

Sponsored by: Mayor DeVilbiss and Assembly member Arvin
Amended: 03/18/14
Adopted: 03/18/14

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. 14-030**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY SUPPORTING HOUSE BILL 79 AND SENATE BILL 28, ESTABLISHING THE SUSITNA STATE FOREST.

WHEREAS, the Alaska State Department of Natural Resources manages over 9.5 million acres of State land in the Borough, and timber harvesting is allowed on 2.1 million acres of this land; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 79 and Senate Bill 28 would establish a new Susitna State Forest from State lands presently classified in the Susitna-Matanuska and Southeast Susitna Area Plans for forest management; and

WHEREAS, demand for State timber sales is growing and personal use sales for fuelwood have increased in this region; and

WHEREAS, local mills depend heavily on State timber for their raw material and there is a growing interest in roundwood, wood chips or pellets for both commercial and residential heating; and

Whereas, other regions of the State with state forests have experienced both a diversification and increased economic activity that supports local communities; and

WHEREAS, the Susitna State Forest would include 20 parcels totaling approximately 686,800 acres; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska State Division of Forestry worked with the Division Mining, Land and Water Management to identify and exclude

lands that are priorities of the State land disposal program for both residential and agricultural purposes; and

WHEREAS, since 2009 the Division of Mining, Land and Water and Division of Forestry have held numerous public meetings in communities in the region, conducted webinars and given presentations to local governments and various organizations to discuss this proposal; and

WHEREAS, legislatively designating a State Forest would ensure that productive forest land will remain available for long-term forest management that will follow multiple use principles, and residents of the region will continue to have access to the range of uses and benefits they currently enjoy; and

WHEREAS, management of the forest will follow the regulations and best management practices required by the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (FRPA) that is designed to protect water quality and fish habitat; and

WHEREAS, the Assembly requests the Forest Management Plan (FMP) for the Susitna State Forest, which will replace the Susitna Forestry Guidelines, follow the format and management intent of the Forest Management Plan for the Tanana Valley State Forest; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Forestry has recently completed a forest mapping and inventory for the forest classified lands in the region, and this information will be used to determine allowable sustained yield harvests and inform the development of the Forest Management Plan; and


WHEREAS, the Susitna State Forest will encourage a mix of all season and winter only access development to the entire forest, and has recently begun work on the Little Susitna River ice bridge and winter road project that will access timber sales on state land, and facilitate development on Borough lands in the Fish Creek Block.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly supports the adoption of House Bill 79 and Senate Bill 28 establishing the Susitna State Forest.

Adopted by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly this 18 day of March, 2014.


LARRY DEWILBISS, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:


LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk
(SEAL)

YES: Sykes, Beck, Arvin, Colligan, Colver, and Halter

NO: Salmon