



Lions Club Park Chugach State Park

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

Lions Club Park

- ▶ Lions Club Park is a popular community park centrally located in Eagle River at the junction of Eagle River Road and Eagle River Loop Road.
- ▶ The park is popular for baseball, softball, and other sports, as well as neighborhood walks, and as a community gathering place.



Lions Club Park and Chugach State Park

- ▶ The Eagle River Lions Club developed and operated Lions Club park under a series of permits from DNR. The current 20-year permit expires January 2, 2024 and cannot be renewed as explained below.
- ▶ The organized sports fields, clubhouse with alcohol sales, and community park are very different from the rest of Chugach State Park. DNR believes that the Eagle River community will be better served by Lions Club Park if the Eagle River Lions Club are allowed to operate the park under their direct ownership. This requires modification of the Chugach State Park boundary.

Lions Club Park and Chugach State Park history

- ▶ DNR acquired this 40-acre parcel in 1961 as a Mental Health grant
- ▶ DNR permit issued to the Eagle River Lions Club effective January 2, 1964, with a 20-year term.
- ▶ Eagle River Lions Club began developing the park in the 1960's and 70's, building baseball fields, the clubhouse building, and other facilities.
- ▶ Chugach State Park was designated by the legislature in 1970, including all state-owned land in this section, subject to valid existing rights. This section was presumably included because Eagle River flows through the southern portion (Section 13, Township 14 North, Range 2 West, Seward Meridian).

Lions Club Park and Chugach State Park history (cont'd).

- ▶ Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants from the federal government were first used in Chugach State Park in 1970, shortly after park designation. LWCF grants require the state to preserve the park for outdoor recreation in perpetuity. Any use other than outdoor recreation constitutes a “conversion” and requires replacement land of equal value be added to the park.
- ▶ Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation renews the Eagle River Lions Club’s permit for 2 additional 20-year terms. The current permit expires January 2, 2024.
- ▶ Alaska Supreme Court’s 2013 decision in SOP v. DNR requires that permits for use of legislatively designated state parks must be revocable at will. This decision means that DNR cannot issue a new permit to the Eagle River Lions Club, since the facilities cannot be readily removed.

Lions Club Park activities and facilities

Baseball and Softball fields



Lions Club Park

Football – Tennis – Basketball – Horseshoes



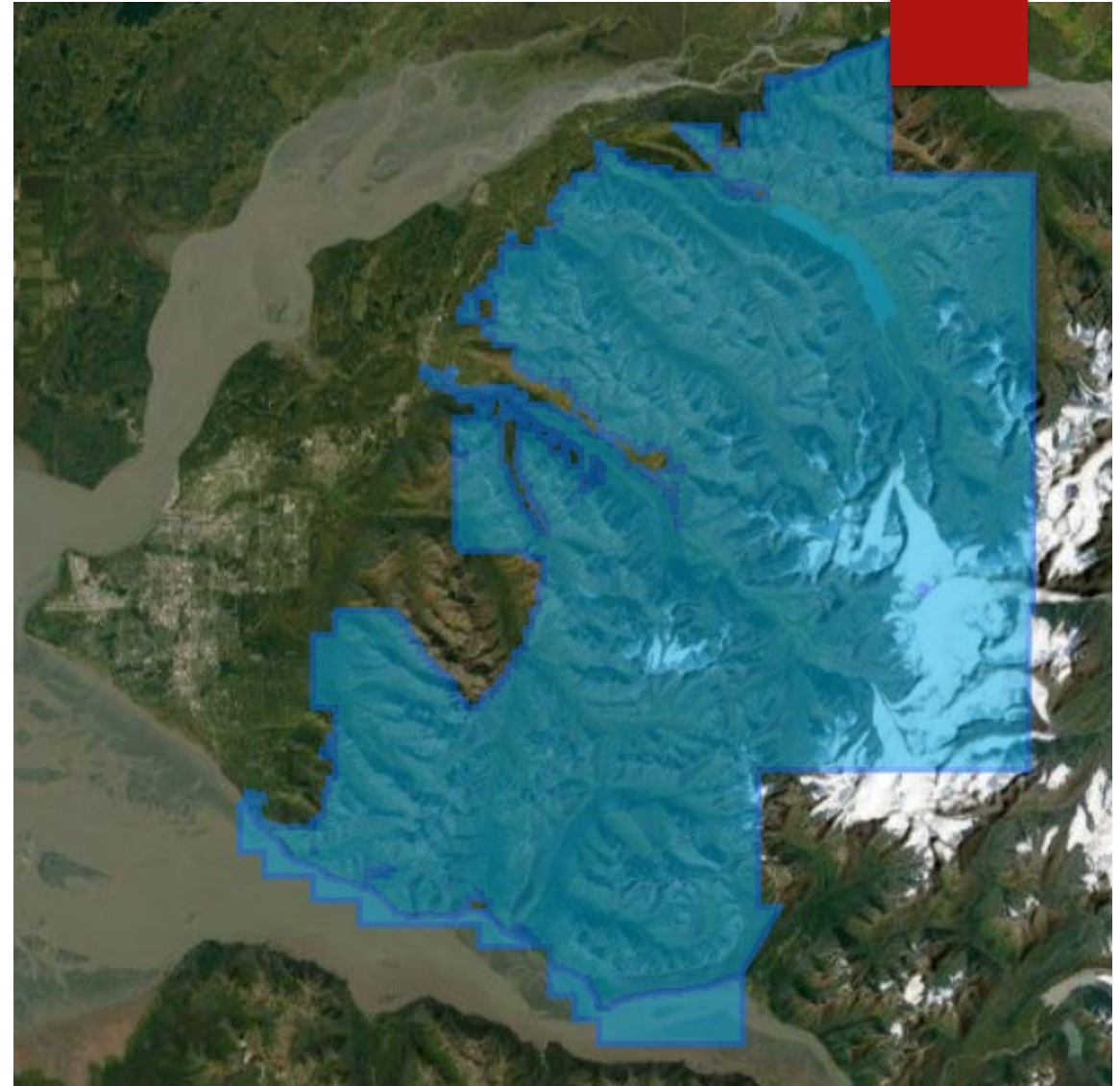
Lions Club Park

Picnic shelter – Playground – Clubhouse



Chugach State Park

- ▶ Chugach State Park covers approximately 485,000 acres, mostly undeveloped mountains, stretching from Knik River Road to Turnagain Arm.
- ▶ Visitor activities include sightseeing, hiking, ATVing, snowmobiling, skiing, hunting, fishing, and more.
- ▶ Facilities are primarily trails, trailheads, campgrounds, and public use cabins.
- ▶ Chugach State Park has no other facilities like Lions Club Park for organized team sports. No Alaska State Park has a facility comparable to Lions Club Park. The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation lacks the experience, funding, or authority to operate facilities for these types of sports.



LWCF Conversion Replacement Land

- ▶ The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) requires replacement land of equal value be added to Chugach State Park to replace Lions Club Park. There are 4 parcels of general state land, 3 in Eagle River Valley, and one on Pioneer Peak, which are proposed replacement parcels.
- ▶ All 4 proposed replacement parcels are steep mountains adjacent to Chugach State Park. The primary current use is wildlife habitat, with occasional use by hikers or hunters. None of them has any active DNR authorizations or known development or mineral potential.
- ▶ The inclusion of these parcels to Chugach State Park will not change access for hunters, hikers, or others who currently use these parcels



LWCF Conversion Replacement land summary

Remove from Chugach State Park	Acres	Estimated (tax-assessed) value
Lions Club Park	40	\$1,400,000
Add to Chugach State Park		
Parcel 1 – Meadow Creek	60	\$150,000
Parcel 2 – Berryhill Dr	60	\$135,900
Parcel 3 – Eagle River Road	24	\$213,300
Parcel 4 – Pioneer Peak	10,160	\$1,000,000

Eagle River Parcel 1

- ▶ Parcel 1 covers 60 acres in the Meadow Creek Valley. Estimated value of \$150,000.
- ▶ Legal description T. 14 N., R. 1 W., S.M., Section 5, SE1/4 SW1/4, S1/2 SW1/4 SE1/4



Eagle River Parcels 2 and 3

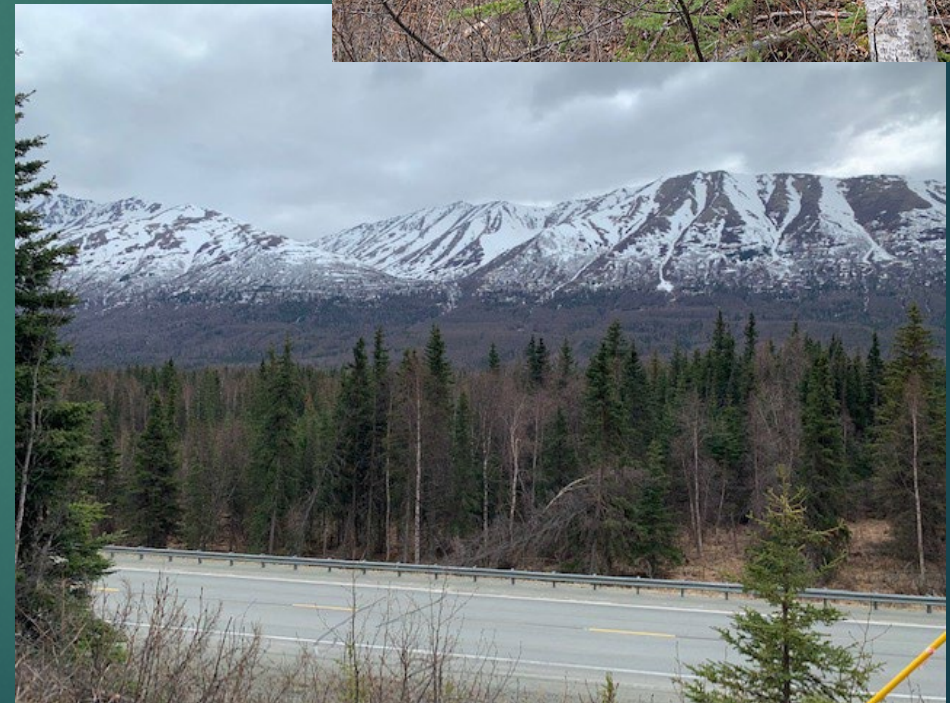
- ▶ Parcel 2 covers 60 acres on steep slopes near Berryhill Rd. Estimated value of \$135,900.
- ▶ Legal description T. 14 N., R. 1 W., S.M., Section 24 NE1/4 SW1/4, E1/2 NW1/4 SW1/4
- ▶ Parcel 3 covers 24 acres on steep slopes above Eagle River Road. Estimated value of \$213,300.
- ▶ Legal description T. 14 N., R. 1 E., Section 30, Lot 3



Parcels 2 and 3



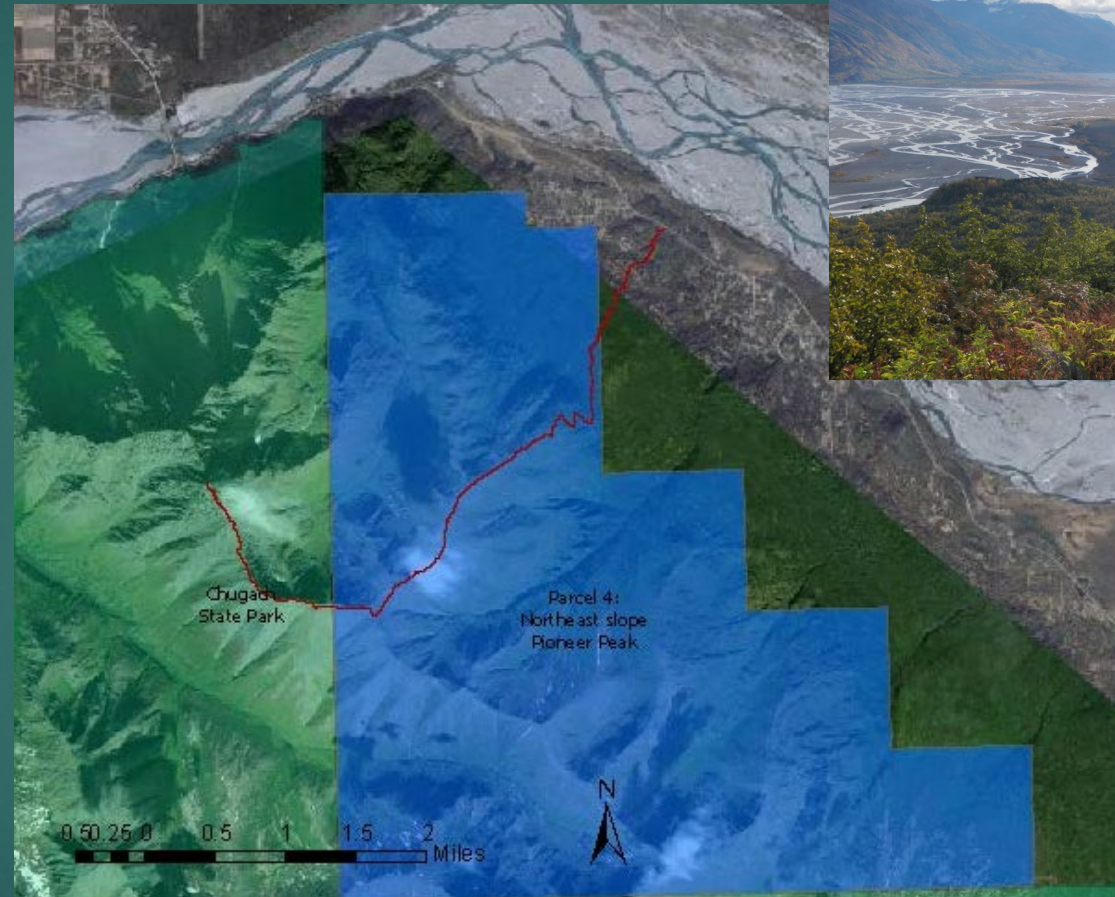
Parcel 2 – steep hillside and view across Eagle River from parcel 2



Parcel 3 – steep hillside and Eagle River Rd

Parcel 4 - Pioneer Peak

- ▶ Parcel 4 covers 10,160 acres above Knik River Road. Estimated value at least \$1 million (no tax assessed value)
- ▶ Legal description T. 16 N., R. 3 E., S.M., Section 7, Section 8, excluding N1/2 NE1/4, Sections 17-21, Sections 27-35



Conclusion

- ▶ The proposed bill directs DNR to:
 - ▶ Complete the LWCF conversion
 - ▶ Retain road and utility rights-of-way
 - ▶ Convey the Lions Club Park to the Eagle River Lions Club
- ▶ Upon completion of these steps
 - ▶ Lions Club Park is secure as a community park
 - ▶ Chugach State Park boundaries are updated
 - ▶ Access to the Chugach State Park additions for hunters, hikers, and other park visitors is unchanged