

HB

306

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Vice Chair:
House Finance Committee

Chair:
House Finance Subcommittees for:
Department of Public Safety
Department of Law



Session:
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-4958
Fax: (907) 465-4928

Interim:
PO Box 464
Chugiak, AK 99567

BILL STOLTZE STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Representative_Bill_Stoltze@legis.state.ak.us

House Bill 306

Convey Hatcher Pass to Mat-Su Borough

"An act making certain land available for selection by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough."

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough has been working with the Department of Natural Resources to convey land ownership of Borough and State lands. One particular piece of land is located within the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area. This parcel is on the southern boundary of the public use area, and is actually outside of the real natural entrance to the area. In order to convey this land, its public use designation must first be removed.

The provisions of HB 306 will make the acreage on the southern border of the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area available to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

- The Matanuska-Susitna Borough may only select the acreage described in the legislation.
- The acreage of land must have been selected on or before January 1, 2007, or it will remain in the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area unless otherwise specified by law.
- Any of the land selected shall remain available for conveyance until all administrative and judicial appeals have been exhausted.

I ask for your consideration and support of HB 306.

DISTRICT 16

BIRCHWOOD • BUTTE • CHUGIAK • EKLUTNA • FAIRVIEW LOOP
KNIK RIVER ROAD • LAZY MOUNTAIN • PALMER • PETERS CREEK

2

STOLTZE

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE
TO: CSHB 306 (RES)

- 1 Page 2, line 7, following "(b)":
- 2 Delete "The"
- 3 Insert "Subject to authorization by a majority of the qualified voters in
- 4 the borough voting on the question at a general or special election, the"

*adopted
w/o objection*

1

AMENDMENT

STOLTZE

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE
TO: CSHB 306 (RES)

adopted 4-5
N-0
as amended

- 1 Page 2, following line 22, following:
- 2 Insert a new subsection to read:
- 3 "(d) That portion of the land selected under (b) of this section that lies
- 4 within 1,000 feet of the line of ordinary high water of the Little Susitna
- 5 may not be developed or improved."

Reletter the following subsection accordingly.

4 = SAMUELS
RAMRAS
CRAWFORD
GATTO
OLSON

amendment to # 1

Conceptual Amendment
To HB 306

adopted
w/o objection

In House Resources by Representative Seaton

Page ___ Line 4

Delete 1000

Insert 600

Page ___ Line 5

After "improved

Insert

except for trails and may not be transferred from public ownership.

adopted

24-LS0907F
Bullock
2/1/06

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 306()

**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION**

BY

**Offered:
Referred:**

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVE STOLTZE

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act making certain land available for selection by the Matanuska-Susitna**
2 **Borough."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 *** Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
5 to read:

6 **FINDINGS OF FACT.** The legislature finds that making the lands specified in sec.
7 2(b) of this Act available to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough for selection and conveyance
8 under AS 29.65 is consistent with the testimony and position of the Department of Natural
9 Resources at the time the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area was created. Furthermore, the
10 selection is consistent and compatible with the Hatcher Pass Management Plan, as amended.

11 *** Sec. 2.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
12 read:

13 **AVAILABILITY OF HATCHER PASS PUBLIC USE AREA LAND FOR**
14 **SELECTION AND CONVEYANCE TO THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH. (a)**

1 Notwithstanding the reservation of land, designation of the reserved land as the Hatcher Pass
2 Public Use Area, and assignment of control and management of the land to the Department of
3 Natural Resources made by AS 41.23.130, the land in sec. 2(b) of this Act, intended to
4 accommodate alpine, Nordic, and resort development, is available to the Matanuska-Susitna
5 Borough for selection and conveyance under AS 29.65 or AS 38.05.810, and subject to
6 AS 38.05.035 and 38.05.945.

7 (b) The Matanuska-Susitna Borough may select the following land within Township
8 19 North, Range 1 East, Seward Meridian, that is part of the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area:

9 Section 26: W1/2SW1/4 west of the line of ordinary high water of the Little

10 Susitna River; and

11 Section 27: E1/2E1/2

12 Totaling 200 acres more or less.

13 (c) Land described in (b) of this section that

14 (1) has not been selected by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough before January 1,
15 2007, shall remain in the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area;

16 (2) is selected by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough but not conveyed by the
17 Department of Natural Resources shall remain available for conveyance to the Matanuska-
18 Susitna Borough until all administrative and judicial appeals regarding the failure to convey
19 the selected land have been exhausted; and

20 (3) is not ultimately conveyed to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough following
21 the exhaustion of all administrative and judicial appeals shall remain in the Hatcher Pass
22 Public Use Area unless otherwise specified by law.

23 (d) The commissioner of natural resources shall promptly notify the revisor of statutes
24 of the conveyance made by the Department of Natural Resources to the Matanuska-Susitna
25 Borough of land described in (b) of this section.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: HB306-DNR-ML&W-04-17-06
 () Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Natural Resources
 Title Convey Hatcher Pass to Mat-Su Borough RDU Resource Development
 Component Title Acquisition and Defense
 Sponsor Rep. Stoltze
 Requester (H) RES Component No. 2459

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING						

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL						

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0
 Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This legislation allows DNR to convey title to approximately 200 acres within the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough under the Municipal land entitlements statute (AS 29.65).

There is no anticipated significant fiscal impact associated with the implementation of this proposed legislation. DNR will use existing municipal entitlement and land planning staff to process the Borough's request for transfer of the parcel.

Prepared by: Dick Mylius, Acting Director Phone 907-269-8625
 Division: Mining, Land & Water Date/Time 4/17/2006
 Approved by: Michael L. Menge Date 4/17/2006
 Agency: Natural Resources

April 18, 2006

TO: Representative Ralph Samuels, Co-Chair
FROM: Franice Barker, Chickaloon, Alaska
RE: HB 306, *Conveyance of Hatcher Pass Public Use Area Land to Mat-Su Borough*

I am writing you regarding HB 306, which seeks approval from the Legislature to transfer 200 acres of the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area from the State of Alaska to the Mat-Su Borough (MSB), for the development of the ski area and surrounding commercial properties. I oppose this land transfer of the Public Use Area lands for a variety of reasons including the risks to water quality and potential impacts to the Little Susitna fishery and other recreational uses.

This 200 acres is located along the headwaters of the Little Su River and was specifically designated as a Public Use Area "to provide for public recreation activities; to protect and enhance the fishery, waterfowl, and wildlife resources and habitat and provide for the public use of the fishery and wildlife resources, including fishing, grazing, hunting, and trapping; and, to protect the water quality and scenic resources within the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area. (AS 41.23.100).

Why does MSB need 200 more acres? MSB already holds sufficient land to make the development possible (3,000 acres) and should develop that property before acquiring more acres. The public has not yet had the opportunity to review a development proposal for the existing MSB 3,000 acres and MSB has not specified publicly what they would do with the additional 200. It's another one of those secret negotiations (can't tell anyone till it's done) deals.

Although I am an avid skier and would like nothing more than for this recreational ski development to happen, it doesn't need to happen at the expense of this valuable river corridor that is critical for water quality and healthy fisheries in the Susitna valley.

The 200 acres in question was appropriately set aside by the State as Public Use area in 1986. Its status should not change.

April 17, 2006

Dear Representative Samuels,

RE: comments regarding HB 306
CONVEY HATCHER PASS PUBLIC USE AREA LAND TO MAT-SU BOROUGH

Alaska Statute 41.23.100 establishes the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area for the following purposes:

- To provide for public recreation activities;
- To protect and enhance the fishery, waterfowl, and wildlife resources and habitat and provide for the public use of the fishery and wildlife resources, including fishing, grazing, hunting, and trapping;
- And, to protect the water quality and scenic resources within the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area

I oppose HB 306. To convey 200 acres of land within the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area (HP PUA) to the Mat-Su Borough for the purpose of creating a subdivision or future commercial development to augment the ski area violates the establishment of the public use area.

- The Mat-Su Borough (MSB) already holds title to 3,000 acres of land within the 11,000 acre ski lease area for the ski area development
- The MSB has not stated clearly why they want the 200 acre withdrawal from the HP PUA – MSB and JL Properties have been "flip flopping" on the need and intent for the 200 acres this past year
- The MSB Parks, Rec & Trails Board and the Mat-Su State Parks Citizen Advisory Board both passed resolutions against the withdrawal of any HP PUA land
- If the land is transferred public access will be denied as it will be privately owned
- The Hatcher Pass Public Use Area was created for the public and by the public and should stay in public hands
- The MSB previously attempted to remove approx. 1,000 acres from the public use area, however, only received 160 acres – part of the acreage provides an easement through the HP PUA to access the 3,000 acres so access is secured, therefore, the 200 acres is not needed to provide access
- Any large scale development on the Little Su has the ability to negatively impact the fishery and water quality
- The Little Su River is a valuable and economic public resource that supports a primary fishery and public recreation

Enough is enough, do not allow any more land within the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area to be removed and given away to any entity. It belongs to the public.

Kathy Stella
Palmer, AK



Cascadia Wildlands Project

Alaska Field Office

907.424.3835 • POB 853 • Cordova AK 99574 • cascadia@alaska.com • www.cascwild.org

April 19, 2006

Dear Representative,

As an Alaska resident and on behalf of Cascadia Wildlands Project, I am writing to urge **Against HB 306**. I was on this land a few days ago and value it very highly. Cascadia has a longstanding interest in this spot. We are party, along with the State and Mat-Su Borough, in a Settlement Agreement that holds the Hatcher Pass Management Plan binding on the Borough. We also have an administrative appeal currently pending before DNR over transfer of this land, among other issues.

This land, along the banks of the Little Su River, is uniquely valuable for Water Quality, salmon and moose habitat, and public recreation. JL Properties and the Mat-Su Borough are planning development of what amounts to a strip mall, or at least a housing subdivision, on this land. That is a bad idea made worse by HB 306.

Our interest here is conservation. We see the "ski resort" being used as a mask to win public funding for more Mat-Su subdivisions on what should be public recreation land along the Little Su river at Hatcher Pass. Your constituents also have clear **hunting, fishing and recreation access interests** that would be damaged by this bill.

The bill as written has the following serious flaws:

- As the developer (JL Properties) has recently indicated, **this land is not necessary for ski resort development**. The Borough also recently withdrew their request to DNR for conveyance. I could talk with you all day about why this land has nothing to do with the proposed ski hill, which would be miles up the road in a different direction.
- The state has already given the Borough over 3,000 acres, including over 100 acres within this Public Use Area, for ski resort development. How many times are they going to come back with their hand out?
- The language of HB 306 **does not accommodate DNR's current decision** to convey this land, which depends on the land being removed from the Public Use Area. This is the Decision that we have currently under Appeal to the DNR Commissioner. This version of HB 306 results in overlapping decisions to convey the same land, and a hopelessly legal muddle.
- Conveyance would **junk the Hatcher Pass Management Plan**, which would not be binding on the Borough or whatever private developer they give the land to. We sued DNR over this issue in 2002, and settled in 2003 when the state and Borough agreed to

attach a special condition to the land patent holding, the HPMP binding. HB 306 does not include this language, with the following negative results:

1. **Could result in litigation, just like in 2002.**
 2. **Results in muddled management & legal status.** Per our 2003 Settlement Agreement, the surrounding land is all subject to the Management Plan.
 3. **Call's good faith of state and Borough into question, that land really will be managed consistent with the management plan.**
- **The Findings of Fact are not true.** It is not true that proposed development is consistent with the original intent of the Public Use Area. Neither is not true that this land is "authorized for development purposes in the Hatcher Pass Management Plan..." (page 1, lines 10-11) Making this finding of fact circumvents the Management Plan process.

Because our interest is conservation, we might support this version of HB 306 for the simple reason it is so muddled it would certainly give us cause for further legal delays to development. However, we would prefer to avoid that pointless and wasteful conflict.

Please do not pass HB 306. Please feel free to call if you have any questions at all regarding our interest in this matter.

Sincerely,



Gabriel Scott

Alaska Field Representative

Cascadia Wildlands Project

cc: House Resources Committee

From: Gabriel Scott [cascadia@alaska.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 19, 2006 12:25 PM
To: Rep. Jay Ramras
Subject: HB306

Dear Representative Ramras,

As an Alaska resident and on behalf of Cascadia Wildlands Project, I am writing to urge **Against HB 306**. I was on this land a few days ago and value it very highly. Cascadia has a longstanding interest in this spot. We are party, along with the State and Mat-Su Borough, in a Settlement Agreement that holds the Hatcher Pass Management Plan binding on the Borough. We also have an administrative appeal currently pending before DNR over transfer of this land, among other issues.

This land, along the banks of the Little Su River, is uniquely valuable for Water Quality, salmon and moose habitat, and public recreation. JL Properties and the Mat-Su Borough are planning development of what amounts to a strip mall, or at least a housing subdivision, on this land. That is a bad idea made worse by HB 306.

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- The state has already given the Borough over 3,000 acres, including over 100 acres within this Public Use Area, for ski resort development. How many times are they going to come back with their hand out?
- The language of HB 306 **does not accommodate DNR's current decision** to convey this land, which depends on the land being removed from the Public Use Area. This is the Decision that we have currently under Appeal to the DNR Commissioner. This version of HB 306 results in overlapping decisions to convey the same land, and a hopeless legal muddle.
- Conveyance would **junk the Hatcher Pass Management Plan**, which would not be binding on the Borough or whatever private developer they give the land to. We sued DNR over this issue in 2002, and settled in 2003 when the state and Borough agreed to attach a special condition to the land patent holding the HPMP binding. HB 306 does not include this language, with the following negative results:
 1. **Could result in litigation**, just like in 2002.
 2. Results in **muddled management & legal status**. Per our 2003 Settlement Agreement, the surrounding land is all subject to the Management Plan.

3. **Call's good faith of state and Borough into question**, that land really will be managed consistent with the management plan.
- **The Findings of Fact are not true.** It is not true that proposed development is consistent with the original intent of the Public Use Area. Neither is not true that this land is "authorized for development purposes in the Hatcher Pass Management Plan..." (page 1, lines 10-11) Making this finding of fact circumvents the Management Plan process.

Because our interest is conservation, we might support this version of HB 306 for the simple reason it is so muddled it would certainly give us cause for further legal delays to development. However, we would prefer to avoid that pointless and wasteful conflict.

Please do not pass HB 306. Please feel free to call if you have any questions at all regarding our interest in this matter.

Sincerely,
Gabriel Scott, Alaska Field Representative
Cascadia Wildlands Project, Alaska Field Office
PO Box 853
Cordova, AK 99574
(907) 424-3835

cc: House Resources Committee

TESTIMONY FOR HB306 April 19, 2006

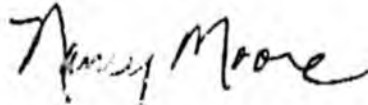
The Mat-Su Borough already has title to 3,000 acres of public land and some of it is public use land. This 3000 acres should be developed before any additional land is transferred to the Borough. The acreage that is being requested is along the Little Su River and could be used for housing development.

The statute that established the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area states the purposes for the lands are to provide public recreation, protect and enhance fisheries and wildlife resources and to protect water quality and scenic qualities. The 200 acres requested by the borough should remain in Hatcher Pass Public Use Area.

Should the borough receive this conveyance then deed restrictions should state that no development should occur within 1200 feet of the river. Wildlife habitat, scenic qualities, and water quality are the values that need to be maintained in the Hatcher Pass Area.

Please do not transfer an additional 200 acres to the Mat -Su Borough.

Thank you
Nancy Moore
PO Box 399
Palmer, Alaska



907-745-1540



This legislation would make approximately 200 acres available to the Mat-Su Borough in the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area. The Mat-Su Borough, in concert with the private sector, is developing a portion of the area into a regional Alpine and Nordic ski area along with housing and commercial development.

Transfer of this land to the Borough is consistent with the purposes of the Municipal Land Act (AS 29.65) which provides for the transfer of land to municipalities to encourage economic growth and self-sufficiency. Because the land is located within a legislatively created Public Use Area, approval by the legislature is necessary.

Background

The Hatcher Pass Public Use Area was established by the Alaska Legislature in 1986. In its entirety it totals about 5,200 acres. The area was established to: 1) provide for public recreation activities; 2) protect and enhance the fishery and wildlife resources, including fishing, grazing, hunting, and trapping; and, 2) protect the water quality and scenic resources with the area.

What the public use area did not allow was "disposal" of the land. Even a conveyance to a municipal government for a public purpose or to foster economic development is considered to be a disposal.

In 1989 the Hatcher Pass Management Plan was amended to provide for the development of the Government Peak sub-unit of Hatcher Pass into a ski resort along with residential and some commercial development. While allowing development, rules were put in place to protect the values of the area.

Since the Public Use Area was created and the Management Plan adopted much has happened. The state, through the Department of Natural Resources, has turned over development of the ski area project to the Borough, the Borough has assumed management and ownership of the lease for the area, and the Borough has obtained ownership of land outside of the Public Use Area that will support the development of area with numerous recreational opportunities along with some residential and commercial activities.

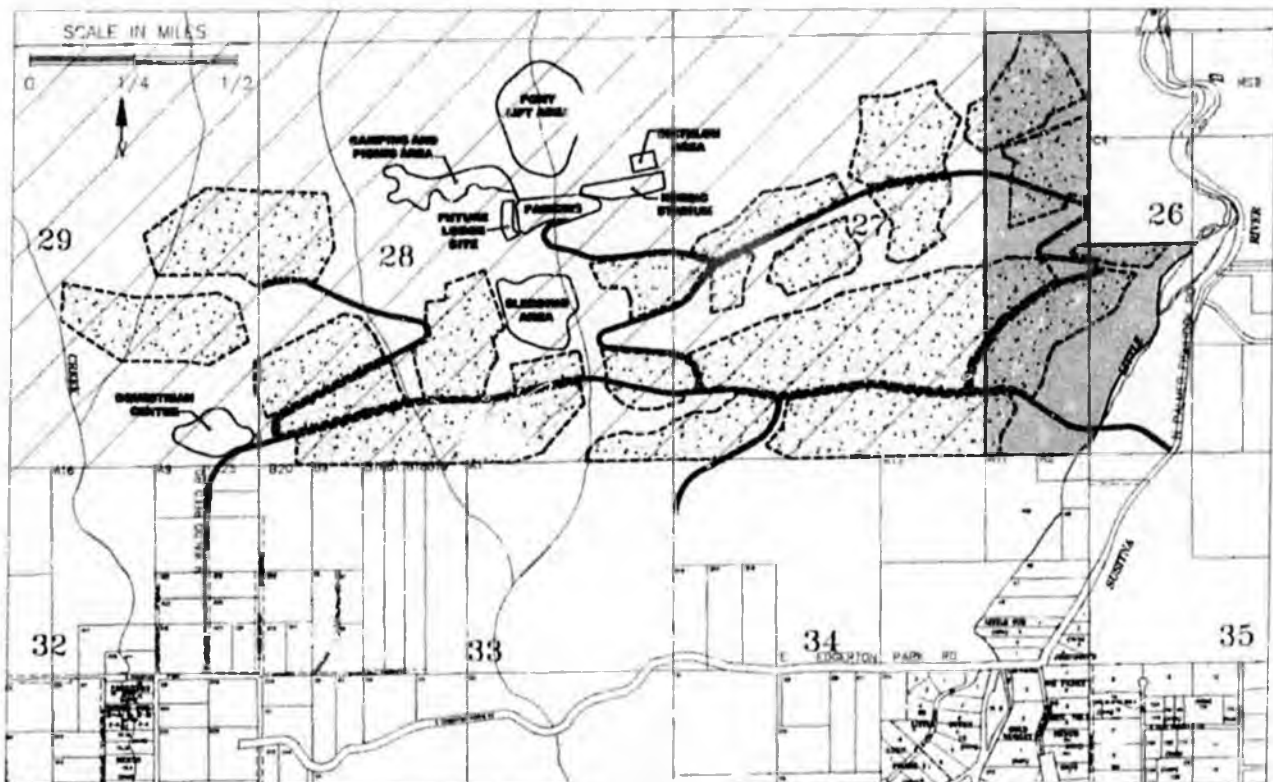
The Borough continues to take steps to ensure that the Hatcher Pass area is developed at a level of quality, taking fullest advantage of the area's unique attributes, including diverse recreation opportunities, taking advantage of the areas spectacular setting, great views, quality land and proximity to two of Southcentral Alaska's population centers. This commitment began with the Borough fully endorsing the Hatcher Pass Management Plan in 1989, and continues today as we complete the final stages of adopting a Special Land Use District (zoning) for the entire development and recreation area. Obtaining this final 200 acres of land is one of the last key pieces for turning this project into reality.

Request

The Borough is requesting that the legislature authorize a conveyance of 200 acres of land to the Borough at the southern end of the existing Public Use Area by adopting HB 306. We have consistently stated, and the proposed legislation clearly states, that the transfer of this land to the Borough shall be subject to Hatcher Pass Management Plan. This includes some development restrictions, as well as water body and wetland buffers that will ensure that water quality and quantity is maintained in the Little Susitna watershed.

This request is wholly consistent with the public record when representatives of the Department of Natural Resources testified before the legislature that development was envisioned to occur in the area when the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area was created. The Hatcher Pass Management Plan was amended, specifically to deal with the proposed development of the ski area in the 1980's and the lease area, when originally issued by DNR, included the area covered by this legislation.

The Borough now owns 3,000 acres immediately adjacent to the land involved with this legislation and approximately 150 acres at the base of Government Peak where the Alpine ski area base facilities will be located. Once you cross the Little Susitna River from the Hatcher Pass Road this parcel will be the gateway or entrance to the South Side development and recreation area. This legislation will consolidate land ownership with the Borough instead of having a small piece of the development area also owned by the state and is a key component to the Borough for the development and management of the area.

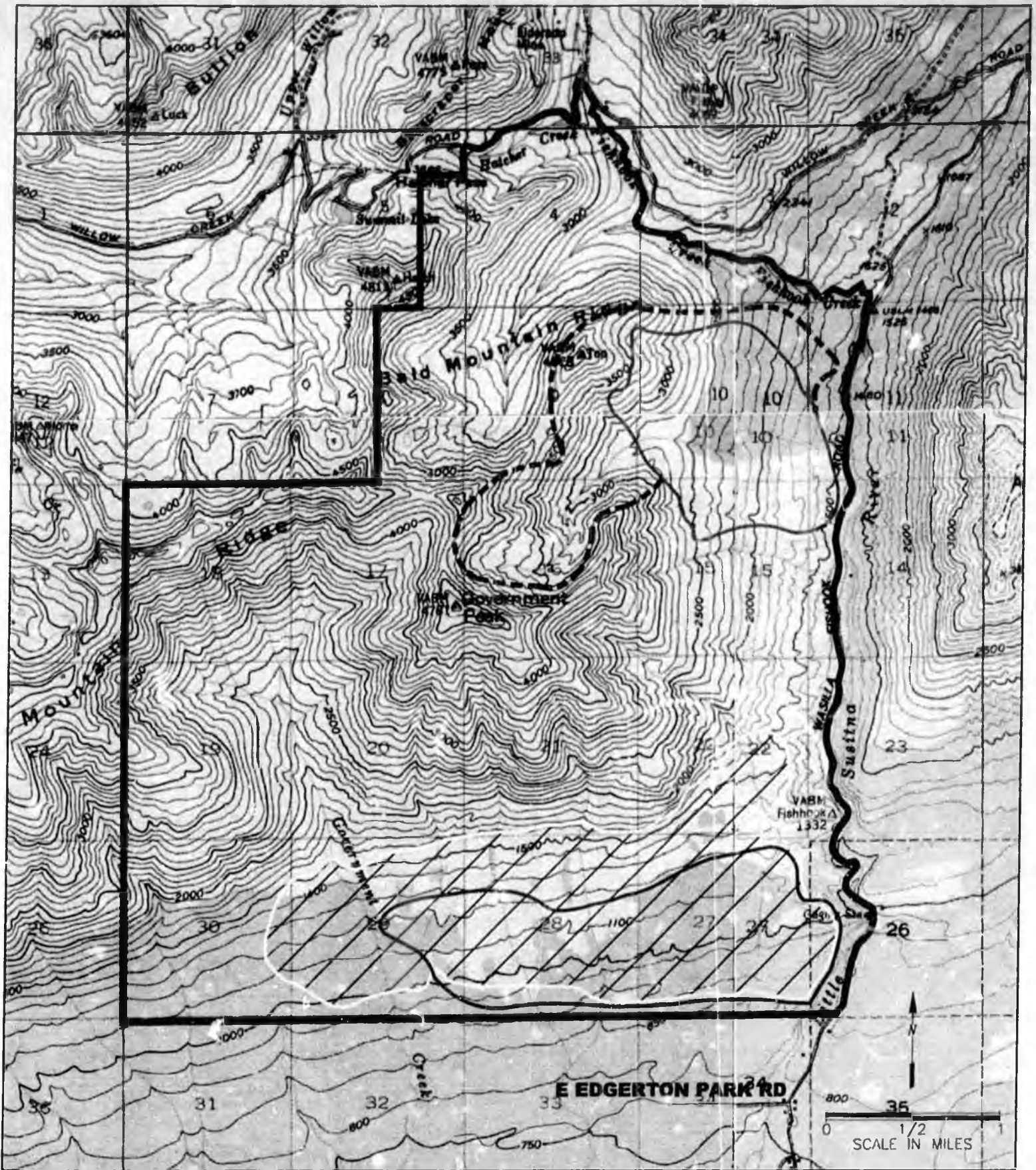


Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Community Development/LMD 4-14-2006

 Borough Owned

 Commercial/Residential
Development Areas

 HB 306



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/LMD - April 14, 2006

- Future alpine expansion (600 acres)
- Alpine ski area (700 acres)
- Special Land Use District Boundary

- Residential development area (1100 acres)
- /// Area of nordic ski trail, recreation trail & equestrian trail system (1400 acres)



	Amended:	12/06/05
	Adopted:	12/06/05
Motion to Amend Previously Adopted	Passed:	12/15/05
	Amended:	12/15/05
	Adopted:	12/15/05

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. 05-151 (AM)**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY APPROVING STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH FOR THE YEAR 2006.

WHEREAS, the 24th session of the Alaska State Legislature will reconvene in January 2006; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough remains the fastest growing community in the State of Alaska and is predicted to maintain above average growth rates for the next decade; and

WHEREAS, to meet the needs of the Borough's growing population, to help diversify the local economy, and to develop an efficient and effective transportation and educational system the Assembly has determined the State legislative priorities for the year 2006.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly hereby sets the following State legislative operating budget priorities to provide property tax relief for the residents of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough:

1. Property tax relief in the form of municipal assistance/revenue sharing/community dividends
2. Full funding of mandated Senior Citizen and Disabled Veterans tax exemption programs

3. Foundation funding - minimum base student allocation of \$5,347
4. Full funding of the Teachers and Public Employee Retirement System shortfall
5. Full funding of pupil transportation assistance
6. Increased funding of the Alaska State Department of Transportation and Public Facilities operations and maintenance budget

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly hereby sets the following capital project State legislative priorities for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough for the year 2006:

1. Emergency full funding for roof replacement and major renovation of Su-Valley High School
2. Hatcher Pass road and infrastructure improvements
3. Restoration of the \$50 million to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for projects within the Borough
4. Matanuska River erosion management
5. Funding for construction of portables in the amount of \$2.6 million

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly hereby sets the following additional State legislative priorities for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough for the year 2006:

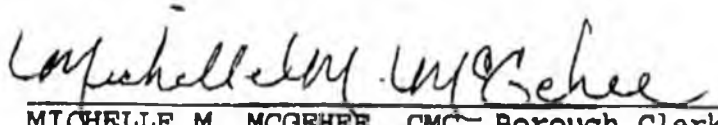
1. Re-Authorization of the School Construction Debt Reimbursement program
2. Hatcher Pass land transfer
3. Expansion of correctional facilities within the Borough
4. Increased response to community threats posed by Meth labs
5. Expansion of residential treatment centers within the Borough

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly this 6 day of December, 2005.



 TIMOTHY L. ANDERSON, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:



 MICHELLE M. MCGEHEE, CMC, Borough Clerk
 (SEAL)

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: Woods, Allen, Colberg, Kvalheim, Bettine, Colver, and Vehrs

AMEND PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY DECEMBER 15, 2005: Woods, Allen, Kvalheim, Bettine, Colver, and Vehrs

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH****Borough Manager's Office**

350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645

Phone (907) 745-9689 • Fax (907) 745-9669

jduffy@mat-sugov.us

January 28, 2006

The Honorable Bill Stoltze
State Representative
State of Alaska
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Stoltze:

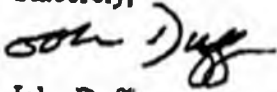
Thank you again for introducing HB306 the legislation regarding the land transfer to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough within the Hatcher Pass area. This land transfer will allow for the development of a community based Nordic ski facility as well as commercial and residential development. The project will have long term positive impacts by creating local employment and business opportunities as well as providing our youth with a place to recreate. Indeed, a recently completed economic impact assessment of the project has found that the project will create 1,350 long-term construction jobs and between 185 to 490 long term jobs when in operation. Our local school district has indicated that the project will be ideal for hosting training and regional and statewide competitive events. The recreation and tourism related benefits are immeasurable.

To recap, the land transfer and removal of the Public Use Area designation for approximately 200 acres of land is necessary in order to provide sufficient lands for the proposed Olympic class Nordic and Biathlon ski trail system, multiple purpose trails, and residential development. The Borough and State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources previously co-authored development management guidelines to protect the environment and uses of the area while maximizing the development and recreational potential of these lands. These guidelines are found within the Hatcher Pass Management Plan, as amended. Moreover the Borough, working with local citizens and developer, has developed a Special Use District which will further guide development of the project. Thus, more than adequate land use and development protections will be available to properly manage this important asset.

As reported by the media, a small part of the lands, about twenty acres, are no longer needed for the proposed commercial village as the hotel, lodge and ancillary commercial development will be relocated to the middle of the project area and away from the Little Susitna River. The twenty acres however, are still required to provide access to the development and to properly manage the entire development area and the recreational trails that may be developed on the property.

The Hatcher Pass ski area project has been a goal of the Borough and State of Alaska for over twenty years and is now very close to fruition. I have attached our Assembly's resolution that identifies this project as one of the Borough's top priorities. Your leadership in sponsoring the HB306 and working to obtain its passage is a critical element in the ultimate success of the project and is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your support. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 907-7435-9689 if you require any additional information.

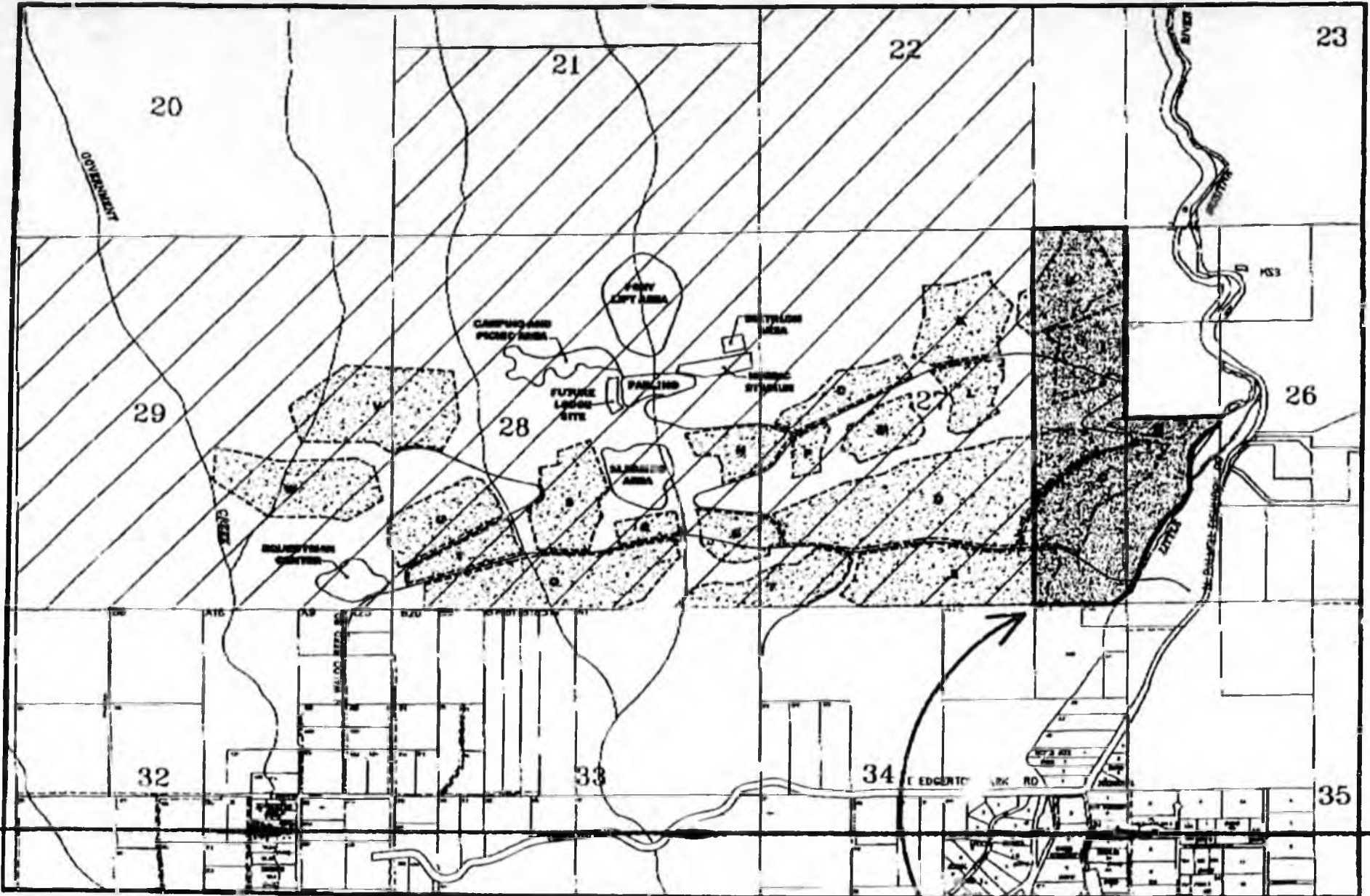
Sincerely,



John Duffy
Borough Manager

cc: Senator Huggins

Attachments: Assembly Resolution
Project Map



Community Development/LUC -31-2005



Borough Owned



Commercial/Residential Development Areas



HB 306



0 1/4 1/2
SCALE IN MILES