other state and local regs by authorities
- * Ban two-stroke motors in the Park used for transportation

All the best.

Comment 33 of 86 - submitted on 11/03/2008 at 12:00 AM:

News of change afoot at Nancy Lakes State Recreation Area has traveled far and wide. Although from the Lower 48, my family travels to Alaska on a regular basis. And one of our treasured experiences is canoeing and portaging through this area, staying at a cabin surrounded by peace and quiet. There are so few areas that can boast this attribute, and I am alarmed to hear that this may change. My understanding is that there is an existing management plan spelling out retention of the area's quiet and natural beauty, but that this clearly defined plan is not being enforced, strengthening the resolve of ATM users to increase their access for their own convenience.

Please please please be strong in the face of this pressure and protect the area's rare and unique qualities. DO NOT LET ATVs INTO THE PARK. Each time you do, it sends the signal that ATVs have a right to be there.

As our human population increases there are fewer places to find a retreat to nature. Please save this pristine, quiet treasure for today and future generations of Alaskans and visitors to your great state.

Thank you.

Comment 34 of 86 - submitted on 11/12/2008 at 12:00 AM:

This letter is submitted as comment on the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area and the current scoping effort to identify issues.

The first issue is the poorly planned and executed public notification. A notice in the Mat-Su section of the Anchorage Daily News, unseen by those living in Anchorage, does not constitute notification for those 200,000 or so users of the park. A notice on the Nancy Lakes web site does not constitute notification unless it is the expectation of DNR that all citizens will check all public land web sites every day in case the managers plan to change things. The general public has not had notification except that by word of mouth and friends e-mailing friends. At the Anchorage "secret" meeting the leaders stated that this word of mouth notification was adequate notification.

Unless the public is notified of meetings, issues and comment periods in a proper, usual and acceptable fashion, any plans coming out of these "secret" meetings are invalid. The public owns the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area, not the managers, not the inholders, and certainly not those adjacent to, but outside, the area.

The process needs to begin again.

A second issue is respect for the original purpose of the park and existing management plan. It is clearly stated in that management plan that Nancy Lake RA is not open to ATV use. In the past, including the recent past, ATV use has been allowed and even encouraged by park personnel. In addition to this past violation of the park plan, current planners in the "secrete" meetings are not presenting the original values stated in the establishment of the park and the existing plan but are proceeding as if these values and restrictions do not exist. The floor is open to any and all ideas about how the park will be used.

Values that need to be honored are those of quiet recreation in natural settings. As the population of greater Anchorage, Wasilla, Willow, and the immediate areas surrounding the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area increase, the value of areas set aside for quiet recreation increases. As the number and types of motorized recreational vehicles increase, the value of areas set aside for quiet recreation increases. As the development pressures from the tourism industry, real estate agents, and adjacent landowners all increase, the value of areas set aside for quiet recreation increases.

The general public, the people of the State of Alaska, deserve to have their parks preserved for the purposes for which they were established. This principle needs to be the guiding principle for any new management plans. The next generations depend on it.

Comment 35 of 86 - submitted on 10/27/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I support NO revision to the Subject plan and furthermore request that the existing plan be strictly enforced i.e. no ATV's and/or motorized vehicles in the park.
Best Regards

Comment 36 of 86 - submitted on 10/22/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I will be unable to attend the public scoping meeting in Anchorage on November 4, so am instead emailing my suggestions and concerns for a NLSRA plan revision. My family and I have enjoyed the trails, lakes, and cabins of NLSRA for over 20 years. It's a highlight of our brief Alaska summers to spend a few days and nights hiking, canoing, and staying in one of the lovely cabins at these lakes, and a highlight of our dark winters to ski the trails and lakes in the areas off-limits to snowmachines. This area is extremely important to our quality of life in Alaska, and so this management plan is of great significance to us.

We value quiet, low-impact, nonmotorized recreation, and limited development of trails, docks, and cabins. We value wildlife-watching and so visit only those lakes where floatplanes and motorized boats are not allowed.

We strongly request that the revision plan maintain, and clearly enforce, the existing plan's restrictions on motors, in particular the ban on ATVs. We understand that ATV permits to inholdings have resulted in great damage to trails and wetlands. We urge the state land managers to manage the area for the public users, rather than for those few who are demanding easy, motorized access to their private inholdings.

We also suggest that the revised plan focus on maintaining existing trails and docks,

rather than building new ones. The existing infrastructure is enough, as long as it is well-maintained, and as long as regulations are adequately enforced.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment at this beginning stage of the process. I look forward to providing more input at the next stage.

Comment 37 of 86 - submitted on 10/23/2008 at 12:00 AM:

In regards to the Nancy Lake area and trail system:

THE MANAGEMENT PLAN SHOULD BE ENFORCED. NO ATV USE SHOULD BE ALLOWED IN THE NANCY LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA.

I have canoed in this area and this is clearly a case where these uses are in conflict. Allowing both together is a classic case of mismanagement.

Comment 38 of 86 - submitted on 01/24/2009 at 12:00 AM:

I write to you today to express my opposition to ATV use in Nancy Lakes State Recreation Park. I ask you to keep to your management plan that allows ATV use by special permit only, and to limit that use as much as possible. ATV use has already caused extensive damage within the park and it damages the opportunity for people to experience the solace and quiet of wild pristine places.

My family and I and my church use this Recreation Park. We canoe, hike, stay in the campground and cabins, swim and play in the lakes. My church has a tradition of taking it's youth to stay several nights at one of the cabins each summer. For most it is the highlight of their year.

I hear access is the issue yet I disagree. There are already many access routes via float and ski plane, canoe and snowmachine. ATV use cause irreversible damage. Please protect this park.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Comment 39 of 86 - submitted on 10/27/2008 at 12:00 AM:

The following is my response to the below email I received from VMBaH.

No flexibility! Is that how this is to be read?? Consider this. I used to have a canoe rental business which operated in the NLSRA. My business served the park users by providing about 50 canoes at different locations, 15 were located at Redshirt Lake, at the end of a 3 mile trail. Due to the expanse of the Park and the number of canoes to be maintained, in time it became almost impossible to maintain the level of repairs and other safety items required at the more remote locations. I requested a "special" permit to use an atv to allow me to get back to Redshirt Lake in a timely fashion and return to base to continue with the other tasks required to keep such a labor intensive business going. I appreciated the fact that State Parks allowed me to have this permit and it not only benefited my business but allowed me to provide safer and cleaner canoes for park users. I feel, that under certain circumstances the use of special permits may be warranted and State Parks management should be allowed to continue making those decisions when needed. I do not however support opening the Park to the unrestricted use of ATVs'.

----- Original Message -----

Valley Mountain Bikers & Hikers

Please consider attending these meetings - be a voice for hikers and bikers and the "self propelled"

Monday, October 27th Public Meeting @ 6:30 pm in Wasilla Nancy Lake SRA Management Plan - Proposed Revision

A public workshop will be held from 6:30 to 8:30pm at the Public Safety Building 61, located at 101 W. Swanson Ave. in Wasilla to discuss the revision of the plan. The intent of this planning effort is to address many of the issues that affect park management, access, waterbody structures and recreational use.

****** Over the past several years, a small number of ATV users have been given special permits to ride their machines in the park to access private properties, even though the park's management plan forbids all ATV use. There is now some discussion of opening the park to motorized use. So please attend this meeting or send in comments - let them know that the current management plan should be enforced and no ATV use should be allowed in the Nancy Lake SRA.

Comments can be sent to: Wayne Biessel wayne.biessel@alaska.gov Brandon McCutcheon brandon.mccutcheon@alaska.gov

Comment 40 of 86 - submitted on 10/24/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Please ensure no motorized vehicals are use on Nancy lake, please.

Comment 41 of 86 - submitted on 10/23/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I'm writing in opposition to opening up the Nancy Lakes Recreation area to motorized access. For many years, this area has provided a marvelous opportunity for Alaskans and visitors to canoe, fish, hike, and enjoy nature in the peace and quiet of the Alaskan outdoors. Use of the area my motorized vehicles of any kind will destroy this tranquil area and violate the stated intent of the management plan for the area. There are many other areas available to those who would recreate in a motorized vehicle. I urge you to keep Nancy Lakes protected from the noise and pollution that such vehicles bring.

I urge you to maintain the current management plan.

Sincerely.

Comment 42 of 86 - submitted on 11/02/2008 at 12:00 AM:

ATVs are decimating most landscapes where they are allowed. Please, not in the Nancy Lake area.

Thank you.

Comment 43 of 86 - submitted on 12/04/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I don't live in Alaska but I have visited your beautiful state. In fact I have hiked into Nancy Lakes State Recreation Area and spent a couple of nights at a cabin out there. It was so quiet, just absolutely lovely. Loons, moose, beavers and canoeing in perfect quiet. Now I am told you are considering allowing four wheelers into the park. That is so sad. It is a terrible idea, and a wrong direction to go in these times. Please protect the park. I hope I will have another chance to visit there, but I would not come if it were a four wheeler access area. Thank you for considering the feelings and opinion of a visitor to your wonderful wilderness.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Comment 44 of 86 - submitted on 12/03/2008 at 12:00 AM:

i am opposed to motorized vehicles.

i am writing to add my voice to the opposition to changing the park plan. the park plan says no motorized vehicles and i want that to remain the rule.

i also want the rule enforced.

i do not agree with letting people have special use permits to get to their cabins-- including old or infirm people

nature is not wheelchair accessible, it is nonsense to try to make it so, or to claim a right to have it so.

i have been walking to my cabin for more than twenty years.

i have hated when four wheelers disturb the experience.

and they do disturb the experience.

separate trails would not be an answer, the noise travels, it is awful.

people saying that a compromise should be reached, are not understanding that the silence is an important element of the wilderness experience.

it is not just the sight of the fourwheelers that disturbs, the noise disturbs, period.

and the damage to the ground is undeniable, there is no possibility of people staying on a particular trail, that is not how it happens.

i have already seen that.

and so have you.

do not allow fourwheelers at all.

i don't mind if you disallow all motor boats too.

i want it quiet, i want nature.

more people and times changing are not reasons to open the park to fourwheelers, they are reasons to enforce the no motorized vehicles rule.

please do not change the park plan.

please do not issue permits to fourwheelers.

please enforce the rule against fourwheelers.

thank you.

Comment 45 of 86 - submitted on 11/05/2008 at 12:00 AM:

No ATV's at all.

They should not be allowed.

I don't like the noise.

I don't like the damage.

I own land on butterfly.

I bought it for the quiet.

Thank you.

Comment 46 of 86 - submitted on 11/06/2008 at 12:00 AM:

It has come to my attention that the Nancy Lakes Management Plan may potentially be revised and I wanted to submit my comments. I live in Eagle River and head to Nancy Lakes a few times every year. In the summer and fall, I canoe the lakes (sometimes staying at a cabin - James Lake cabin is my favorite). In the winter, I have both skated the lakes and skied on them. Please keep the lakes motorize-use free. While enjoying the peace of the place, snowmachines and ATV's only detract from the experience. I can understand their use in emergencies but recreational use on the trail system is just an abomination. Quiet places are getting harder and harder to find and Nancy Lakes is simply a refuge. I love this recreation area and hope that I can continue to experience it without fear of motorized/non-motorized user conflicts and without the pollution that ATV's and snowmachines bring to an area. Thanks for your time with my comments and your work in protecting one of the greatest canoe (and ski and skate) trail systems in the country.

Comment 47 of 86 - submitted on 11/05/2008 at 12:00 AM:

1. I have enjoyed the time that I have spent in the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area. It is especially important to continue to protect its special qualities so that those of us can continue to enjoy its use. Because of its closeness to the developed population areas in southcentral Alaska, there will be increased use of the area.

2. I DO NOT WANT THE PARK OPENED UP TO ATV USE. As a resident of an area that has major ATV trails, I know how ATV use tears up the environment in a permanent way. These ATV trails to NOT go away. They become mudholes from increased use and trails around the mudholes are always made. The area is impacted. There are enough ATV trails in southcentral for ATV owners to use.

3. The property owners in the area do not need to have ATV trails. They can use snowmachine access during the appropriate times and fly into the lakes.

4. The goals of the existing management plan needs to be ENFORCED NOT CHANGED. The special permits that allow ATV use should be revoked so that the area's quiet and natural beauty can come back to the way that it should be.

Please consider this in your management plan.

Comment 48 of 86 - submitted on 11/02/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I wish to express my strong support that the Nancy Lakes Recreational Area remain accessible to motorless modes of transportation only. Although there is much Alaska wilderness, most is open to motorized transportation. Please keep the Nancy Lake area unique in its unbridled solitude from four wheelers, motorized boats, etc. I support my latter statement even though I have and enjoy a 225 h.p. boat and other motorized recreational vehicles. Thank you.

Respectfully.

Comment 49 of 86 - submitted on 11/06/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I would like to take a moment and thank both of you for the time and effort you have put into reviewing the issues involved with the Nancy Lake Park. I would also like to reiterate the comments I made last night regarding my concerns with the park:

- Careful consideration must be made to examine the consequences that could occur if DNR allows ATV use throughout the park. Specifically, the possibility exists that "Butterfly Lake Trails" could be created all over the park if ATV's become legal for park use. It seems improbable that DNR could reasonably regulate any ATV use and maintain that use to specific trails (there are already short off shoots occurring on the butterfly trail). Does DNR have the funding and personnel to police and regulate ATV use over the entire park? Also, is funding available to "fix" any trails once they have been destroyed from such use?

- Why has ATV use on the Butterfly Lake trail been permitted while they are restricted on Red Shirt Lake trails? I strongly urge you to walk the Red Shirt trail and see for yourself how nice it is. This is the kind of trail I, as a park user and hiker, would like to see.

I do not own any land within the Nancy Lake Park area but as a hiker the current conditions along some trails greatly influences my experience using the park, i.e. I've hiked both Red Shirt and Butterfly trails and the Red Shirt trail is by far more enjoyable.

Please add me to your email list regarding any meetings or future actions taken by DNR. Once again thank you for your time and also for giving me the opportunity to voice my concerns.

Comment 50 of 86 - submitted on 01/15/2009 at 12:00 AM:

My understanding is that the Nancy Lake SRA is in the process of considering management changes. I use this area for canoeing, hiking, swimming, fishing and camping. The non-motorized nature of the area is what attracts me. I feel that allowing any motorized use degrades the appeal of the area. My understanding is that some (summer) ATV use is being considered at this time. I am strongly opposed to any ATV use being allowed in the area.

Comment 51 of 86 - submitted on 12/16/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Hello and I hope these comments are not too late to have an effect! The Nancy Lakes State Recreation Area needs more protection than ever. I enjoy using the Recreation Area with my simple canoe and my 2 feet. Quiet places are getting rarer! The goals of the existing management plan need to be enforced, not changed. Specifically, "retain the area's quiet, natural beauty" and continue to ban motorized trail bikes and ATV use.

Thank you.

Comment 52 of 86 - submitted on 11/04/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I am writing to you about the future of the Nancy Lakes State Recreation Area. I have hiked, skied, biked and canoed and ice skated in the Park for the past 17 years. I

have enjoyed the cabin rentals, and the tenting areas. I have showcased the State's NLSR.A. to both outdoor recreation students from UAA and visiting family and friends. I have even taken infants and young children for a safe and quiet family recreational outing, a place where I am not worried about loud motorized use or gunfire. The area is an incredible resource, a stone's throw from most of the state's population (lower Mat-Su Borough and Anchorage Bowl area).

I am concerned about the potential changes to the existing management plans. If any changes are made, I would like to see them strengthen the quiet recreation nature of the area, not weaken. The area should stay closed to motorized use in the summer. Specifically, ATV's should not be allowed in the R.A. - their damage to the natural fauna and flora is just too great. I have travelled around the state and have repeatedly witnessed extensive damage where there are no rules or regulations.

Please make sure you protect the area for all our benefit. Motorized use exists in the winter. Please let us have this area in the summer.

Comment 53 of 86 - submitted on 11/07/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I was at Wednesday's meeting but opted to leave early when I realized that it wasn't the most productive venue. No fault on you or State Parks, the folks in attendance were particularly unhappy and downright mean. I had no idea of the access issues, I wish I did because that would indicate I owned land in the area. Until that day comes and my family and I can afford it, we remain super-users of the public cabin system and the other recreational opportunities that the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area provides for us. Being such, I would like to provide my comments on what I would like to see addressed in the next revision of the NLSRA master plan. Specifically, the following:

Public cabins in NLSRA - updating/renovating existing structures and/or constructing new cabins in the area. I think many of these Public Use cabins are very popular and the area could use more. I also believe several of the cabins are fairly old, even unsafe, and could be renovated or enlarged to increase usage (specifically the Lynx Lake cabins).

Geocaching in NLSRA - this is a topic that other State rec areas are wrestling with and I think it can be addressed in the Master Plan appropriately. I would love to ultimately see a policy statement issued by State Parks, but I doubt that will happen soon, so in the interim I think it needs to be handled on an individual basis per park/area.

Snow vehicle access - I think this was mentioned as a topic, but I just wanted to reiterate it. Specifically, opening and closing the season and whether or not ATV's (i.e. four-wheelers) are included in this category.

This is my two cents' worth. I am happy to provide more information and volunteer my time into research, information gathering, draft language for the plan, etc. on any of the above issues or others that you have gathered. I would like to remain in the loop, and to that end I will say that I think the State did a fine job advertising the launch of this planning effort. I think we all (both park users and land owners) have a responsibility to be aware of the issues and participate. For what it's worth, too, I don't think a survey is appropriate. Many of the park users during the summer are from out of state or one-time users who will only provide comments like "Need more air fresheners in the outhouses" or "Need RV dumping capabilities".

Thanks a lot for your efforts on this.

Comment 54 of 86 - submitted on 12/02/2008 at 12:00 AM:

The current management plan for the Nancy Lake area should be enforced. No ATV use should be allowed in the Nancy Lake SRA. Our state needs to make sure the activities in our parks and recreation areas are sustainable. So many areas have been damaged by ORV use already, my children will never see the beauty and quiet I enjoyed growing up here. Don't let well organized ORV users decide the fate of the Nancy Lake SRA. Let common sense and science decide. It's better for the water, the wildlife, the habitat, the forest, and our future enjoyment of this place.
Thank You.

Comment 55 of 86 - submitted on 10/28/2008 at 12:00 AM:

One additional park issue that occurred to me as I was returning to Anchorage is the need to address invasive species in the park. As I am sure you are aware someone introduced Pike into the lake system and they have now worked their way from Lynx to Butterfly lake. There are probably plant issues as well.

Comment 56 of 86 - submitted on 12/02/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I am a property owner on Butterfly lake and have been since 1983. I am opposed to the effort to revise the Nancy Lake Recreational Area plan to allow the use of four wheelers. I adopt by this reference the comments of Pat Gilmore in his filing on this matter. The four wheeler crowd has torn up the park and shown no regard whatsoever for those who walk or canoe in. Please preserve the "quiet" nature of the park as mandated by the existing plan.

Comment 57 of 86 - submitted on 01/21/2009 at 12:00 AM:

My wife & I are property owners on Red Shirt Lake and have the following comments: My comment is in regard to Trail 14 used for winter access to Red Shirt Lake. I use the trail a number of times each winter, but I'm a novice snow machiner so access using Trail 14 fits my skills. The new restrictions about when to open Trail 14 seem to cause lots of angst for not only the property owners but also the park employees. I have a number of observations that lead up to my recommendation.

1. The park employees are required to manage the park properties in an environmentally conscious manner while providing opportunities to the public for recreation purposes. This appears to mean that one of your priorities is to preserve the vegetation along Trail 14.
2. The property owners want access to Red Shirt via Trail 14, similar to that which was granted in the past, especially in the shoulder season.
3. Property owners have used Trail 14 for winter access for over 30 years. Even during trail closures restricted access was allowed to their cabins via written variances by Park employees.
4. In the winter of 2007-2008, written variances were no longer granted. Trail 23 was offered in 2008 by the Park as an alternative trail during the shoulder season. However, Trail 23 is a longer and a more difficult trail to use. In addition, it hasn't been sufficiently brushed to allow reasonable shoulder season access. In addition, where the trail goes through mature trees; snow cover is patchy and doesn't provide

sufficient cover for reasonable access or vegetative protection.

5. Maintaining two Trails, 14 & 23, is expensive for DNR to maintain, especially when you consider that Trail 23 is primarily for the shoulder season.

6. Property owners want to be law abiding, but observe riders or see signs of frequent use by snow machines even though the trail is closed, which causes frustration to both owners and park employees.

7. It is impossible for Park employees to police and stop all illegal riders, so the trail sees constant use.

8. On Trail 14, there is some "minimal" damage to the vegetation in several areas along the trail. However, due to the frozen conditions, the vegetation quickly grows back in the spring. This seems to indicate that the damage is to the dead summer vegetation but not the root crown, which allows regrowth in the spring.

9. The summer trail which allows hikers to have access to Red Shirt and the public use cabins is void of vegetation and this seems to be an acceptable practice by the Park. Management is more towards minimization of erosion and maintaining water quality, instead of preserving native vegetation.

10. The Park and landowners have worked well together in the past, but this issue seems to be straining cooperative atmosphere that formerly existed.

Recommendation: It appears impossible to stop illegal use of Trail 14 when it is officially closed and the vegetation damage is slight and restricted to a small area. Plus it is expensive to maintain two trails. I believe that the money spent on Trail 23 should be used in hardening Trail 14 in those areas where vegetation is affected; this makes the most sense for the long term. Hardening the trail can be done in a number of ways such as: corduroy road, a geo-block system similar to those used in hardening a trail through marshy areas used by 4 wheelers, etc.

Comment 58 of 86 - submitted on 12/05/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I would like to take this time to comment on the Nancy Lake State Park access for the land owners on Butterfly Lake.

First of all, I think that you must review the difference in the types of users of the park in the summertime. It is my belief that the canoeing enthusiast, which I respect as I am one myself, are out for day long excursions. If they are spending the weekend in the area, the majority of them are using the campground for their staging area in which they are able to access with their vehicles. These campgrounds provide the following: trash disposal, fresh water, and road access to the convenient stores and other needed supplies for the weekend. The people enjoying the park for day use can carry their basic needs items with them including appropriate food, water and clothing. Supplies for day use are rather small.

The summertime users are not troubled with the responsibility of maintaining the park facilities; their only responsibility is to leave the park in the same or better condition as they found it. These users do not have the same concerns as if they owned the facility.

The property owners who need access to their property through the park have a much greater need for the use of ATV's. The basic maintenance of existing cabins is

a big issue; cabins need painting, roofs need repairs, windows need replacing, and lawns and yards need attention. Often times the needed repairs are from bear break-ins and simply cannot be done during the winter months. Property owners need to have special motorized access to get the supplies and material to their property in the summertime.

I can not speak for everyone, but I can say for myself and what I believe to be true to many of the other property owners on Butterfly Lake. These properties are being used for an entire weekend, week or longer at a time. The supplies for a day trip are far less then a weekend trip. Please review the list of supplies that are common for one of my family weekends at my Butterfly Lake property. The size of my group is four children and two adults.

1. Fresh drinking water for six people 2 nights and 2 days
2. Food for a family of six 2 dinners, 2 breakfast, 2 lunches and snacks
3. Cooler of ice to keep food fresh
4. Clothing to include: rain gear rubber boots, summer wear, swimwear, change extra cloths and jackets
5. Five gallons of gas for the generator
6. Six floatation devices
7. Charcoal for the grill
8. Sleeping bags and bedding
9. Group size toiletries (medicine, mosquito repellent, toilet paper, trash bags, first aid kit, bear protection, camera, fishing gear, etc.)
10. Tools and materials for cabin repairs

My situation is what I believe to be representative of many other property owners on Butterfly Lake. The fact is that my children are young and cannot carry many of the required safety items and supplies along the two mile long trail in question. The trail is enough for them to handle on their own. I believe that six healthy adults would have a battle as well with these supplies.

The property owners that are fortunate enough to have an airplane at their means can transport these same supplies right to the edge of their property. I am not one of those property owners who can afford an airplane that would transport my family and supplies; however I would like the same access that they enjoy.

I do however own a Polaris ranger I only use for a means of transporting people and supplies to my property. Our group of six uses one ATV to access the property and many times some of the group walks while the ATV packs our needed supplies.

I think that it is important to recognize that the property owners do have special needs in order to utilize their properties in the summertime. It is for this reason I would like to continue the same special access that we currently have. I am open for suggestions on how to improve the outdoor experience for everyone and understand we are in a give and take situation. Property owners have a lot invested

into their cabins. These same property owners have been responsible and have not abused the current trail but have taken the initiative to continue to improve the trail when allowed to do so. The trail would have been improved this year as well but is was not permissible by the Department of Natural Resources.

Please note that the trail users are improving the current park approved trail with their own time and money, and that alone should show the importance of this access to them.

Comment 59 of 86 - submitted on 01/14/2009 at 12:00 AM:

Hello, I am writing about the review of the Nancy Lake Management Plan. This is a place I go with my family EVERY year. Often we take two or three trips to the park each summer. Please retain the area's quiet, natural beauty and continue to ban motorized trail bikes and ATV use. ATV's have only damaged the trails as well as the wilderness experience we go there to enjoy. THE MANAGEMENT PLAN SHOULD BE ENFORCED, and NO ATV USE SHOULD BE ALLOWED IN THE NANCY LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Comment 60 of 86 - submitted on 11/28/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Plan.

State Parks provide for quality outdoor experiences for a broad cross section of people. When management plans were developed for Alaska State Parks years ago it was recognized that ATV use was not compatible with other uses in these areas. Use of ATV's is destructive to the environment, destroys wildlife habitat and mars the wilderness quality of an area. ATV use has grown across the state damaging wetlands, stream beds, alpine tundra, and forest almost entirely unregulated. State Park lands need to continued to be protected from such abuse by ATV use on public lands.

Please do not allow ATV use in NLSRA.

Comment 61 of 86 - submitted on 11/10/2008 at 12:00 AM:

The purpose of this letter from the Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition (AQRC) is to offer scoping comments as part of the planning for a revised management plan for NLSRA. AQRC is a nonprofit organization with approximately 600 supporters/ members from around the state who are interested in promoting quiet recreation on public lands and protecting cabin owners, wildlife and others from motorized recreational noise. We believe that natural quiet is a resource to be protected by land managers in all their planning and management efforts.

Board members were in attendance at both scoping meetings. We were notified of these meetings only through email messages from individuals; not by DNR or DPOR. I have tried twice to be put on your notification lists: first, by calling the phone number listed in Biessel's July 2, 2008 letter and, secondly, by emailing Mr. Biessel on Oct. 13th. My assumption was that AQRC would receive official notification of the meetings. Not so. No letter was received nor did I receive official notice via my email address. You and Mr. Biessel were soundly criticized for the lack of public notice about these meetings; however, the inconclusive discussion at the Anchorage meeting did not wholly convince us that you yet believe you have an obligation to

notify the public as a whole. Both meetings were overwhelmingly dominated by cabin owners, many with vested interests in preserving ATV access; where were those who canoe, camp and hike the area?

We suggest that the issue of notification is symptomatic of the major issue in the management of NLSRA which is that state parks chose to manage for one user group at the expense of all others, to the detriment of the resource and contrary to the management plan. You are in a difficult position, but we hope your idea is not simply to change the plan for the sake of making ATV use legitimate.

We urge that you start the planning process by first identifying the legislative purpose enacted into the statute and the implicit and explicit values inherent in that purpose. Failure to do that, as was the case in the Anchorage presentation, leads people to think anything can be proposed. Then, lay out the precise history of ATVs in NLSRA: what "access" rights existed at the time NLSRA was created and which were grandfathered in; when and how many permits were issued each year; what criteria were used to issue permits; what were the conditions of the permits; did any enforcement take place to see that the conditions were observed, and, if so, what were the results? Compile, document and present the adverse affects ATV use has had on other cabin owners and the values they hold, such as natural sounds, natural quiet and solitude. Lay out in detail the various means of "access", winter and summer, available to cabin owners within NLSRA. (We do not believe DPOR has any obligation to permit persons to cross through NLSRA for the purpose of reaching private property outside the boundaries. If you think there is one, lay out the legal case.) In our opinion, unless and until you can convince us that ATVs are the only means to reach certain private inholdings, that DPOR has an obligation to assist, and there is a practical way to restore the resource, there is no need to substantially change the management plan.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Comment 62 of 86 - submitted on 10/22/2008 at 12:00 AM:

PLEASE DO NOT SUPPORT OR ENCOURAGE MOTORIZED USE IN THE NANCY LAKE STATE REC AREA. THERE ARE THOSE OF US WHO RECOGNIZE THE VALUE AND BENEFITS OF NON-MOTORIZED REC AREAS, AND OUR RIGHTS SHOULD NOT BE VIOLATED. IF YOU HAVE SPENT TIME IN NON-MOTORIZED AREAS, YOU REALIZE THE VALUE AS WELL.

Comment 63 of 86 - submitted on 12/05/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I have been authorized to send this feedback by the Board of the Willow Area Community Organization on the 1983 Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Master Plan currently under scrutiny for revisions. At our December 1, 2008 meeting we passed the following motion: "Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Master Plan of 1983 opposes ATV's in the Park. WACO requests that revisions continue to oppose ATV's in the Park."

Regarding the protection of this park from ATV's (all terrain vehicles), as you know the terrain is very fragile, heavily marsh and marsh-like type which is destroyed almost the minute one ATV crosses it. The destruction that has occurred already because of mistaken conditional use permitting and unapproved others will take decades or more to repair if left alone starting now. To envision the destruction that will occur if more ATV's are allowed is horrifying.

This Park has been referred to as one of the four 'Jewels of the State Parks'. It needs protection to remain this Jewel. We cannot allow the precedent setting that opening this Park up to ATV's would mean for all the other state parks, Jewels included. Population in South Central Alaska is growing, and growing rapidly. As this growth increases, pressure will build to allow 'just this' or 'just that', each of which continues the whittling away of the protected state of this Park. We need to stand strong to protect this beautiful place for all the people of today and tomorrow. And of importance, as costs continue to escalate and paychecks do not keep pace, to have such beautiful places close enough to the main urban centers of Alaska promotes ways and places for all people to access the calming and centering that occurs when we biologic beings return to in depth nature.

As to those people who bought 'remote' properties and now want access using ATV's, we do have sympathy for the need for them to figure out other ways to get to their properties. Unfortunately the definition of remote means very limited access. A remote property in our state does not mean 'homestead'. Homestead days are over, as should be the presumption that any property can have road access. Perhaps some other solution can occur for the few impacted, for example state lands land swap where the new land has road access already.

And the last point I would like to make on behalf of my community. We feel that this critically important process, the review and update of the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Master Plan needs more time and more public input. We happen to be the community next door, as are only a few other communities. But we have not had the chance to provide input easily. Please consider extending the public input part of your review process. We would appreciate you attending our next Community meeting, January 5, 2009 to discuss the specifics of your process and to hear from our community. We may find that there are several important items that we would like to provide input about regarding the health of our neighbor.

Thank you.

Comment 64 of 86 - submitted on 10/27/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I'm 14 years old. My family owns a cabin on Butterfly Lake and we have been going there for about 7 years now. Usually me and my brothers bring friends, so typically we carry a lot of gear. I'm sure we could manage by carrying out all of the food, gear, and ect., but it makes it a whole lot easier if we can use our ATV's to haul stuff on. When we first bought the cabin we would always walk out and it got really frustrating because we would never have enough people to carry everything out. It is also about a 3 mile hike to get to the boat launch and as kids, it's not that hard to make it, but for the older cabin owners, they have a tougher time making it those 3 miles. When we use our ATV's we can get to the cabin alot quicker and have more time to have fun at the cabin. I really like being able to ride my four-wheeler to the cabin and I am willing to voice my strong support for contnued use of ATV's on the trail.

Comment 65 of 86 - submitted on 10/30/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I'm writing this letter in regard to possible revisions to the Nancy Lake State Rec Area management plan and primarily to address the Butterfly Lake Trail. I have been using the NLSRA since the early 1980's and have hiked, canoed, skied, fished and

snowmachined on every trail and lake the park has to offer numerous times. I've stayed in the cabins and camped at most of the campsites. I've bushwhacked to lakes and areas on foot that most people wouldn't know existed if they didn't see it on a map. To say the least, the NLSRA is near and dear to the heart of me and my family and friends. I also use an ATV to access my property on Butterfly Lake. There are people trying to paint a picture of how bad its getting with ATV's and making it sound like ATV's are crisscrossing Park land everywhere and how bad the trail is getting due to ATV use. Nothing would grieve me more than if this were the case and nothing is further from the truth. ATV use on the Buttertly Lake trail is not used for recreational riding but to simply access property to that area. This was the intent in 2001 when Park officials approved ATV use on the trail and is still the intent today. A group of landowners have volunteered their time and money, under the Parks permitting process, to the task of maintaining the trail on a yearly basis so all people (hikers, ATV's, etc.) can access their property more easily. Park officials at a meeting in the spring of this year recommended that the expert trail consultants, Kevin Meyer and associates of the NPS Rivers, Trails @ Conservation Assistance Program be coutacted and assist with ideas and recommendations for future trail maintenance and upgrades. In July, I bad the privilege with other landowners, the NLSRA Ranger and trail crew to do a complete inspection of the Butterfly Lake trail with Mr. Myers and associates. Mr. Meyer stated that trail upgrades or maintenance would be an easy fix. All the material needed is pretty much on site. He also gave ideas and recommendations for a loading area at the lake, and approved the maintenance work completed prior to his inspection. He also stated with regular maintenance the trail can be used for hikers and ATV's alike.

I am blessed to be able to physically walk the two mile trail to Buttertly Lake. However that is not the case for my lake neighbors and friends Dick and Alice who are in there 70's and have some health issues. They ride an ATV. Jerry and Perry, who are in their 60's, same story, they ride an ATV. Dave C who has heart related problems; his family rides an ATV. My friend Rick, artificial hip and diabetic, rides an ATV. The folks that have a small baby I met this summer ride an ATV, and a host of other people with some of the same problems mentioned above. Many people haul materials and things to make their lake experience more enjoyable. Looking to the future, if I'm lucky enough to achieve a ripe old age, I would like access to my property on an ATV.

I find it ironic that some of the same people that have complained and railed against ATV access, our access, fly expensive airplanes to get to there cabins and have never set foot on the Butterfly Lake trail in years or not at all. And also the fact that some of the people that walk only, who are against ATV access, still drive several miles through the Park with there four wheel drive vehicles to get to the trail head.

Undoubtedly you have probably recognized that I support access to private property with ATV's on the Butterfly Lake Trail. I strongly believe that all of the people whether they hike, bike, canoe, ride ATV's, mush dogs, ski, snowmachine or fly airplanes can coexist on the Butterfly Lake Trail. I have actively participated in the maintenance and improvements of trails because of a simple belief, its not all about just me and what's good for me, its about what can benefit other people besides me.

Sincerely.

Comment 66 of 86 - submitted on 01/23/2009 at 12:00 AM:

My husband and I are owners of two parcels of property on Red Shirt Lake. We are writing to comment on the winter access to the lake through the Nancy Lake State Recreational Area. In the past, when the lakes were frozen but the snow depth was minimal, the Park Service issued special use permits for property owners to access their cabins via the Red Shirt Lake Winter Trail. They no longer do so. Instead, last Spring, Superintendent Biesel offered to provide an alternative trail during the shoulder seasons. He admitted that the alternate trail was in need of improvements to make it user friendly, but that those improvements would be made during the 2008 summer season. That has not been done. Furthermore, because this trail goes through heavily wooded areas, the snow depth is even less than the traditional winter trail, making it especially difficult for snowmachine travel. As it stands, we do not feel that the new trail is a satisfactory alternative to access the lake. In addition, this plan now requires the Park Service to improve, maintain and police two trails. We would prefer to see the Park Service's limited resources be used to make improvements to the original trail (which has been in use for 30 years with minimal damage) by either hardening the trail or rerouting it around environmentally sensitive areas. I would also like to encourage public access to Red Shirt Lake remain at the north end of the lake in order to provide some degree of protection for private property at the south end.

In the past, the Park Service and the Red Shirt Lake property owners have had a very good working relationship. For whatever reason (problems with other lakes in the area, new management, whatever...) this relationship has become contentious. This is not beneficial for anyone. The property owners are simply trying to maintain the winter access which has existed for the past 30 years.

Sincerely.

Comment 67 of 86 - submitted on 11/10/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I welcome the opportunity to comment on the NLSRA Plan. My family has used the park for camping in the established areas, skiing on the trails, renting Public Use cabins, and most importantly for canoeing. We have made use of the canoe loops for some truly awesome trips with our children and now grandchildren. Nothing beats sliding the canoe into the water at the edge of a mist-covered lake on a crisp fall morning. Moose, ducks, migrating swans, beaver, otter, all may lie ahead for the quiet, alert canoeist.

This park is so close to the urban areas, yet on the best of days provides a uniquely quiet experience on the interface with the backcountry. Unfortunately, permitted ATV and trail bike use has damaged trails in recent years and disturbed wetlands as well as being incompatible with hiking or portaging a canoe. In keeping with the stated goals of the NLSRA, this ATV use should be halted immediately and the ban on ATV use enforced. Mitigation should be planned and implemented to restore the trails for foot traffic. Park management should be looking to the future in continuing to provide for a quiet, protected recreational experience.

I understand some private landowners have requested access via ATV. These property owners have access via floatplane, foot and canoe, and may use snow machines in winter when the snow depth allows. This is sufficient for access. We

have owned remote land in the upper valley for almost 30 years and know what it takes to get to a remote cabin. The extra effort enhances the value of the experience, in our view.

Please respect the original intent of this park and protect it from further incursion by inappropriate and illegal motorized use.

Comment 68 of 86 - submitted on 12/03/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Nancy Lakes State Recreation Area Management Plan. Friends of Mat-Su (FoMS) has the following comments for your consideration:

The Nancy Lake State Recreation Area (NLSRA) is a unique haven for canoers, hikers, skiers, dog mushers, and snow machiners. The park's management has traditionally prohibited ATV use because a large majority of users prefer the quiet solitude this lake system offers. The original plan was carefully crafted to accommodate this desire. For the last several years, a small number of ATV users have been given special permits to access private properties. Unfortunately, this activity has damaged wetlands, created muddy hiking trails, and frustrated park users. The conflict in land use is a problem that needs to be addressed in the updated plan.

FoMS advocates that planners continue to support the philosophy of the original plan, especially two goals: "to retain the area's quiet, natural beauty, the attribute most sought by NLSRA visitors," and "maintaining an environment of quiet solitude through which to paddle." We discourage the use of ATVs because this activity is directly at odds with these goals. Furthermore we encourage better enforcement of the current regulations prohibiting ATV use and we suggest that the park provide education to users with special ATV permits on best management practices for off roading in this special area. We also recommend that the park require adequate snow conditions before allowing snow machine use.

Finally, if State Parks and DNR feel so inclined to change this well thought out and useful plan, it may be advantageous to conduct an in depth survey of the users and land owners in the area to determine what qualities are important to them. A couple of open houses will not provide meaningful data. The survey from the creation of the original plan was a useful tool that facilitated the decision to ban ATV's from the park. It would be a shame to "fix" something that isn't broken rather than improve on a good plan, including the section that recommends using geothermal heat to heat buildings.

Thank you for your efforts and we look forward to participating in the next phase of the process.

Comment 69 of 86 - submitted on 11/12/2008 at 12:00 AM:

This concerns the Lynx Lake Trail to Butterfly Lake. We all enjoy the outdoors in different ways, this is what makes us individuals, we all respect and appreciate the land. We all can't afford planes, or fly in, and some of use are not phycically able to walk, does that make it right for some to band us from our property we purchased. I guess two trails is what it will take. Us ATV/property owners already maintain the trail with our own time & money, something that the state wouldn't have to do. About the complaints of noise pollution, what about boats, planes, skipoo's. My husband & I pick up trash along the trail, & I'm sure if this trail was opened to the

public that would increase, and also more noise & theft.

A docking area & storage/parking are would be a good way of appeasing everyone.

A road all the way in is great also, but I would think it would cause more problems.

Just because we use an ATV doesn't mean we don't like to hike, fish, ski and do all the things people like to do. And hopefully it doesn't make us bad people.

I was along when we hiked the trail with the trail committee, and they had said, the places we worked on were good and with their expertise we learned how to do it better. So it's not like we don't try or care about the trail!!

Thanks for listening.

Comment 70 of 86 - submitted on 11/05/2008 at 12:00 AM:

My name is Mikayla Saito and submitting these comments on behalf of Alaska Center for the Environment and our 6,000 dues-paying members. Alaska Center for the Environment (ACE) is Alaska's largest home-grown citizen's group working for the sensible stewardship of Alaska's natural environment. ACE is a voice for many public land users.

As this voice, ACE supports the "Statement of Position on Amendment of the Nancy Lake State Recreational Area Master Plan" submitted by Patrick B. Gilmore. We believe the proposed amendment for construction and use of docks in the state recreational area can be adequately addressed by clarifying and enforcing existing park policies. However, amending the NLSRA Master plan to sanction private property owners' ATV access and use goes against the public's interest and the original intentions of the creation of NLSRA.

We would like to encourage the Division of Parks to take into consideration the initial purposes of the park before allowing irreversible and lasting damage to the vegetation and trails of this pristine non-motorized area. Purposes, such as those stated on page 6 of the existing Master Plan, which reads, "In 1967, the original master plan for NLSRA was prepared and identified the necessity 'of providing future generations with unspoiled, open-space recreation of natural character as a critical fact of NLSRA, a concept we are still in agreement with." ACE is concerned about the current ATV activity in NLSRA and would appreciate the Division of Park's continued support for its existing recommendation to not allow ATV improvements or access within the park.

Comment 71 of 86 - submitted on 11/02/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I previously wrote to Mr Wayne Biesell concerning permitting four wheel and other ATV access in the Nancy Lake Recreation Area. I understand you will be instrumental in determining whether the current management plan for the park ought to be amended. That is why I now write to you directly.

I have owned a cabin on Butterfly Lake for over 25 years. I decided to buy the cabin after a friend of mine, Jim and Janet Gorton, purchased a nearby cabin and invited me out to spend a weekend. I was drawn to the quiet beauty and tranquility of the lake and the beautiful hike to the lake from the end of the road near the church camp at Lynx Lake. I was well aware at the time I bought the cabin that, apart from floatplane access in the summer, and snowmobile access in the winter, no other motorized vehicles were allowed in the park. This was important to me since I am

had opportunity to buy a cabin on Big Lake, where I had also spent some time. I reached an easy decision that the remoteness of Butterfly Lake, and the prohibition against motorized traffic in the park, would guarantee the qualities that originally drew me to the place, a beautiful wilderness like experience that was nevertheless accessible to Anchorage---within a reasonable drive, hike, and canoe trip. In fact, when my wife and I first started going in to our cabin, we use to put in our canoe at Lynx Lake, portage to Echo Ponds, portage to Buckley Lake, and and then portage to Butterfly Lake. A few years later, we started hiking all the way to the north shore of Butterfly Lake, and canoed across to our cabin. Either way, the trip was always a quiet one, where we would often see moose, occasionally bear, porcupine, beaver, and other wildlife.

A couple of years ago, the park superintendent started permitting motorized ATV traffic in the park. This traffic thrashed the hiking trail from Lynx to Butterfly Lake, turning stretches of it into muddy bogs impassable to hikers, without going around them. This permission to allow ATV traffic within the park--- directly contrary to the current management plan for the park--- spawned the construction of many motorized barges now permanently docked illegally at Butterfly Lake. These barges exist for the sole purpose of transporting the four wheelers, their trailers and other ATVs, across Butterfly Lake. Most of them offload on the west shore of Butterfly to continue their motorized ATV trip to DeLyndia Lake also known as West Butterfly Lake, outside the park. On some weekends, there is a non-stop parade of barge traffic back and forth across Butterfly Lake, which has become nothing more than a motorized waterway to transport four wheelers and other ATVs from the North Shore of Butterfly Lake to the West Shore of Butterfly Lake. The barge loading area on the North Shore of Butterfly Lake has become an unsightly mess, and while I have not personally yet been the victim of either violence, theft or vandalism, I know other cabin owners on Butterfly Lake who have suffered both theft and vandalism to their own canoes and boats. There have been reports of heated exchanges between ATV/4 wheelers from DeLyndia, and cabin owners on Butterfly concerning the treatment of Butterfly Lake owners boats at the landing by barge users. Nothing like this ever happened in the nearly 25 years I owned the cabin there before ATV traffic was allowed to access the park.

The management plan for the park should not be changed to allow motorized ATV access through parklands. The DNR should be doing everything it can to protect and preserve the character of this quiet, pristine jewel of a park, not managing it for the benefit of people who aren't even using the park for anything other than a thoroughfare to points outside the park. The park should be managed for the people of the state of Alaska---and I mean park users who are using the park for the purposes it was intended....canoes, campers, those desiring a quiet lake fishing experience. It should not be managed for people either inside or outside the park--who just want ease of access across park lands to their cabins. Every one of those people either knew or should have known when they acquired their properties that motorized ATV traffic is not permitted in the park. The rest of us have always transported building materials and such to our cabins in winter by snow machine and sleds when superintendent has determined that there is sufficient to cover to protect park land. None of us have any right to expect that we can use the park land or access our cabins in or around the park land by violating the management plan for the park. The fact that the park superintendent may have in the past issued

annual or otherwise temporary permits for ATV access is no reason that either the management plan for the park should be amended to permit permanent ATV access, nor is it a reason to grant temporary or annual permits for this activity in the future. The management plan does not need to be amended, it needs to be enforced. The ill advised issuance of these permits in the past has created something of a monster, that will only get worse if these permits continue to be granted in the future. An amendment to the management plan to permit four wheel and other ATV access in the park will destroy the very purposes for which the management plan now in existence was adopted. That plan expressly states that its purpose was to retain the area's quiet natural beauty. The existing management plan expressly notes that this was quiet natural beauty was the attribute most sought by the park visitors.

As the population of both Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley grows, the park will continue to come under increasing pressure. In my view, this is exactly why a management plan should exist, and exactly why the existing management plan ought to be enforced with renewed vigor, rather than amended. Only by enforcing the prohibition against motorized ATV access in the parklands can the character of this beautiful park be preserved. It will be forever changed and lost if the plan is amended to permit such motorized access. PLEASE preserve the beautiful quiet character of this park for future generations of Alaskans. Thank you.

Comment 72 of 86 - submitted on 06/29/2009 at 12:00 AM:

Thank you for your invitation to comment on the rewrite of the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Master Plan. We understand the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Master Plan is being rewritten and that all aspects of the plan are being examined. Since its inception in 1979, the Red Shirt Lake Land Owners Association (the "Association") has been oriented to preserving Red Shirt Lake as a safe, friendly and remote environment for all property owners to enjoy. Historically, this has involved the Association in various issues associated with lake access, surface use restrictions, fire prevention and promoting the annual park host program.

The Board of Directors (the "Board") of the Association recently solicited views of all land owners before taking the following public position on the Association's behalf.

As in the past, the Association continues to advocate in favor of the following:

- the ability for RSL property owners to store small boats, motors and fuel at the north end of Red Shirt Lake for the purpose of allowing property owners to walk in and access their property,
- the ban of personal watercraft from Red Shirt Lake,
- the restriction of aircraft "touch and go" activity on Red Shirt Lake,
- a quality park host program, and
- continued use of private docks for the parking of boats and aircraft.

In addition to the issues listed above, access to Red Shirt Lake is of particular interest to the Association.

'Following is the result of the May 2009 survey. It is divided into summer and winter issues. The Board believes the survey results to be an accurate description of the

position of the Association relative to summer and winter access to Red Shirt Lake.

Summer Access

By an overwhelming and almost complete majority the Association members expressed their views, on summer access, issues as follows:

1. The Association does not want motorized, over the ground (ATV, utility vehicle) access to Red Shirt Lake during the summer months. (37 of 38 responses)
2. The Association wants public easements to have pedestrian walk-in access ONLY; all motorized access through public easements should be restricted. (37 of 37 responses)
3. The Association wants Special Use Permits to be issued on an "as needed" basis and limited to Red Shirt Lake Land Owners during the summer months. (25 of 37 responses)
4. The Association wants to limit noise-producing activities between 11 PM and 7AM. (38 of 39 responses)
5. The Association wants to do what is necessary to keep Red Shirt Lake a peaceful and quiet place to bring their friends and family to live and enjoy an Alaskan wilderness experience. (39 of 39 responses)

Winter Access

1. The Association members access their property during the winter time. (38 of 39 responses were yes). The means of access was by snowmachine, plane, skis and foot.
2. The Association members access their property during the shoulder season. (21 of 34 responses were yes).
3. The Association members who used the Chicken Lake trail found it adequate for their needs during the shoulder season, by a slight majority. (11 of 19 responses).
4. The Association members who used the Chicken Lake trail would clearly prefer the Traditional Winter Access Trail for shoulder season access. (16 of 19 responses).

We appreciate this opportunity to contribute to the plan and understand the views of the Association will be incorporated into the final product of your efforts. Red Shirt Lake is a special place to those of us who have been here for decades as well as those who have recently started to enjoy the unique qualities of a remote lifestyle, which can still be found on Red Shirt Lake.

Sincerely.

Attachments: Comments received from May 2009 Survey; Copy of Survey send to Association; Table of Survey Results; May 13, 2009 Letter from DNR Deputy Commissioner Richard LeFebvre to Ray Hickel of Anchorage

Comment 73 of 86 - submitted on 10/27/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I've owned property on Butterfly Lake for nearly 20 years, and I've lived full-time on Nancy Lake for over 20 years.

I am not able to attend tonight's meeting and so I wanted to give you my thoughts on this issue:

- There is NO reason to change the existing NLSRA Management Plan. The plan was prepared with thought to protecting the park for the future, and that is where we are now - the future.
- Parks should have ADDED protections, not decreasing protections, as development extends around them.
- Parks are for everyone, not just the private property owners that happen to be near the park.
- The point of parks and protecting them is for everyone now and in the future to have the SAME experience as people who enjoyed them in the past.
- People who buy remote property should accept the fact that it is remote. I accepted that fact when I bought my lot on Butterfly Lake.
- The NLSRA was labeled a "Jewel" of the Alaska State Parks (look on the State Parks website). The proposed changes will alter that FOREVER. I think the people who chose this park as a jewel of the parks system would want to know about these proposed changes.

Thank you for considering all these points in your review of this important issue.

Comment 74 of 86 - submitted on 10/24/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I would simply like to add my voice to those who oppose continued (or expanded) access of the Nancy Lack area by ATV's. I've paddled in these waters on several occasions, and have recognized the fragile nature of the portage trails and other aspects of this wetland. I can't imagine that ATV's do any good to these soils or access points. I also can't imagine how disruptive these machines might be to the peace and quiet that is so precious on these lakes. Thanks much for your stewardship of these public lands. I hope you decide to limit or eliminate ATV use in the Nancy Lakes Recreation Area.
Sincerely.

Comment 75 of 86 - submitted on 11/19/2008 at 12:00 AM:

It was almost 30 years ago. I was having one of those memorable summer canoeing days in Alaska: sun shining, a pair of loons making ripples on a mirror-smooth lake, canoe beached at a picnic spot on shore facing the mountains. Fish weren't biting, but who cared? At the end of the day we took the short walk to our car, parked beside a little two-lane road that ran between the lake and a rustic homestead, and returned home better people, in love with life in Alaska.
Today, the picnic spot is a Fred Meyer, the homestead is a Target, the little road is 5 lanes of heavy traffic, and Wasilla Lake on a sunny day is a labyrinth of jet skis and motor boats.

Thank goodness that some wise people set aside the NLSRA over 40 years ago to "retain the area's quiet, natural beauty" (p. 24; this and following items in quotation marks are taken directly from the park's existing Management or Master Plan). Clearly, if this area was special enough to save way back then, it is even more

valuable now. The area's population has doubled since then, and more and more people have fewer and fewer places to enjoy the park's hallmark attraction: an easily-accessed quiet time outdoors in a gorgeous place. According to park users, the most appreciated qualities of the park are "natural beauty, open space and quiet; campgrounds, easy access and convenience; canoe trails; and good maintenance" (p. 30). While I can understand park managers feeling a need to update certain aspects of the existing management plan, the plan itself is solid, and was based on extensive input from park users. The purpose of the park should remain the same: "providing future generations with unspoiled, open-space recreation of a natural character" (p. 6). All management decisions should reflect that purpose.

The basic problem is not with the plan: the problem is that the existing plan is not being enforced. Appropriately, ATV use is prohibited in the park, but the previous superintendent allowed it by excessively granting special use permits. "The plan does not recommend any ATV improvements or access" (p. 88), but both are now there. The special use permits that allow ATV's in the park state that they will be revoked if the park resources are damaged. The park is clearly damaged, but not one permit has been revoked, and more permits are being handed out, not less. The park doesn't need a new management plan so much as it needs new stewards. I'm hoping that Wayne is that steward.

I encountered ATV users on every one of five canoe trips through the southern portion of the canoe trail last August and September. The Echo Ponds have always been one of my favorite areas in the park: intimate, convoluted, serene. Now they are flanked by a motorway. On one memorable trip last fall, my wife and I encountered a bull moose in rut on the second pond there. He was chasing a cow, bellowing, his tongue hanging out, splashing across one pond and the next, stopping to thrash a clump of alder with his antlers. We watched for over a half hour in the lowering sunlight until the bull and cow headed off into the woods. It was a moment of wild magic. Then, as we headed into Candlestick Lake, a group of 6-wheeled ATV's went roaring by through the mud, and the spell was broken. The rush of this amazing wild encounter was gone. It doesn't seem like a few ATV's should be that big a deal, but the unfortunate fact is, a "natural experience" is a fragile thing. And because it's so fragile, and valuable, and increasingly rare, it needs to be protected. That's what a park is for: to protect these kinds of experiences for everybody.

I could tell similar stories about the barge parking lot on Butterfly, and what it is often like when I arrive at that portage trailhead. The bottom line is that the site and its attending activity is the opposite of the management plan's stated intention of "maintaining the natural appearance of all portage trails and canoe launch/landing sites."

In the last few years, park management has degraded this beautiful jewel for the convenience of a few property owners. The park isn't theirs, however. It belongs to the people of Alaska: not just those here now, but those who, I hope, will be able to find a little peace and quiet here in the future.

The goals and objectives of the existing plan are their best hope. Please begin enforcing them.

Sincerely.

Comment 76 of 86 - submitted on 01/22/2009 at 12:00 AM:

The 1983 Master Plan indicated the Lynx Lake Road use be restricted to existing property owners authorized and holding access permits. This was the same process in place for the Red Shirt Lake Winter Trail until two years ago when Special Use Permits for property owners ceased. Reinstatement of the Special Use Permit or Annual Permit for property owners should begin immediately. Special use permits do not need to be granted to everyone who asks for one, and according to the 1983 Plan can be restricted to property owners.

The Red Shirt Lake Winter Trail is not a year round trail and re-vegetates during the summer. Early and Late summer investigation should be made as to the impact of the Winter Trail.

The 18" snow equivalent model for allowing access to Nancy Lake Recreation Trails in the winter should be re-evaluated. As I understand, this requirement was developed for Yellowstone National Park. The Nancy Lake Recreation Area is located in a Sub-Arctic environment that differs from Yellowstone.

Thank you.

Comment 77 of 86 - submitted on 10/23/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I am writing to express my opposition to revising Nancy Lake SRA's management plan to allow motorized vehicles. The area should be managed in a way that preserves its natural state as much as possible, because that is the whole point of an outdoor recreation area.

Comment 78 of 86 - submitted on 11/04/2008 at 12:00 AM:

For the last 15 years I've had the pleasure of visiting your great state just about every year, and each time I visit I do my best to travel to the Nancy Lake State Recreational Area. My first trip was a canoe adventure and a few days stay on a private lake. There we saw the local wildlife including moose, loons, eagles; relaxed by swimming, hiking and fishing; and spent well needed time relaxing. The biggest appeal of heading into the area was that it was and is a way to experience the tranquility of Alaska.

I've recently learned that there is consideration going on of allowing ATV's into the park. I would like to let you know this concerns me greatly as a user of the area. I understand from family I have in Alaska that there are many areas open to ATV's and I can only imagine as the state becomes more populated that those areas will increase. This is why I think it is vital to keep this area pristine. As I understand there are other means for those who need to develop their property via plane/snowmobile or special permits. This has not been a significant issue in the all these years, and I fail to see any undue hardship on current landowners.

I again would urge you to continue to consider the NLSRA a place where I can come to your state and enjoy.

The world increasing getting smaller and Alaska has been fortunate enough to plan its space well, I sincerely hope you continue this great tradition.

Sincerely.

Comment 79 of 86 - submitted on 11/20/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Attached are my comments regarding Nancy Lake State Recreation Area public scoping. I received a notice of the Scoping meetings held in Wasilla and Anchorage, but no notice about comments. Please add me to your list so that I receive all notices and information connected with the planning effort. Also, I spoke with Brandon yesterday, and he said the deadline is December 5th. I am concerned because there hasn't been a public notice (to my knowledge) and it doesn't seem like folks know the deadline and some may not even know that you are accepting comments. Please let me know if you received my comments in good order.

These are my comments on the revision of the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Master Plan ("Plan" or "Master Plan"). I am a member of the Mat-Su State Parks Citizens Advisory Board, but I am commenting here as an individual.

I am aware of certain controversy over permits that have been issued by the Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation ("DPOR") allowing persons to cross Nancy Lake State Recreation Area ("NLSRA") with ATVs to gain access to properties that lie beyond the NLSRA boundaries. This appears to be the driving force behind the Master Plan revision project. My comments focus on this ATV issue.

Summary

The basic point of my comments is that the existing Master Plan, which has been in place for many years, is a good one. It protects the NLSRA's natural resources and the quality of the visitor experience. It is far sighted, and ensures that the quiet, backcountry experience in a natural setting that the public now enjoys will be available for others to similarly enjoy in the future. Although there may be a need to implement a "minor change" of the Plan, for example in the case of lakeshore docks, there is no need to amend the Plan. There is especially no need to amend the Plan with respect to its prohibition of ATV use.

To change the Plan to legitimize any ATV use, even if the use level is low, would inevitably lead to more and more ATV demand, by property owners within and adjoining the NLSRA, then property owners near but not adjoining the NLSRA (e.g., Delyndia Lake), then perhaps a mile or so from the NLSRA (e.g., Cow Lake), then property owners further and further from the NLSRA, then general ATV recreationists out for a spin. Over time, there would no end to this demand. DPOR is just kidding itself if it thinks that ATV use would remain confined to a specific route and to limited private use only. Other persons will demand permits, and once permits are allowed for some, they will have to be allowed for all.

The ATV proponents have a very large foot in the door, and DPOR would be well advised to close it now before it is blasted wide open. Closing the door to ATV use requires enforcement of the existing Master Plan and existing Administrative Code. This should be done without delay.

Note that although there is a need to regulate the construction of docks on NLSRA lakes, it is unclear to me why such regulation can't be accomplished short of a plan amendment, either under existing regulations or through a "minor change" allowed for area plans under AS 38.04.065. "A 'minor change' is a change that does not modify or add to the plan's basic intent and that serves only to clarify the plan, make it consistent, facilitate its implementation, or make technical corrections" [see

11 MC 55.030 (f)(2)].

ATV Issue

Wayne's letter addressed to "Interested Party," dated July 2, 2008, provides a good summary of the issue. It is clear that the ATV use and the storage of private vehicles on park land, both of which are occurring, is contrary to both the Alaska Administrative Code and the existing NLSRA Master Plan. It has resulted in a degradation of NLSRA natural resources and the quality of the visitor experience. And if ATV use continues to be allowed, the problem will only worsen.

The underlying cause of this situation is DPOR's lax policy and procedures with regard to its issuance and management of the permits (i.e., monitoring of permittee compliance and enforcement of permit conditions, the Master Plan, and regulations). The permits are being granted relatively freely; not for "special circumstances," but on a recurring basis for routine access through the NLSRA. In addition, especially with respect to the adverse effect that the ATV use has had on NLSRA natural resources, the permits violate 11 AAC 18.025. Furthermore, I have seen photographs of the Butterfly Lake "marina," which is a barge docking site where ATV vehicles are stored (in violation of 11 AAC 12.220. Unattended Camps and Equipment) and where resource damage has and is occurring. And finally, ATV use is incompatible with the purposes and values of the Nancy Lake SRA. I won't repeat the points I have read in public comments on this issue that demonstrate this incompatibility, except to state unequivocally that I agree with the "the necessity 'of providing future generations with unspoiled open space recreation of natural character' as a critical factor of NLSRA" (NLSRA Master Plan page 6) and that ATV use is incompatible with this goal. The ATV permits and use are contrary to the basic intent of the Plan.

DPOR has acted contrary to Alaska Administrative Code ("AAC") and in a manner incompatible with the NLSRA Master Plan. The remedy is not to amend the Master Plan in order to legitimize DPOR's inappropriate actions. The remedy is for DPOR to henceforth act in conformance with the AAC and the Master Plan.

There is no reason to do otherwise. The ATV proponents, to my knowledge, have no valid existing rights to overland road or ATV trail access through NLSRA to their properties. In the old days, ATV permits were the exception rather than the rule, and even then there was resource damage -so much so that permits were suspended in the 1990s. Today, permits are granted not only to inholders and those owning property abutting the NLSRA, but also to owners of noncontiguous properties (Delyndia Lake). The situation has gotten out of hand to the extent that DPOR's actions have apparently led some of the ATV users to erroneously believe they have a "right" to ATV access through NLSRA. According to one public comment letter, properties for sale are being advertised as ATV accessible.

This is undeniably a difficult situation. But not putting a stop to ATV use in the NLSRA now will turn a difficult situation into an impossible one -impossible to control the number of ATV users, impossible to control where ATVs go, impossible to control the NLSRA natural resources and quality of visitor experience. DPOR is on a long and slippery slope. It would be costly both in terms of money and staff to attempt to manage this ever growing ATV use. And it would forever change the character and basic intent of the NLSRA.

Increasing need for quiet recreation in an unspoiled setting

ATV use on state land is a large and growing problem throughout the Mat-Su Valley and elsewhere. Wetlands are being trashed, impairing the integrity of the wetlands and adversely affecting water quality. Backcountry opportunities where one may enjoy a natural landscape, an aesthetically pleasing trail, and a quiet experience are being lost.

Unfortunately, DNR is turning a blind eye to this abuse of public land. It lacks the will to establish strong regulation or even to enforce the not so strong Generally Allowed Uses (11 AAC 96.020). In light of this, the problem will only worsen. The ATV machines are getting more technically advanced, increasing their capacity to get further and further into the backcountry, and there are more of them. ATVs preclude other uses. The Alaska dream for many is to experience the unspoiled landscape and natural quiet of the backcountry, and those folks (me included) have a right to their dream. Parks are the only places where the State has the practical capacity to prohibit ATV use, and it is surely appropriate and necessary for it to do so in this case.

NLSRA is one of the places where one can enjoy quiet recreation in a largely unspoiled setting. This opportunity should be preserved.

Conclusion

The current controversy over ATV access boils down to a "private benefit at public cost" scenario, and the public cost is potentially enormous. NLSRA is a public park unit. Private interests wish to benefit at the expense of a valuable public resource, and DPOR has accommodated them. By so doing, DPOR undermines the NLSRA's basic values and its management intent and puts at risk, in order to accommodate the few, the backcountry experience enjoyed by the many.

Even if DNR/DPOR believes there is an argument or provision in law that would withstand the slippery slope scenario that I have described above, I oppose ATV use within NLSRA. The damage that is occurring presently, in and of itself, is sufficient evidence of incompatibility of ATV use with the values and management intent of the NLSRA. DPOR has the obligation and authority to prohibit ATV use, and it should do it. I believe that it is neither appropriate nor necessary to amend the Plan. Any tweaking, such as regulating docks, can be accomplished through the "minor change" process.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely.

Comment 80 of 86 - submitted on 01/23/2009 at 12:00 AM:

DNR: As an Alaskan resident since before 1976 I would like to comment on the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area (NLSRA) planning efforts as offered in the online Public Notice.

1. I support the continued conservation and use of the NLSRA to emphasize high quality, natural, and "primitive" canoe trail and hiking experience opportunities. I believe well managed and limited access by 4-wheeler and snowmachine vehicles in specifically designated and maintained areas may be carefully incorporated into a

multiple use approach.

2. Any development of high density, road accessible camp and other sites should be done on the periphery of the SRA so as to provide for that spectrum of public use without detracting from the quality of the core afoot or afloat activities. Motorized watercraft use should be focused on Nancy Lake itself.
3. I would encourage consideration to providing more sanitary facilities and fire rings for additional camp sites to be spread around the entire system of canoe and hiking network trails. There are several portages that could also be improved or "developed": Chicken - James Lakes; Ardaw Lake - Jackknife Pond; Lynx Creek - Red Shirt Lake; Lynx Creek - Phoebe Lakes; Butterfly - Heart Lakes; Heart - Phoebe Lakes; better portage maintained on the north "loop" from Rhein Lake through Darrell Lakes to North Rolley including camp sites with fire rings.
4. Perhaps expanded cooperation and joint effort with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game could add to the on-going utilization and enjoyment of sports fishing resources. NLSRA used to be home to a worthwhile Rainbow Trout fishery. Pike eradication or management attention may provide for improved results in this area.
5. NLSRA is an invaluable tract of Alaska land and waters that provides outstanding wildlife habitat and recreational potential for a wide spectrum of users. The fact that it is closely located to and easily accessible by a huge percentage of the state's population and tourists makes it even more imperative to continue to preserve and nurture its unique position in the public interest. Effort to encourage minimal impact from surrounding public and private lands should also be taken to preserve the natural qualities of this truly special area. Keep up the good work to plan for and manage this SRA without over-development and commercialization.

Sincerely.

Comment 81 of 86 - submitted on 11/07/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I have been following an alarming situation in regard to the use of state park land. My family has made frequent use of opportunities for recreation in the Nancy Lake area. At Thanksgiving one year we rented a public use cabin and enjoyed the peaceful snow-covered landscape while we played games by the glow of the wood stove. One summer we followed the loons along the canoe trail and stayed in a public use cabin on Lynx Lake. The only thing that disturbed our sleep was the haunting call of the loons.

I could list many more occasions. We understood the requirements and regulations involved. We understood that those rules protected and improved the experience for all users of state park land. We saw the cooperative use of the area by the general public and private landowners. We saw evidence of both public and private entities striving to be good stewards so that all could benefit from Alaska's treasured public lands. Alaska's state parks provide unique recreational opportunities that only peaceful (gently developed) wild places can offer.

I have become aware that state park management has caved-in to pressure from a small but vocal group demanding personal exceptions to regulations prohibiting the use of four wheelers in the state park area of Nancy Lake. The result has been pronounced negative impact: significant damage to trails and lakeside property,

litter, increased noise, vandalism, and an overall reduction of the wilderness experience for cabin owners and public users of the state park.

State Park management must not make exceptions to the regulations designed to maintain a quality wilderness experience in the park. Continued relaxing of standards will lead to increased expectations by potential property owners and four-wheelers that the area is a free zone for all manner of destructive and disruptive activities which destroy the quality of the experience for those who have for years expected the state park be a place to get away from such intrusions.

In the past, park users and private owners have understood the limitations. They chose the area for the peaceful experience created by those limitations which were designed to protect the park. Now, that trust has been shattered. The future of the park's usefulness as a place apart from destructive intrusions is in grave jeopardy.

My interest is as a citizen who uses state parks and wants to see the land protected without arbitrary exceptions being made for those who have little regard for the well-being of the land and all users of the state park.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Comment 82 of 86 - submitted on 11/17/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I just wanted to take a moment to send you my comments regarding the Butterfly Lake ATV Trail. I attended the first meeting which was held at the Willow Community Center and was able to listen to the concerns some property owners have about the trail.

I support maintaining ATV access via the ATV Trail for property owners on both East and West Butterfly Lakes if they have the proper vehicle registrations and park permit. When the trail was first put in I frankly had my reservations about increasing access to the lake. I suspected people might litter or worse use the trail to access the lake for the purposes of vandalism or other property crimes. What I have found is that the people using the trail have been doing so in a responsible manner. In fact as I am sure you know we have collected donations from property owners for the purposes of maintaining the trail. I have been acting as the treasurer of what we call the Butterfly Lake Association. We currently have several thousand dollars in our bank account which has been earmarked for trail maintenance. During the time that I have been using the trail to access Butterfly Lake I have been able to meet many property owners that I otherwise would not have met. Largely, these are family groups that are accessing the lake for weekend recreation. They love the park, the wildlife, and the peacefulness of the Nancy Lake Recreation area. In fact because of the trail many families have been able to transport aging parents and relatives that otherwise would not be able to enjoy all that the park has to offer. As property owners in this beautiful area they are fiercely protective of the park and do a great job of policing each other to keep the park clean and safe.

Those of us who use the trail understand that the use of the trail is a privilege and not a right. We are dedicated to complying with the guidelines set up for use by the Park Service. I look forward to working with the park service to come up with a plan that effectively provides access to private property while maintaining the park in its pristine condition. I am sure that by working together all concerned parties can reach a consensus on how to achieve an acceptable Nancy Lake Management Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments and participate in this process.

Comment 83 of 86 - submitted on 10/31/2008 at 12:00 AM:

Concerning the Lynx Lake Rd/Trail to Butterfly Lake. The church camp maintains the road from the gate to the church camp. Land owners maintain the trail from the church provided parking lot to Butterfly Lake with the State Parks OK! & approval. I can understand people's concern about ATV use on the 1 1/2 mile access to Butterfly Lake - but if we could all come to an agreement for all use's (walk-in/ATV). There was a concern about people using the parks access to cross Butterfly Lake. There are two barges that do this (I'm one of them) the exiting point from Butterfly Lake is at a Subdivision Wolverton Mt & there is a right of way where the barge are docked. The landowners that use the barging area at the entrance to Butterfly Lake would all agree to use a staging area to load & unload if that is possible. Appreciate all your concerns for all the people!!!

Comment 84 of 86 - submitted on 11/27/2008 at 12:00 AM:

The Nancy Lake State Recreation Area (NLSRA), particularly our property on Skeetna Lake, is the place on the planet that is the most special to me. I am hoping that, in the end, this management plan review process is going to be simply a celebration of this treasure of a natural area and a reminder that we are fortunate that, some 50 years ago, people had the foresight to recognize that it should be preserved. In "Shem Pete's Alaska," he describes how the Denaina people have paddled these waters for centuries. Think of that! When I am paddling the canoe trail, I love to let my mind wander from lake to pond via wetland and stream, visualizing the Denaina in their canoes as they paddled eastward where other lakes, like those we call Lucille, Wasilla and Cottonwood Lakes, were once part of this same watery web of passageways. It is the thought of those central valley lakes now, their natural beauty and tranquility shattered by highways, megabuildings, and all manner of concrete and noise, that makes me all the more thankful that the Nancy Lakes chain of lakes has been protected.

I strongly support the current plan's objective (Page 24): "To retain the area's quiet, natural beauty, the attribute most sought by NLSRA visitors, while providing recreational opportunities most appropriate to NLSRA and most desired by the public." Unlike the current effort to revise the plan, the public process included broad public input. The values identified then are even more compelling today. What people most want in the NLSRA is to "enjoy the quiet natural setting&the natural beauty, open space and quiet; campgrounds; easy access and convenience; canoe trails; and good maintenance." On the other hand, the "most frequently mentioned facilities or activities considered inappropriate for NLSRA were motor boats; commercial establishments; snowmobiles; more roads' and motorized vehicles." (Page 30)

I strongly encourage you to retain and enforce the provisions in the plan that prohibit ATV use.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN NLSRA

My husband, Doug Smith, and I have enjoyed the canoe trail and recreation opportunities in the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area (NLSRA) extensively since 1979. Back then we lugged a heavy folding kayak through the chain of lakes to

camp, swim, and fish at various campsites. In 1982 we finished building a lightweight wood-strip canoe and took it on its maiden voyage, paddling all the way to Skeetna Lake where we found a cabin tucked into the woods. We fell in love with this place and contacted the owner in Tacoma, Washington. Ross LeMaster and his wife, Alice, had built the cabin on what they called "Spearhead Lake" a few decades earlier and had spent much time there, but advancing age made getting to this remote property difficult. They agreed to sell it to us.

As teachers, we were able to spend our entire summers in the park. We'd put into the Little Su at the Parks Highway near Houston and float to the portage into Skeetna, often with the canoe gunnels close to the water, hauling all sorts of supplies and building materials. Over the next 15 summers, we floated the Little Su and portaged out the dozen or so lakes to Nancy Lake Parkway more times than I can count. We had a key to the Lynx Lake Road gate, but far preferred the canoe trip to the bumpy uncomfortable ride on that road.

In all of those years and through all of those trips, we never once saw an ATV or any evidence of an ATV. There were a couple of canoes on the north shore of Butterfly just west of the trailhead and we were aware of an overgrown trail that we crossed on the portage between Buckley and Candlestick Lakes, but we never saw anyone on the trail. In his July 2, 2008 letter, Wayne indicated that an occasional permit for ATV use to haul in supplies had been issued in those years, but that was news to me.

In the late 1990's, the increased motorized riverboat traffic on the Little Su made that trip feel less and less safe, so we began driving the Lynx Lake road and putting our canoe in near the church camp. In the early 2000's we started noticing a serious mess on the once-overgrown trail on the Candlestick to Buckley portage, and we began bumping into ATVs on that portage and near the Butterfly trailhead. These incidents and the growing number of motorized rafts parked on Butterfly Lake became increasingly disturbing to us and we spoke to park personnel about it. I was told in no uncertain terms that permits are only issued to property owners, i.e. to people whose names were on the title, not cousins, friends, nephews, etc.

It was a complete surprise to receive Wayne's July 2, 2008 letter indicating that meetings had already taken place about the issue of ATV use and permits. Skeetna Lake was somehow included as one of three lakes for which ATV permits would be issued, even though we oppose their use, have contacted the park expressing our concerns, and have the only inholding on the lake! Why were we never contacted? We have always received the mailings and notices on issues such as new Lynx Lake keys that have been sent to private in holders. Yet we were never contacted in any way about any of the meetings or communications that occurred in 2007 and 2008, nor did we receive any records of these meetings even though I have asked for them several times.

It was also an unwelcome surprise to learn that my nephews had applied for and been issued five ATV permits for themselves, their wives and their stepfather! None of these people are titled owners nor were any of the owners (my sister, my husband and me) contacted before the permits were issued. This runs completely counter to the policy that had been described to me.

THE CURRENT SITUATION WITH ATV'S AND PARK MANAGEMENT

It is clear that there has been some serious mismanagement of the ATV issue in this park when a non-property owner can get 5 permits for the asking, without the owner's permission, to an inholding that has been granted ATV access rights even though the owners oppose it, as the result of a meeting about the ATV issue to which the property owners were not invited. All this in a park in which ATV use is expressly prohibited, using permits that are supposed to be immediately revoked when damage to the park occurs.

This brings us to the present revision of the management plan. Compared to the level of public input considered by the original plan, the current scoping process and public notice are completely inadequate. The people who were notified of these meetings were the property owners that Wayne was able to contact, and these were mainly people who have a stake in the ATV issue, far different from the input solicited by the park in the original plan where there was extensive public notice of meetings and a survey of park users was conducted. When contrasted with the present approach poorly advertised meetings of interest groups with single agendas it is apparent to me that the "public process" is seriously flawed. A cross-section of park users is not being included in this process.

Further, it seems obvious that the management plan does not need to be totally revised. Has anyone been complaining about it? Is there a sudden groundswell in opposition to the plan's objectives, or a feeling that the goals of protecting the area's quiet natural beauty are somehow outdated? Has the public outgrown the need for beautiful places to fish, hike, canoe, and camp? Clearly not!

What has happened is that a perfectly good management plan has been mismanaged, leading to a conflict between user groups: those using the park as it is intended, and those using it in a way specifically prohibited by the plan - on ATV's. There has never been legal ATV access through the park: the park's management plan has prohibited their use for over 40 years, the park's website prohibits their use, and so does the Alaska Administrative Code.

Until 2001, the park gave expensive citations to anyone caught using ATV's in the park. I never saw one there in over twenty years. Now ATV's are a part of every single trip I make to the park. The management plan hasn't changed, but something else has. In my opinion, the park's management needs a backbone, not a new management plan.

The explosion of ATV use and their negative impacts are the direct result of not enforcing existing rules, including the conditions for obtaining a special use permit which state that they will be revoked if damage to the park occurs. Granting a whole season's use instead of a single use with a special use permit, combined with the lax way in which they are disseminated (my nephews being an example) has compounded the problem. And the problem is getting worse: lands are being sold along and beyond the park boundary as "ATV Accessible," and this is occurring more often as more properties are being subdivided every year.

At the scoping meeting, I listened to the folks who have been using ATV's these past several years, and now understand their point of view and frustration a little better. Not only had park personnel issued them permits to use their ATV's, they had actually walked the land with them, helping to choose a trail route and encouraging

them to use their own money to build and improve the trail! This shows how far astray the previous superintendent had gone. However, compounding these mistakes by changing the plan is not the answer. This is not an access issue: these private properties are accessible via canoe, foot, airplane and snow machine; so the answer is to enforce the plan and stop permitting ATV use. As an act of good faith, perhaps state parks should reimburse the ATV trail builders for the money they spent.

IN SUMMARY

A large and growing problem exists with ATV use in NLSRA. Does this necessitate a hasty revision of the park's management plan with limited public input or scrutiny? I don't think so. There is nothing hopelessly vague or outdated about the existing management plan, nothing that should put park managers in a quandary about the plan's intent. The public spoke, and it's in black-and-white: No ATV's, no ATV trails. Period. The document has not failed the park's managers; the managers have failed the document, and in so doing, the public and the park itself.

Thank you for your consideration. I am very hopeful that Wayne Biessel, who inherited this problem when he became the new superintendent of this special park, will hear the public's continued support for protecting the quiet, natural beauty and wonderful system of lakes so ideal for paddling and portaging. I hope that he will manage the park in a way that will maximize protection of the resources and enjoyment by the public. Enforcing the prohibition of ATV's is a crucial element of such a management policy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely.

Comment 85 of 86 - submitted on 12/05/2008 at 12:00 AM:

I learned about the Nancy Lake Planning, and just took a look at the 1983 Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Management Plan. Wow! was I impressed - here is an excellent plan that is well crafted and still relevant. Because the populations of the Mat-Su Valley and Anchorage have greatly increased, having a strong management plan that ensures our future ability to enjoy the quiet and natural beauty of Nancy Lake is more important now than ever. But, this plan needs only review and minor updates; it does not need a major revision.

I am concerned that ATV access to private land on lakes inside and outside the park has resulted in increased impacts and damage to park resources. ATV use should be prohibited in Nancy Lake State Parks. Similarly, permanent barges should also be prohibited. If ATVs are prohibited, there is no need for these barges. Barges come with fuel storage problems, and risks of pollution and damage to the water bodies. They should not be allowed.

The scoping document says that, "As more remote parcels are developed, there is pressure to provide access to private lands. The number of docks and other structures within the water bodies of the park has also risen dramatically since the 1983 plan." These two sentences worry me greatly. First, there is no requirement for the Park to provide access to private lands outside the park, and probably no requirement for the Park to provide access to most private lands within the park. When selling land, both the State and the Mat-Su Borough constantly remind land

buyers to make sure they have access before they buy the property because the State or the Borough won't be responsible for providing it. I strongly object to state parkland being used to provide ATV access to private property.

Second, the lakefronts should be kept as natural as possible and protected from uses that cause erosion or runoff. I think rules for docks and other structures within the water bodies of the park should be carefully crafted and of low impact. For example, docks should be limited in size and profile. I'm not sure what "other structures" are, but they too should be small with low profile.

My interest in this plan is that of a person who has visited Nancy Lakes for almost twenty years. I first visited the park by dog sled team, and I am already planning to canoe there this summer. Skiing, hiking, dog sledding, canoeing, and snowmachining when there is sufficient snow cover these are the appropriate means to travel through the park.

I urge you to keep in mind that as the Mat-Su Valley grows, unspoiled natural beauty is disappearing on a daily basis. The reason we dedicate and make rules for our parks is because we recognize the value of natural spaces both for ourselves and for our children and grandchildren in the years to come. If we allow impactful uses in the park just because someone wants them, the natural beauty we value so highly will disappear in our parks too.

Therefore, I strongly support maintaining the current ban on motorized trail bikes and ATV's. These vehicles destroy habitat and create ugly, muddy paths that blight the countryside. I understand that some people have been granted permits for ATV use to access private property through motorized bikes and ATV's. This permit system should be phased out, no new permits should be issued, and the use of these vehicles in the park should be prohibited. The permit states that it is a privilege that can be revoked at any time. Because the ATV use that has been permitted has also resulted in extensive damage to the park, it is time to end the permit system.

Finally, while I acknowledge that the plan should be reviewed for minor revisions, the basic intent of the plan, its goals, and its protections for the park's natural resources should remain the same. The current management plan provides for protecting this magnificent place, offering a quality backcountry experience just 90 minutes from Anchorage. Rather than spending its resources revising this excellent plan, State Parks needs to provide the staff and funds to monitor and enforce the rules.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this process and ask that you add my email to the contact list for this project. I tried to sign up on line and got an error message, so I am not sure whether I was added or not. Thanks.

Sincerely.

Comment 86 of 86 - submitted on 11/30/2008 at 12:00 AM:

While visiting with friends and family over the Thanksgiving holiday, I was disturbed to learn that management changes may be occurring at the Nancy Lakes State Recreation Area. Although I live in Washington State, I visit Alaska regularly to spend time with extended family and enjoy the outdoor recreation your state is famous for.

While in Alaska, one of my favorite activities is hiking and canoeing through the Nancy Lakes area, and staying at a cabin on one of the lakes. The peace and quiet of this unique area is the main draw for a visitor such as myself, which is why I'm so concerned that may be changing.

It's my understanding that the current management plan encourages the retention of the area's quiet and natural beauty, but this has become endangered due to the increasing demands of ATV users. The current plan needs to be enforced, not watered down by increasing ATV access. Peaceful and quiet natural areas near towns and cities are becoming increasingly rare. Please do not allow ATV use in the Nancy Lakes State Recreation Area. This will permanently damage a spot that is treasured by tourists and natives alike.

Thank you.