

Unit 1a - Echo Cove

Background

This unit includes state tidelands and submerged lands in and adjacent to Echo Cove.

Goldbelt Native Corporation owns approximately 2,600 acres around Echo Cove. The remaining uplands are in the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) ownership. The USFS administers a linear strip of land which provides access between Echo Cove and Sawmill Creek. The CBJ Juneau Harbormaster manages a boat launch on the southeast end of the cove. This paved ramp and parking area was built with funds from ADFG in 1990.

The USFS and Goldbelt are currently negotiating a land exchange. Some Goldbelt parcels between Echo Cove and Sawmill Creek and around Cowee Creek will go into USFS ownership and be managed for recreational uses and include facilities such as picnic tables, trails, and public use cabins. In exchange, Goldbelt would receive title to lands near Hobart Bay. Some upland parcels would be retained in Goldbelt ownership although the corporation has no definite plans for its land at this time.

Recreation. The primary recreational activities in Echo Cove are water-based, including camping related to sightseeing, beachcombing, hiking, kayaking, canoeing, and motor boating. The easy access and protected waters of Echo Bay make it a popular place to use sea kayaks, skiffs, and other powerboats. Airboats are also used to Berners Bay by anglers, hunters, and cabin users. Airboats also travel through the area in order to access rivers flowing into Berners Bay. Charter boats and commercial kayaking trips travel up the east side of Berners Bay from the CBJ boat launch in Echo Cove to the mouth of the glacial rivers at the head of the bay. The area provides opportunities for viewing bears, deer, goats, waterfowl, marine mammals, and seals. Other existing recreational use of the area occurs at Point Bridget State Park and at a church camp adjacent to the park. The state park allows for dispersed recreational use and has some improvements including trails and campsites. A public-use cabin is proposed when funding allows.

Mining and Minerals Potential. The USFS and Native uplands adjacent to the state tidelands in this subunit have high mineral potential. Existing federal mining claims are located on the east side of Echo Cove.

CBJ Designations. The CBJ has designated the Echo Cove area (Subunits 1a8, 1a10, 1a12, 1a13, 1a25, and 1a26) a Proposed New Growth Area. This is a rural area that the Comprehensive Plan determined suitable for future urban/suburban development if specifically approved by the CBJ in accord with the procedures and criteria in the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan guidelines also state that in the Echo Cove Unit, CBJ will preserve as Public Open Space valuable public recreation lands and wildlife habitat including shoreline areas along Lynn Canal.

Area Meriting Special Attention (AMSA). The tidelands from Point Bridget east to the mouth of Echo Cove have been proposed as an AMSA by the Juneau Coastal Management Plan. An AMSA planning process has not been initiated. The area was proposed as an AMSA based on its scenic values, its uses for water-related recreation, and habitat for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. The management direction of the AMSA proposed by the Coastal Plan would allow: appropriate development of Goldbelt lands using the CBJ process for new growth areas; maintain public recreational access and use of designated areas and; maintain opportunities for construction of a marine highway terminal at the north end of the Juneau road system to serve a new Juneau-Haines ferry/route.

Transportation. The 1986 Southeast Transportation Plan looked at nine different options for surface access along Lynn Canal between Juneau and Haines/Skagway. Most alternatives included extending the road up the east side of the canal from Echo Cove to Skagway or at least to the Katzeihin River. Three alternate routes up the west side of Lynn Canal begin at St. James Bay, William Henry Bay, and Sullivan Island. Access to these three points would be by ferry from Echo Cove or Sawmill Creek. Other alternatives discussed by the transportation plan include high-speed ferries between Juneau and Skagway or other combinations of roads and ferries along Lynn Canal. The preferred alternative in the plan was access up east Lynn Canal without the need for any ferry service.

DOTPF is currently developing the Juneau Access Study that involves reconnaissance and cost estimates for a variety of routes (both ferry and road) along Lynn Canal.

Any road or ferry terminals may involve establishing rights-of-way on state tidelands, shorelands, or submerged lands. It appears that most improvements would be on USFS and Native-owned uplands. Interim Land Management Agreements (ILMA) or leases would be required for any new ferry terminals built on state tidelands.

There have been various other proposals to construct a port immediately north of Echo Cove in Subunit 1a15. In 1988, Echo Bay Exploration proposed a dock site just south of Sawmill Creek in a small cove at south end of Section 32. The proposal would require a 3-mile extension of the road past the Echo Cove boat launch. This proposal was later dropped in favor of helicopter transport to the Kensington Mine.

Boat Launch and Marina. There is a new boat launch with upland parking on the southeast end of Echo Cove managed by CBJ. The parking is located on a six-acre upland parcel owned by CBJ. The tidelands are state owned. ADFG has applied to DNR for an ILMA (ADL 105113) for this boat launch.

The 1983 CBJ Small Boat Harbor Plan proposed expanding the existing Echo Cove boat launch to include a marina to include up to 982 stalls, leaving space for a potential 2800 additional stalls in the future. This would include extensive upland development for parking and support facilities. Developing this site was a low priority among the sites looked at by CBJ and there are no near-term proposals to build this marina.

Management Intent

For the near-term, the state tidelands, submerged lands, and uplands in this unit will be managed to provide a semi-primitive recreation experience, wildlife habitat, and harvest opportunities. Subunits 1a14 and 1a15 will be managed respectively for Ha, Hv, Rd, Wd; and Ha, Rd, Wd designations. Tideland support facilities for shoreline developments such as resource transfer facilities, a port, or a ferry dock are allowable uses within these subunits. Designating two subunits for Waterfront Development (Wd) provides the flexibility to work with an applicant to identify a site that will avoid or minimize significant adverse impacts on other resources and uses for which these subunits were co-designated.

The intent is to concentrate development in one of these two subunits. There may be some engineering limitations in Subunit 1a15 because of the steep shoreline. The small coves in the south end of Subunit 1a14 are currently used as campsites but receive less use than the mouth of Sawmill Creek (1a7). Subunit 1a7 has not been designated Waterfront Development (Wd) because it is a popular campsite and contains anadromous fish.

Management Guidelines

Northern Route Access Corridors. Prior to authorizations along the tidelands on the east side of Echo Cove and north to the mouth of the Antler River, DNR will ensure that authorizations do not block future opportunities for a port or transportation corridor. Before DNR authorizes any phase or segment of a regional road corridor north from Juneau, appropriate agencies and the public will have the opportunity to comment.

Mineral Closures. The estuarine area, from mean high water to a water depth of 40 feet (measured at mean low low water), at the mouth of Sawmill Creek and near the mouth of Cowee Creek, including all of Echo Cove, will be closed to new mineral location to protect important rearing areas for anadromous fish. The maintenance of the high-quality estuarine rearing habitat adjacent to these streams and avoiding impacts to the associated water quality and marine plant and animal communities is essential to sustain the productivity of the Juneau-area commercial- and community-harvest fisheries. The estuarine area at the mouth of Cowee Creek is located within Point Bridget State Park, therefore already withdrawn from mineral location. In addition, the shorelands under Windfall Lake and Creek down to their confluence with the Herbert River will be closed to new mineral entry because mining in the river and lake bed would conflict with the spawning, rearing and incubation of the significant anadromous fish population that live in this clear-water system. Maps of these closures can be found in Mineral Order 653 in Appendix B.

Land-Use Designation Summary

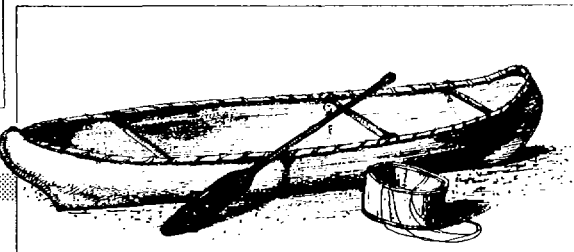
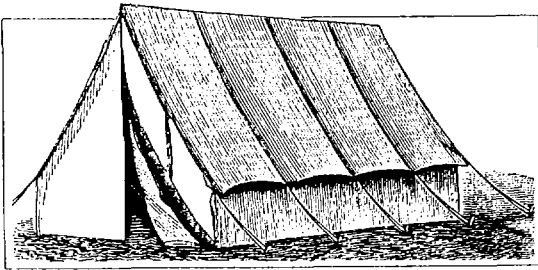
For keys to the one-letter and two-letter abbreviations used in this table, see the beginning of this chapter

UNIT 1A: ECHO COVE						
Area no. & name	DNR designation	CBJ zoning district	Land type	Adjacent ownership	Resource or use	Other comments
1a1	Hv	RR	SU	State	King and Tanner crab commercial and personal use harvest	
1a2	Ha Rd	RR	T	USFS	Anadromous fish estuarine rearing	
1a3	Ha	RR	T	Private/ Native selected	Herring spawning	
1a4	G	RR	SU	State		
1a5	G	RR	SU	State		
1a6	Hv Rd	RR	SU	State	Salmon commercial trolling and sportfishing; king and Tanner crab commercial and personal use harvest; waterfowl hunting	
1a7 Sawmill Creek	Ha Hv Rd	RR	T	Native	Herring spawning; Dungeness crab personal use and commercial harvest; salmon commercial trolling and sportfishing; black bear and waterfowl hunting; campsite	
1a8	Ha Hv Rd	RR	T	State	King and Tanner crab commercial and personal use harvest; migratory waterfowl habitat; black bear and waterfowl hunting; anadromous rearing	
1a10 Echo Cove	Ha Hv Rd	RR C-Conceptual new growth area	T	Native	Anchorage for hunters and sportfishers; salmon, Dolly Varden, cutthroat trout sportfishing; commercial salmon trolling; Dungeness crab commercial and personal use harvest; migratory waterfowl habitat; sand lance spawning	Waterfowl and black bear hunting
1a12	Ha Hv Rp Pt	RR C-Conceptual new growth area	T	CBJ	Anchorage; salmon, Dolly Varden, cutthroat trout sportfishing; Dungeness crab commercial and personal use harvest; migratory waterfowl habitat	Includes CBJ-managed public boat ramp; CBJ-owned 6-acre upland parcel
1a13 Inner Echo Cove	Ha Rd	RR C- Conceptual new growth area	T	Native	Migratory waterfowl habitat; scattered eel grass bed; sand lance spawning	

Land-Use Designation Summary (continued)

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Area no. & name	DNR designation	CBJ zoning district	Land type	Adjacent ownership	Resource or use	Other comments
1a14	Ha Hv Rd Wd	RR	T	Native	Herring spawning; salmon sportfishing; Dungeness crab rearing; bear viewing and spring and summer concentration	Possible port site
1a15	Ha Rd Wd	RR	T	Native	Herring spawning; Dungeness crab commercial harvest; salmon sportfishing	Possible port site
1a25	Rd	RR C- Conceptual new growth area	U	Native		Goldbelt, Inc. requested parcel as accretion lands
1a26 Cowee Creek	Rd Ha Hv	RR C- Conceptual new growth area	U	Native/ private	Anadromous stream; salmon sportfishing; black and brown bears in summer/fall	Adjacent to Cowee Creek and Point Bridget State Park; Goldbelt, Inc. requested parcel as accretion lands



UNIT 1A INSET - Echo Cove

