

Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Public Scoping



User Questionnaire Comments

The User Questionnaire developed for the scoping process for the Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers contained a section at the end where participants could write in any additional comments that they had concerning the rivers or the river corridors. The following comments were submitted with the User Questionnaire.

1	I believe that the Recreation Rivers Management Plan is a well thought out guiding document that was created with great vision. The management plan does not take away from thoughtful development, but restrictions should remain in place so that rampant development does not make Alaska another over-managed and over-developed place in the lower 48.
2	I am native Alaskan. I wish to see intelligent development for our state with concerns for the effects of climate change. As one of the few places in the world with an abundance of wildlife, clean water, and fertile land, it is our responsibility to safeguard our beautiful state for our children's children.
3	I don't mind development for public use. I have a big problem with development for commercial or industrial/mining use only. I very much enjoy many areas of the Susitna valley and explore more every year. Any future development should be open to the public when funded by the public. Any development to improve the public access to the Susitna drainage would be greatly appreciated. Along with areas to camp and have basic services.
4	I do actively utilize these corridors to access some of Alaska's untouched and near to town water ways. These rivers are currently wild and I would hate to see the experience diminished by negative development or reduced management as to not allow my children and grand children the same opportunity to experience the resources of the rivers. I am not a supporter of locking land up as to not allow access but am for managing a portion of land or water ways to allow the access to the true wilderness and have that be a possibly for generations to come. Protecting these areas is extremely important. A lot of the reason for the management plan is to protect the fragile resources available to the public by these rivers. That being regardless of if the public knows and or has experienced it for themselves. Mistakes made that negatively effect water ways, land, and the resources they provide are irreversible. Thank you for the time and effort put into this survey and taking the time to hear for the public.
5	Please do not ruin this area with a road through it.
6	Use and access should be prioritized for personal use of Alaskan residents. Tourist and commercial use should be tightly controlled and with a plan deliberately implemented protect the resource for personal use of AK residents.
7	Please protect our right to access and use this property. Preservation of the environment and quality of the experience is highly desired

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8	<p>The upper Little Susitna River is considered a salmon sanctuary for good reason. It is a beautiful, productive habitat for fish & wildlife and deserves to continue to be protected. We have made a point to develop our property away from its banks in a responsible manner. Ample public access is already available in the Hatcher Pass Recreational Area and that should be enough to accommodate and inspire others who will want to preserve this unique riparian area.</p>
9	<p>I am a Board Director for the Tanaina Community Council (Little Su crossing), Board Director for Anchorage Snowmobile Club and Treasurer for Curry Ridge Riders of South Denali.</p>
10	<p>I would like to see these areas remain recreational and DO NOT support the West Susitna access road because it will significantly impact the very areas contained in this survey. Using public funds to pay for this private business use road is ridiculous. This road will serve only those private interests, whose industry is not taxed equal to the other natural resource industries and this road will simply allow them to increase their corporate earnings on the backs of the Alaskan taxpayers and ensure the continued theft of the PFD.</p>
11	<p>Please do not destroy the character of the Matanuska Susitna River Valleys. The balance between road access and remote is important; it provides all Alaskans and tourists a variety of remote and more easily accessible life styles, businesses, and experiences. To change regulations in order to put a road through the heart of the Susitna Valley will change forever some of the Mat-Su's most important assets.</p> <p>Significant private and commercial investments have already been made in this part of the State with an intent to carry forward an Alaskan tradition of living, working and playing remotely. Tourists pay significant money to do so.</p> <p>The current proposed change is for no apparent reason other than supporting mining and timber development that has yet to be shown as economic or beneficial to the State. No evidence has been presented that the mining development is economic or benefit Alaska or the Mat Su Valley. Further, anyone who has recently flown over the Mat Su Valley can report that the forests have been decimated by the spruce bark beetle and it will be decades before any new growth is of sufficient size to warrant such an industry.</p> <p>The State and the Mat-Su Borough have a history of failed projects and abandoned infrastructure. The State and Mat-Su cannot currently afford to maintain and police the roads it now has.</p> <p>Please, take the time to analyze carefully the positive and negative impacts of any change in regulations before pushing through changes that appear to be designed to benefit commercial mining and timber developments for which little or no evidence shows will be successful or beneficial to the State.</p>
12	<p>As a resident, I am 100% against this road and the states irresponsible spending.</p>
13	<p>Do not allow monetization of Alaska's wilderness. Adding things like lodges will only really cater to non-residents and cause more congestion along the rivers. Punching roads through will drastically increase litter and destruction of the surrounding areas.</p>

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14	<p>It would have been nice to implement the first plan before revising one 30 years later to avoid doing some of the more challenging ideas developed in the first. I accept the existing motorized use, but feel that the Little Su still deserves a few non motorized weekends as promised and never delivered. And the last thing we need are more ATV trails in river corridors -- OK to cross, but keep ATVs in the mountains and let the rivers be accessed by boats. Public use cabins are an idea worth considering though...Improved air access needed on Talkeetna, the one river I visit more frequently besides the Little Su. Long term camps and organizing multi-site camping areas remain the key ways DNR could manage these rivers better....And I still support instream flows to protect rec and fish in these basins; don't give that water away or reduce the conservation protections implied in the first plan.</p>
15	<p>Power boats operating upstream of the Parks Highway Bridge create congestion and noise pollution, and cause bank erosion. If power boat use will continue to be allowed, an engine size restriction and No Wake Rule should be enacted and enforced. The Little Susitna River is quite narrow upstream of the Parks Highway Bridge, with the "channel" suitable for power boat navigation even more narrow or nonexistent. Unless the river is extremely high, powerboats meeting when traveling in opposite directions creates an unsafe condition.</p>
16	<p>These recreation river corridors are accessible natural areas that should be protected from segmentation and development for the foreseeable future.</p>
17	<p>It is very important for us that the integrity and habitats on the Little Su and surrounding creeks are protected from damage to the creek bed, tributaries, and surrounding animal habitate. Every year we see fewer and fewer fish coming up Swiftwater creek and there is minimal other wildlife. The use of Bald Mountain trail keeps increasing and so does the trash in the creek and woods. The damage to the woods is significant with big trucks driving up the mountain they are expanding trails, making new ones every year, and rutting up the soft areas where the water runs.</p>
18	<p>Much of this area has limited access. Responsible development that provides sustainable, unimpactful access, such as hike in/fly in public use cabins, minimalistic hiking trails, basic facilities (parking lots with restrooms at trailhead) add significantly to the recreational value of the land without causing degrading impacts to the land and wildlife.</p>
19	<p>My current issue stems from little jet boats flying up and down the river. This area of the river is the salmon spawning area. These boats can disturb the river bottom faster than a truck or ATV driving thru the river. Salmon stocks are disappearing and an accident with kayakers I'm afraid is inevitable if we don't stop this practice. The river should be non-motorized north of the Parks Hiway</p>
20	<p>For those of us that live remote, Please don't make it more difficult to live remote.</p>

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<p>21</p>	<p>I'm concerned with the numbers of people who trespass regularly with entitlement issues and leave their trash, etc. at that location. It has been an ongoing concern of neighbors who have houses closer than ours (2 miles away) when underage drinking and other illegal things go on.</p> <p>People drive ATVs through the river, which is a salmon spawning area, set up camp, parties, and bonfires fueled with our trees.</p> <p>the Alaska State Troopers are familiar with the attractive nuisance it provides.</p>
<p>22</p>	<p>As Alaska gets more populated, moderation of activities needs to be taken seriously. There should be sections of our rivers that are dedicated to quiet, non-motorized activities, like canoes and kayaks, rafts, or just camping. Growing up with these rivers it was always nice to feel out there and away from people and noise. Now, with all the power boats - esp airboats - and now helicopters, so many people, so much trash along the rivers, people leaving fish guts to attract bears, and on and on. We still go as we always have, but sacred places should be protected.</p>
<p>23</p>	<p>I am a former Alaska resident and have been on the Talachulitna River for the last 34 years. I spend March, June, July August, and early September on the River. If this road goes in the area will become like the Denali Highway with trash everywhere. The snow is very deep in our valley and the moose struggle without the added nuisance of excessive snow machine traffic. The Dalton Highway was originally closed to public. Now it is open. This road would eventually be the same. You will receive all kinds of selfish reasons to discourage the road but the TRUTH is that anyone with knowledge of the area, the fish, the wildlife knows the favorite wilderness on the Mat-Su valley will be destroyed. Don't be the agency to sell out our wilderness to the politicians.</p>
<p>24</p>	<p>You use the generic term "much has changed" in your news letter. Much has changed indeed. The summers are much dryer, warmer , much less rainfall and longer. The Spruce forest is 99.9 percent dead, you could not build a log cabin on the Tal, like I did 42 years ago! Global warming at its finest. I am sure the pine martin have been and continue to be much effected, squirrels , on an on on on. All wildlife is being affected , I have witnessed. Now do I need to even talk about the Salmon, I think not. I would suggest to you and yours when your grocery shopping, buy farm raised salmon only! I have made and continue to make a carbon foot print on this earth , what are my choices for change? DNR has a daunting task, if this survey is about saving wildlife and preserving the environment thats left! If the underlying reason for this news letter/survey is about mining, road building to mines and the almighty dollar, my time has been greatly wasted. Thank you.</p>
<p>25</p>	<p>would be nice to have an egress for emergency use, off Champion</p>
<p>26</p>	<p>Thanks for taking the survey info</p>
<p>27</p>	<p>The current level of facilities keeps the corrudors a wilderness experience. If the state wants to invest in campgrounds or cabins - I feel strongly they need a maintenance plan as these often become a detract ion when not managed properly. (as well as bear attractants and causes for conflict between bears and users)</p>

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28	We live on the highway system. However, I visit natural areas to hike, bird, kayak and run sled dogs. I will ALWAYS stand up for the rights of fish and other wildlife and for a wild place to remain wild and free. For clean water for intact soils. Humans are secondary. However if an area can only be protected for how it is of use to humans, then my answers above are sincere. I do not have to “recreate” in a natural place to appreciate it. And in my time in Alaska, I have learned to appreciate any place that is not noisy or torn up or otherwise degraded by humans even if I never visit or only visit occasionally. Rivers are an essential part of a healthy ecosystem. That’s all you need to know.
29	There are no fish weir north of Deshka and no good way of counting fish in the north susitna area. The area seems to be managed for recreation only. We could use more subsistence opportunities for king salmon and other salmon or fish. If I could harvest one subsistence king salmon a year, that would help me very much.
30	I like to see a larger Parking area for winter use along the Peterville road, at this time there is an issue with cabin owners and day use not be able to find parking at the Kroto River parking lot. with the state opening more site for cabin the is a major problem at this time and will only get worse in the future.
31	I strongly oppose the Susitna Road Acces project. This will ruin our SALMON fishery!
32	Keep Alaska the land of wonder.
33	My property has nothing to do with this!!! So why is the government asking this information!!!! What a scam to gain information on peoples property!!!!!!
34	I hate the plan to make anthony road a major motorway
35	We recreationally use all the rivers listed and after seeing what happen in Montana where they have paved hiking and such not thank you. We don’t want roads we don’t want public use areas the leas people the better alaska is suppose to be hard to get to and a challenge. Don’t make it “readily available”. If they don’t like jet boats go back to California!
36	The state is loosing so much of the Mat-su to construction, growth, there is nowhere to take children to enjoy alaska locally anymore. Stop making Alaska into California!
37	I have lived and worked near the Talachulitna River for several summers and I am in favor of post-poning the scoping process. I would also like to voice that I am very against the West Susitna mining road.
38	Don't build the proposed new 100 mile road in the area
39	Litter and erosion are a factor on the Little Sustina. Erosion from nearby construction impacts salmon. Airboats in the Upper Little Sustina impact salmon redds.
40	I’m a believer in free access to these state lands as long as damage to these lands doesn’t take place as can be the case when atv’s are allowed when the ground is thawed for example. Protection of the natural resource is paramount.

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41	Please do not commercialize the he recreational rivers area. Be very careful in these corridors. They are unique and very easily ruined. Unpoliced public use cabins can easily become places for criminals to hide, endangering locals. People are changing these areas enough. Just protect our ability to recreate in theses areas. Don't make it easier. It will get destroyed
42	I was the sport fishing representative on the original Recreational Rivers advisory board.
43	Let's build the Susitna access road soon !
44	This is a huge state with very little access. We need more roads and also open up some of the ones we have now.
45	Alaska needs more outhouses on common roadways. Human waste strongly detracts from recreational experiences. Campgrounds, picnic areas, and recreation sites need outhouses or bathrooms. Backcountry sites like airstrips, river camps, etc, need to encourage or require people to carry out their human wastes.
46	Public land is just that. Public. Let us recreate on our lands without government oversight.
47	Keep things simple. Don't add infrastructure that the state won't be able to pay to maintain later. Allow wholesome but not destructive access
48	<p>The current Susitna Basin Recreational Rivers Management Plan is strong and should not be severely altered or diminished. It was created with impressive public outreach/engagement and the plan reflects it. It is crucial that the provisions aimed at maintaining fish habitat, water quality, water quantity and public access are maintained. Changes could be made to the plan to reflect the well documented warming of salmon streams throughout the Susitna Basin by the Stream Temperature Monitoring Network to ensure that cold water inputs are preserved and water quantity cannot be altered, especially during summer months when non-glacial systems are prone to low or warm water.</p> <p>As currently written, there is a provision that requires the Alaska Legislature approve any changes to the management plan - it is important that this provision remain in the Management Plan to ensure adequate oversight and public involvement.</p> <p>So far in the public process for the review of the Susitna Basin Recitational Rivers Management Plan we have heard that one of the concerns has been a lack of enforcement from DNR - following review of the Management Plan it is important that DNR be engaged in enforcing it.</p> <p>There are many proposed projects in the Susitna Basin that will have irreversible impacts to designated Recreational Rivers (West Susitna Access Road, MEA powerline over Little Susitna) which are potentially moving forward during this process and should not be permitted to within the corridors of designated Recreational Rivers until this review process has concluded.</p> <p>The public engagement and involvement during the original drafting of the management plan was robust and continues to be celebrated. So far this process has not been robust and garnered little public involvement and poor attendance. Following this initial scoping comment period, another round of better timed & advertised community meetings should be considered.</p>

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49	Let's add rivers that are actually accessible to the recreational rivers list.
50	I do not feel this ROAD should be built.
51	The expansion of the west Su rd. would forever ruin this special area. This area generates way more money through guiding and tourism than any foreign mining company ever would.
52	Guides weren't mentioned in the questionnaire, but they are a problem on small road accessible streams like Willow, little Willow, Montana etc....
53	I was involved pushing back against Cotten and talbot when this was being proposed! At the time it was being implemented to lock motorized users from miles of traditional river use. (I still have my copy of the Public Review Draft Sept.1990) I was a resident for 24 years. And may be one again in the future, would hate too not be able to fish were I used to. I believe through education of the different user groups all users can co-exist. Thank you for allowing current nonresidents to participate.
54	I have properties in all the defined areas. I have remote cabins, remote land and road accessible properties.
55	Yes for building the West Susitna access roads. We need more access to that recreation area. Currently the area is only partially accessible by airplane and by boat at great cost. It should be FOR all Alaskans not just the wealthy few that have little private lots with cabins, boats and airplanes... Please move forward with the WEST SUSITNA ACCESS project. It would benefit all Alaskans to have more access allowing, recreation, hunting fishing and prospecting. also access for emergency services, fire and rescue, etc...
56	The current recreational rivers management plan is well organized and is actually more relevant now than when it was written. As published, it is integral to intelligently managing and preserving the existent remote biological resources that are dear to Alaskans. The only people interested in changing legislation are those hoping to significantly change the climate of such a resource for financial/mineral gains leaving irreparable damage.
57	DNR stated that property owners were mailed public notice for the review of the management plan, I did not receive one. - The original management plan was written with robust public input and so far there has been limited public opportunity to be involved due to poor outreach and few public meetings, many of which were hosted at inconvenient times during the workday - request an extension to the scoping process & more public meetings - The current plan requires legislative approval of changes to the plan, if this did not exist DNR would have already gotten rid of the management plan at the direction of the Governor - request that the legislative approval provision remain in the plan - The plan was created to ensure public access and maintain the health of these rivers so that future recreational users can also enjoy them - include support for maintaining public access and all provisions that maintain habitat, water quality and water quality The plan does not address the vandalism, theft and crime that will occur in this remote region. The plan does not address the fire hazard. The whole basin is a tinder box from beetle kill spruce trees.
58	Please keep Alaska wild.

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59	Please maintain this invaluable resource for recreation opportunities for my family and the many other families for now and the future. This area makes Alaska great. It is accessible to normal working Alaskans such as myself, family and friends’.
60	I believe all of the Recreational Rivers should be left as is. The existing management plan that has been mostly ignored by the DNR since it was published is the best, most-well written plan for managing and preserving the rec rivers of the Susitna Valley. Anyone hoping to re-write this plan would be doing so only with ulterior motives that would adversely affect the tributaries and surrounding habitats. Alaska needs to focus on keeping more rivers and lakes undeveloped. There is already an adequate amount of development and access opportunities on our rec rivers. There already is substantial pressure on the fisheries. Opening more access will pretty much ruin the quality of what recreational enjoyment still exists.
61	It is busy enough on Lake Creek as is. No further development of this pristine water should be considered. How arrogant are we to continue to increase usage and develop without regard to this natural ecosystem. Leave things alone and as is.
62	<p>In the past, I used these rivers, but I'm older now and don't get out as much. I live in Talkeetna, so I visit the Talkeetna river corridor frequently. My answers to the appropriate use type questions depend on context. Gas, food, tackle might be appropriate at Doshka Landing but not appropriate for the Talkeetna River upstream from the town of Talkeetna. Bottom line for me is that the protection of the natural, biological, scenic, and environmental integrity of the 6 Rec River corridors must be protected.</p> <p>Regarding Public Use Cabins, if done thoughtfully and located where they can be regularly managed and maintained by DNR or DPOR or DF&G, then it might be ok. However, these rec rivers are mostly off the road system, and neither DNR, etc. have the capacity or funding to manage and maintain any facility that does not have road access. Therefore, public use cabins are likely not appropriate for Rec Rivers. And even if DNR etc had the capacity to manage and maintain, they should still be carefully sited and be few and far between.</p> <p>I am ambivalent about developed picnic areas and hiking trails. None should not be developed unless and until DNR, etc has the funding and capacity to manage and maintain, which is never going to happen. So I do not want to see either of them developed.</p> <p>I have serious concern about how this revision process is progressing. Protection of the natural, biological, scenic, and environmental integrity of our Recreational River corridors is of utmost importance. The 1991 plan provides strong protections and was developed by robust and inclusive process, supported by data and science. Current revision process is disjointed, without defined goals and lacking in public outreach. Technical changes to the 1991 plan are ok. Change in intent, policy or management guidance is not ok. RR Advisory Board is struggling, with absences, resignations, cancelled meetings, 2 to 3 months fill an empty seat... I'll continue with separate letter.</p>

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63	Recreational rivers and protections for them are super important now and going into the future to help guarantee the quality of life we all like here. Pressure for unacceptable development is only going to continue to grow, and once done cannot be undone. We here in Alaska have a once in a lifetime opportunity to not spoil what we have, to get it right, unlike much of the lower 48. I very much distrust DNRs reasons to seek to update the management plan for these rivers as the current administration seems unconcerned with residents desires and seems to view all development as nothing but good and more is better. Not true!!!
64	This is a pretty generic survey. It would be useful to know how the State feels it has implemented and managed the current plan and to know where and what problems the State feels exists. Also, there are things that are hard to anticipate. For example, if new trails are allowed and constructed, will e-bikes be allowed. What's the definition of e-bike. Some are almost motorcycles. Will there be any restrictions on drones. Drones can severely and negatively impact others who are there for a natural experience. There are also new "toys" such as hydro-foils.
65	Use to be an Alaskan resident, I come back multiple times a year for the wilderness, fishing and recreational activities. KEEP AK WILD
66	Prefer government not to get heavy handed on Deshka River and screw up this great area. Would be nice if we could fix the lack of returning Salmon so more people could have reason to come back or visit for the first time. Thirty three years ago I built a cabin on the Deshka River and raised two sons. My hope is that other Alaska families have the same opportunity to enjoy this great piece of Alaska. My grandsons and granddaughters will be there to caretake the land.