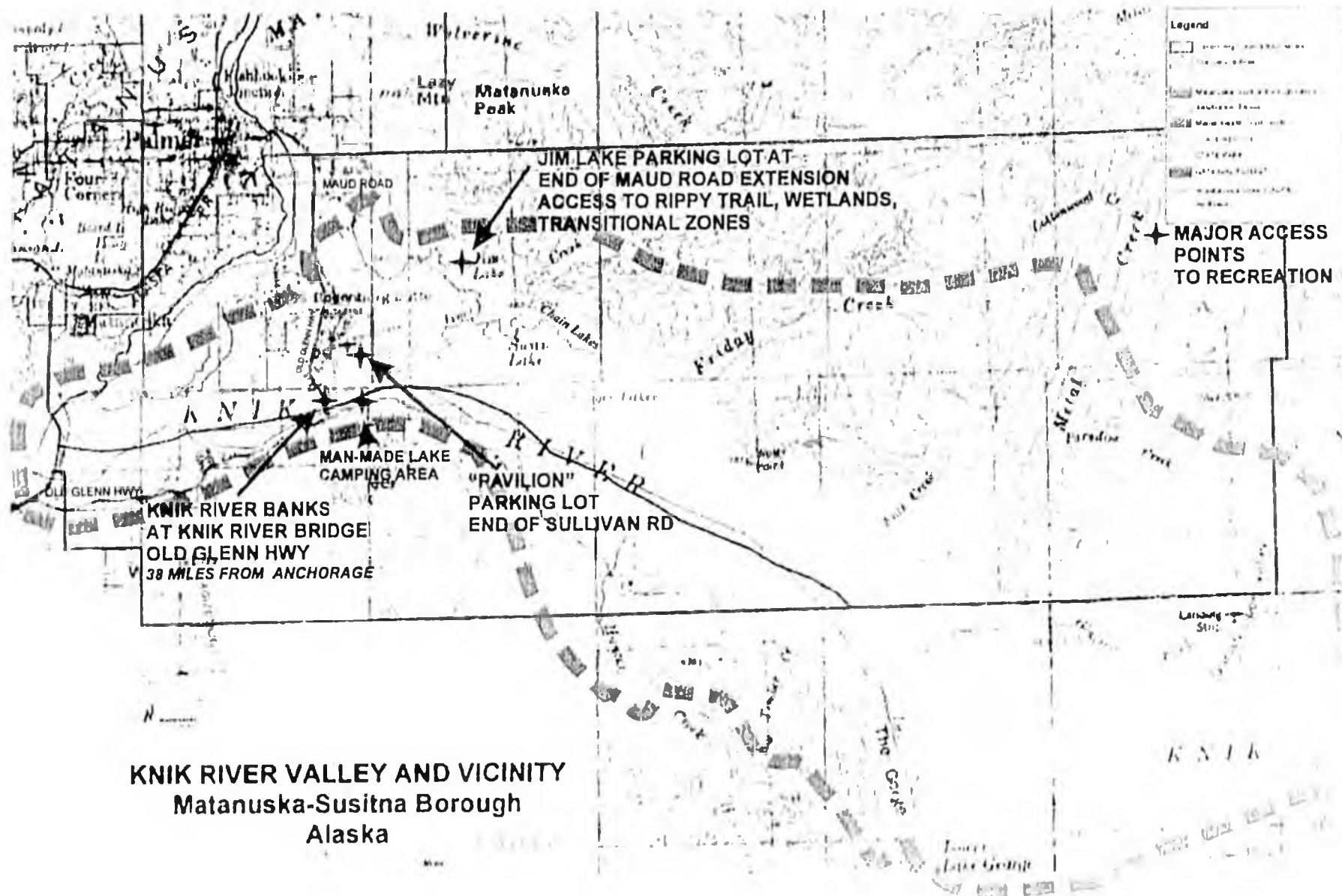
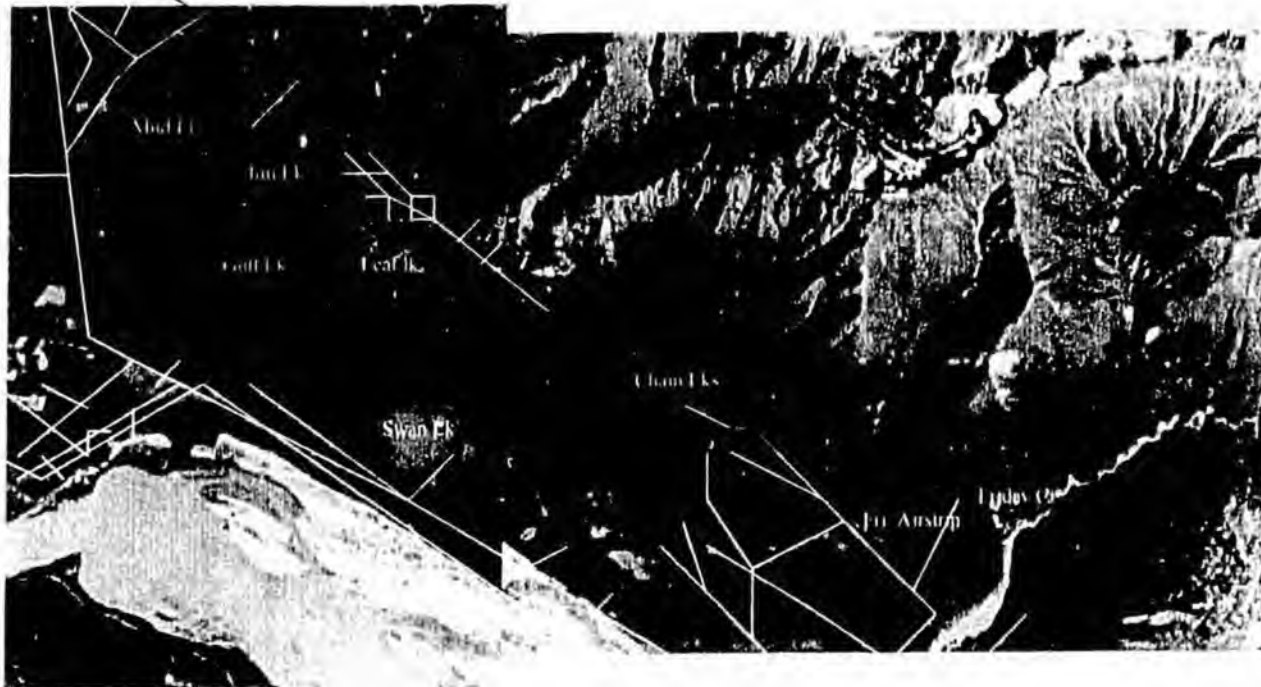


ALASKA LEGISLATURE

HOUSE and SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE FILES, 2005-2006 2903





Yellow = ORV trails

Red = road, Red E. of Mud Lk. (r. square) = Maude Rd. extension

White = Middle of Sec. 22 and extent of old logging trails

Turquoise = What is left of Rippy Trail

Blue = Friday Cr. Trails - so far singletrack

(note- the turquoise line beyond Chain L. is not a mistake - ATVs have been hauled in by air boat)

This is a rough line drawn graphic representation from my knowledge of these trails and is not a GPS map! Use at your own risk.

The Rippy portion of ad-hoc ORV traffic was single track only from White box to approximately the Friday Creek airstrip prior to the Maude Rd. Extension project.

This, along with other documentation, gives you overview about what is happening to the Jim/Swan Wetlands with no Management or adequate Law Enforcement.

Other documentation and photos available by request.

Ralph Hulbert

PO Box 1846, Palmer, AK 99645 phone (907)745-4586; fax (907)746-4186; email hulbert@alaska.net

April 3, 2006

Via email

Rep. Kevin Meyer
Alaska State House of Representatives

Re: CS for HB No. 307(RES); Knik River Public Use Area

I must commend your colleague, Rep. Stoltze, for listening to his constituents' diverse opinions, and advancing the more measured and sustainable proposals; this bill is much improved. I am still concerned about some unique habitats that could be damaged before we realize they're impacted.

This last Saturday, my family and friends hiked along what's now called the Rippy Trail to the upper reaches of Jim Cr., just as we've done for the past 30 years this time of year. Our goal is to see the swans, along with other wildlife and the general well-being (and weariness) that a 6 hour hike bestows. Yes, they were there in force, the first harbingers of local spring, a baker's dozen trumpeting a concert in a tiny open stream amidst the frozen marsh near the mountain.

The seven of us, knowing where we would likely find the swans, quietly moved through the alders to near the edge of the marsh. The swans were only about 200 yards away, and apparently were a bit nervous, although we remained within the edge. After about ten minutes, they lifted off and flew about ¼ mile further to the middle of the frozen marsh. This was apparently for safety, as there was no feed out on the ice. These tiny remote streams in the upper Knik that open early in the spring are critical staging for the Mat-Su population of trumpeter swans, before they spread out to their breeding locations in the valley.

About 12 years ago, ATVs punched a trail through to this location, and fresh tracks were there in the snow, but fortunately, there were no tracks this year on the frozen marsh. This trail ends in wide marsh, with no practical summer connection to the other trails. My concern is that, if quiet foot traffic can disrupt the swans' preferred and critical staging, ATV traffic (even low flying planes) anywhere nearby can do worse (and has, as I've observed in years past). Solutions to preserve the critical habitat may eventually involve abandoning the ATV trail sufficient distance from the marsh, and building an alternative hiking trail to a viewing location that won't upset the swans. I suspect there are volunteers that would do this, if regulatory support framework existed.

Consequently, I hope you might remove or adjust 41.23.200(d)(2) so that existing trails are not enshrined. Also, please include management input from a citizen advisory entity, primarily to encourage the extensive diverse volunteer participation necessary to make this truly successful.

Thanks,



cc: Rep. Stoltze
Rep. Gatto
Sen. Huggins

Louanne Christian

From: Rep. Kevin Meyer
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2006 5:32 AM
To: Louanne Christian
Subject: FW: HB307

Please include this in members' packets for HB 307. Thank you!

-----Original Message-----

From: Joe Gauna [mailto:joegauna@gci.net]
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2006 4:16 PM
To: Rep. Kevin Meyer
Subject: HB307

Please press to make this bill a reality. I am the access chair for the Alaska State Snowmobile Association and this is a clear case of access. Certainly there are some irresponsible people who spoil it for the majority but law enforcement and reasonable restrictions can deal with them. Thanks for your effort and continued support of access for Alaskans.

P.S. I am the one who used to drive you crazy when you were on the Assembly. Keep up the good work.

Butte Area Residents

Civic Organization

259 South Alaska Street – Palmer AK 99645 – 907-745-7525 – 907-227-1628

resource@buttealaska.org

April 4, 2006,

Respected Members of the House Finance Committee
Re: HB 307

We are Brit Lively and Gregory Nilsson, long-time residents and co-founders of Butte Area Residents Civic Organization.

First, we want to thank Rep. Stoltze and this committee for having recognized the shortage of law enforcement resources during past sessions and provided for more Troopers for Ma-Su. That has helped.

Please allocate sufficient funding to really **make a difference in Knik River Valley** with either HB 307, or with creating our proposed Knik River Valley State Recreation Area instead if that is determined to be a better mechanism..(www.buttealaska.org > issues). **We have not seen a fiscal note for HB 307** and therefore cannot comment on its adequacy for what we think is necessary to **turn the Jim Creek badlands into a multi-use recreation destination for local residents and visitors from near and far.**

On a trip to Juneau about a month ago I took a folder with presentation material to Co-Chair Meyer and several members of House Resources and Finance. Please add the attachments of my letter to this presentation to make them part of the record as well and distribute. The attachment is a spreadsheet of over 200 "unique" incidents, sightings and anecdotal experiences by only 11 residents which go with spots on the small "Incident" map in our folder. The packet also includes a video of **"Bodenburg Butte in Knik River Valley – Beauty at our Back Door"** and a **"No-Respect" photo-video** of examples of its ugly side in our recreation area. For a PowerPoint presentation of our area and examples of how damage is caused, please go to www.buttealaska.org > Recreation.

May we ask that you request from the Resources Committee the communication from residents and users of the area to demonstrate the lack of quality of life at our homes or on public lands.

While we have thankfully watched the improvements House Resources has made to this Public Use Area legislation since its introduction, it falls short of our initial expectations for the state lands in our neighborhoods. HB 307 is still heavily weighted toward enhancing motorized recreation and allows continuing dangerous activities, including target shooting (you should see the targets – if you can), **locking legitimate users out and discouraging peaceful family recreation.** The weekend party-mood will continue to spill over into our neighborhoods where there's no hiding from noise, dust and gun fire. **There are three well defined access points to this recreation area.** To get there, people drive through residential neighborhoods including those on the Old Glenn Highway, Sullivan/Caudill/Plumley Road, and Maud Road. Map attached. **Once there, we hear them, smell them, choke on their dust and fear for our lives.**

What is sufficient funding? That depends on whom we talked to. One official with recreational enforcement experience thought that for education and law enforcement it would take two years of on-the-ground presence of **5 fully empowered officers** to write tickets and enforce all statutes, using regular and off-road vehicles, to just make a dent into the existing chaos and lawlessness everyone is familiar with. **(Cost approx. \$600,000+/- for the first year).**

One land manager thought that **2 full-time fully empowered officers** for the first year with off-road equipment supplement by DNR peace officers will be a good step in the right direction. **(Cost: \$300,000+/- for the first year)**

Additional funding will be required for education including signs, rest rooms, repair of existing damage by ORVs and 4x4s, and trail enhancement. Sanitary facilities are a must since there are no public restrooms in the vicinity to accommodate up to 3,000 users on a nice weekend. The lack of sanitary facilities is a serious health hazard to residents. (Cost approx. \$150,000 over 3-year period).

Enforcement is key. When enforcement is assured, agencies such as *US Fish & Wildlife and private foundations are more likely willing to spend money on enhancing the area, knowing that the facilities and infrastructure they put up will be protected from vandalism.* The situation we have now cannot go on, where the community, the state and the borough have put up informational signage only to be destroyed by shooting, burning and blackening out at all public access points of the area.

More federal and private grant money will be available when users pay for their recreation. Motorized and equine use can be very damaging. Even mountain bikes in large numbers can deteriorate trails. I also want to emphasize that *in recreation area with adequate public safety protection, user groups and community groups are more willing to share in maintaining and patrolling trails.* Community patrols and trail watch groups are more likely willing to be eyes and ears for troopers and rangers when they know that these officers are close by. *Several years back, citizens of Butte were willing to start a community patrol, but were advised against it by State Troopers because of the dangers due to the distance to the Palmer Trooper Post.*

I believe that the designation of State Recreation Area under AS 41.21 rather than a Public Use Area under AS 41.23 has the built-in mechanism for a user-fee structure (possibly exempting local residents) and provides the assurance to funding organizations that the State of Alaska is serious about the stewardship of its recreational lands so that their investment is protected. *Visitors from all over the world would gladly pay a small fee to see and experience the wonders of our area, bringing with them new economic opportunities to our small community in the process.*

In this Public Use Area designation, HB 307, **do the users expect that the State of Alaska should pay for their recreation, enforcement, infrastructure, maintenance and enhancement?** And should we, residents and property owners of Butte, with our service area fees for emergencies, fire and road, be expected to continue to pay for mostly Anchorage, Fort Richardson and Elmendorf people who need to be rescued from their ORV and 4x4 accidents. **Are all Alaskans expected to continue enabling a culture of "we can do anything here we're not allowed to anywhere else," leaving residents exhausted after every weekend and slumming down our community?**

Please, confirm with Borough and State officials regarding the high cost of emergency services response in Knik River Valley. According to Capt. Casanovas who is in charge of Palmer Trooper Post, the amount of incidents which generated a case **increased from 840 in 2000 to 1240 in 2005 (over one third)** along and off of the Old Glenn Highway (approx. 17 miles) which accesses all points for recreation on state lands. We do not have numbers for those incidents where AST "counceled" people, or where they received or responded to calls for assistance and the offenders had skipped by the time AST arrived. Or ask how many calls for assistance go to Dispatch which deal with the mayhem around here.

It is in your power to restore peace to our community and give us an opportunity for economic growth by helping create a multi-user high-end visitor destination for south-central Alaska. Give us the basics so we can provide facilities and services which will replace the perception of "da Butte" and associated tainted image of its residents with that of a healthy and vibrant community that is ready to meet this positive challenge. **Please, give us the chance to shine! Give us respect!**

Sincerely,

Brit Lively (907-745-3398) - Gregory Nilsson (907-227-1628, W: 907-694-7124)
Co-Chairs, Butte Area Residents Civic Organization
Mail: 259 South Alaska Street, Palmer AK 99645

Encl.: Spreadsheet of Incidents, Access Points Map, Area Map, Land Ownership, ORV Trails in Wetlands
(sent via email for clarity and color).

THE
FOLLOWING
DOCUMENT(S)
ARE
POOR
ORIGINAL
COPIES

BRT61

51

Butte Community Council RESOLUTION NO. 2005-5

A resolution of the Butte Community Council supporting a bill, for an act entitled, "AN ACT CREATING THE KNIK RIVER PUBLIC USE AREA." State of Alaska, House Bill No. HB 307, and Senate Bill No. SB 197, introduced May 7, 2005.

Whereas: Recent actions by individuals, groups, and statements contained in the "Asset Management Plan for Borough Owned Land in the Butte Area" to propose and solicit new unreasonable restrictions on access and use of public lands in the Butte-Knik River Watershed area, and threaten to eliminate many of the assumed freedoms, lifestyles, and traditional uses of the Butte area residents and others, and

Whereas: Due to the unknown status of the above mentioned actions, and the unknown outcome thereof, this legislation is deemed necessary in order to preserve the traditional uses of the above mentioned public lands, and

Whereas: There are approximately 90 million acres of essentially non-motorized areas already set aside in Alaska in the form of National Parks, Wilderness Areas, Wildlife Refuges, Critical Habitat Areas, State Parks, etc. and

Whereas: We intend that the main purpose of this Knik River Public Use Area is to be for multiple use, including motorized (land, water, and air) ~~vehicle~~ recreation, and including non-motorized use, and

Whereas: There are provisions contained within the Public Use Area legislation, regulations to adequately provide for wildlife and habitat protection, and

Whereas: We intend this Knik River Public Use Area to be similar in scope and purpose to the *Nekchuna Public Use Area* with its allowed uses such as off road motor vehicles, trapping, hunting, mineral exploration, mining and other legally allowed uses, and

Whereas: The users of these public Lands have previously expressed their desires for continued public access by their approvals of past BCC resolutions, public petitions, and their publicly expressed disagreement with many of the proposed restrictions in the draft "Asset Management Plan for Borough Owned Land in the Butte Area."

Now Therefore, we, the people present here tonight, June 8, 2005 being members of the Butte Community Council, by majority vote, approve of this BCC resolution supporting the formation of a *Knik River Public Use Area*, by the Alaska State Legislature.

Signed by: A Quorum of the Board of the Butte Community Council

Dick Coats
Daryl Decker
Jamie Erickson
Jim McLean
Willa J. Frey

STATE OF ALASKA

Matanuska Valley Fish & Game Advisory Committee

Frank H Murkowski, Governor

Wayne Kubat, Chair
PO Box 874867
Wasilla, Alaska 99687
ph. & fax: 376-9568
email: args@mtaonline.net

November 23rd, 2005

Senator Huggins and Representative Stoltze,

The Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee unanimously supports House Bill 307 and Senate Bill 197, the bills to create the Knik River Public Use Area as written and introduced by yourselves.

The Knik River has historically been a destination for many visitors. With Anchorage, Palmer, and Wasilla home to over 50% of Alaska's population, this recreational area will provide access for many diverse users of the area. Adjacent to this area is Chugach State Park that restricts those Alaskans looking for an off-road vehicle experience.

Along with the specific management the legislation will create, we believe that additional education and enforcement will create an enjoyable destination for all recreational users and this legislation is a step in that direction. Thank you for your efforts!

Sincerely,

Wayne Kubat
Chairman - Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE KNIK RIVER WATERSHED
GROUP MANAGEMENT EFFORTS**

Mat-Su CVB Resolution FY05-06

WHEREAS, majority of public lands in the Knik River Watershed (KRW) are owned and managed by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land and Water (DNR).

WHEREAS, this area is popular for a wide variety of motorized and nonmotorized activity and offers exceptional hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, birdwatching and photography; and

WHEREAS, the KRW consists of uplands, wetlands, anadromous streams and other water bodies, unique geologic features, glaciers, swan and other waterfowl staging and nesting areas, and wildlife to include moose, black and grizzly bear; and

WHEREAS, recreation in the area has significantly increased and is expected to continue to increase, and the area is located in the most populated region in Alaska.

WHEREAS, the Knik Arm Wetlands Study (1981) and the Susitna Area Plan (1985) recognized important wildlife value, current and potential future impacts of unmanaged use, and recommended special designation for areas within the watershed; the SouthCentral Recreation Action Plan (1984) recommended a master plan for the Jim-Swan Lakes area of the watershed to more effectively serve diverse recreational interests; and a portion of the Jim-Swan area is located within the Lake George National Natural Landmark; and

WHEREAS, citizens and users have expressed repeated concerns about personal safety, vandalism, game and nongame violations, pollution and lack of sanitation, littering, impacts to fish and wildlife resources, impacts on resident's quality of life, impacts on responsible users, and impacts on hydrology and area aquifers; and

WHEREAS, a sustainable management plan is needed to protect fish and wildlife resources and that will accommodate motorized, nonmotorized, consumptive and nonconsumptive uses; and

WHEREAS, the planning effort shall include a full public process, scientific expertise and trail design expertise, and

WHEREAS, planning, sustainable management, and enforcement on public lands in the KRW will enhance opportunity to develop tourism destinations by offering safe, exceptional recreational opportunity for a multitude of user groups and visitors.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors fully supports efforts to develop a management plan, in a full public process, for the Knik River Watershed that will protect natural resources and accommodate motorized and nonmotorized recreation.

Adopted by the Mat-Su CVB Board of Directors on May 19, 2005.

Sandra White
President

Steve Mulhay
Secretary

Alaska Frontier Trappers Association
PO Box 3208
Palmer, Alaska 99645

January 30, 2006

Dear Representative Stoltze and Senator Huggins,

The Alaska Frontier Trappers Association fully support House Bill 307 and Senate Bill 197.

The Knik River has been a favorite destination for all outdoor recreational users. Trappers have a history of trapping on the Knik River since the territorial days. One of the most talked about trappers was Tex Cobb. He trapped all over the South Central area and has been written about in such magazines as "Outdoor Life". Trappers are possibly the first to utilize the area as a means of support and are the first trail blazers.

With the passage of these bills as written, we will be assured of continued use without the threat of closure in the form of a State Park.

Sincerely,



Bob Green
President, Alaska Frontier Trappers Association

By: L. Woods
Amended: 05/17/05
Adopted: 05/17/05

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. 05-068(AM)**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH SUPPORTING STATE DESIGNATION OF LAND IN THE KNIK RIVER WATERSHED AS A PUBLIC USE AREA AND FOR THE STATE TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO THE ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO DEVELOP A MULTIPLE-USE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE AREA.

WHEREAS, the Alaska State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough are the primary landholders of public land in the Knik River Watershed (KRW) and recognize the need to address management issues within portions of the watershed, particularly in the Jim Creek - Swan Lake - Knik River areas; and

WHEREAS, the area includes over 250,000 acres of public land, the majority of which is owned and managed by the Alaska State Department of Natural Resources; and

WHEREAS, the Borough recognizes that use impacts on State land are so significant as to warrant a special study area that should be established under cooperative management; and

WHEREAS, the Knik Arm Wetlands Study (1981) and the Susitna Area Plan (1985) recognized important wildlife value, current and potential future impacts of unmanaged

use, and recommended special designation for areas within the Knik River Watershed; and the South Central Recreation Action Plan (1984) recommended a master plan for the Jim Creek - Swan Lakes area of the Knik River Watershed to more effectively serve diverse recreational interests; and

WHEREAS, this area consists of uplands, wetlands, anadromous streams and other water bodies, unique geologic features, waterfowl staging and nesting areas, and wildlife to include resident moose, black and grizzly bear; and

WHEREAS, citizens and users have expressed repeated concern about significant increases in unmanaged uses, vandalism and other unlawful violations, safety, pollution, littering, impacts to fish and wildlife resources, impacts on nearby residents and users, and have committed significant volunteer resources in attempts to educate local residents and visitors in order to improve the situation; and

WHEREAS, DNR has statewide experience in developing sustainable multiple-use plans that recognize and provide for a wide variety of users of State land, yet in a way that protects important areas; and

WHEREAS, a planning team led by DNR would include public and private land owners and managers, scientists, a wide variety of user groups that currently use the area,

citizens, and adjoining private landholder representation, and would be developed using an open public process; and

WHEREAS, a management planning effort would enhance the opportunity for multiple-use management that would include partnering, collaboration and volunteerism for agencies, landholders, diverse users, residents and citizen groups.

NCW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly supports the State creating a public use area for public land in the Knik River watershed and urges the appropriation of funds to the Alaska State Department of Natural Resources to initiate a management planning process which includes all user groups and appropriate agencies for the public land in the area. The State funding should include sufficient resources to implement the management plan and provide enforcement of land-use regulations as provided to them under State Statute for their stewardship of public lands.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly this
17 day of May, 2005.

/S/

TIMOTHY L. ANDERSON, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

/S/

MICHELLE M. MCGEHEE, CMC, Borough Clerk

(SEAL)

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

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION 05-22 (AM)

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA PLANNING COMMISSION REQUESTING THE ASSEMBLY TO SUPPORT ALASKA LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A KNIK RIVER PUBLIC USE AREA FOR PUBLIC LAND IN THE KNIK RIVER WATERSHED AND TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO THE ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR PUBLIC LAND IN THE AREA.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough are the primary landholders of public land in the Knik River Watershed (KRW) and recognize the need to address management issues in the Jim Creek-Swan Lake-Knik River area; and

WHEREAS, the area includes over 7,600 acres of public land, the majority of which is owned and managed by the state DNR, and

WHEREAS, this area consists of uplands, wetlands, anadromous streams and other water bodies, unique geologic features, waterfowl staging and nesting areas, and wildlife to include resident moose, black and grizzly bear; and

WHEREAS, citizens and users have expressed repeated concern about significant increases in unmanaged uses, vandalism and other unlawful violations, safety, pollution, littering, impacts to fish and wildlife resources, impacts on nearby residents and users, and have committed significant volunteer resources in attempts to educate local residents and visitors in order to improve the situation; and

WHEREAS, the draft Asset Management Plan for Borough Owned Land in the Butte Area (2004) recognizes that "use impacts [on state land] are so significant to warrant a special study area that should be established under cooperative management; the Knik Arm Wetlands Study (1981) and the Susitna Area Plan (1985) recognized important wildlife value, current and potential future impacts of unmanaged use, and recommended special designation for areas within the KRW; and the South Central Recreation Action Plan (1984) recommended a master plan for the Jim-Swan Lakes area of the KRW to more effectively serve diverse recreational interests; and

WHEREAS, DNR has statewide experience in developing sustainable multiple-use plans for state land; and


WHEREAS, a planning team led by DNR would include public and private land owners and managers, scientists, user groups, citizens, and adjoining private landholder representation, and would be developed using an open public process; and

WHEREAS, legislative designatio: and a management planning effort would enhance opportunity for multiple-use management that would include partnering, collaboration and volunteerism for agencies, landholders, diverse users, residents and citizen groups.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission recommends the Assembly support

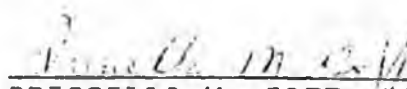
state legislative efforts to create a Public Use Area for the public land in the Knik River watershed and to provide funding to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources to develop and implement a management planning process for the public land in the area.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Planning Commission this 4 day of April, 2005.



HELGA LARSON, Chair

ATTEST:



PRISCILLA M. GOFF, Planning Clerk

(SEAL)

SUBJECT: A resolution supporting state designation of land in the Knik River Watershed as a state special management area and to provide funding to the Department of Natural Resources to develop a multiple-use management plan for the area.

AGENDA OF: May 17, 2005

ASSEMBLY ACTION:

--

MANAGER RECOMMENDATION: Present to the assembly for consideration.

APPROVED BY JOHN DUFFY, BOROUGH MANAGER: _____

Route To:	Department/Individual	Initials	Remarks
	Originator		
	Community Development Director		
	Planning and Land Use Director		
	Finance Director		
	Borough Attorney		
	Borough Clerk		

ATTACHMENT(S): Fiscal Note: Yes ___ No X
 Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board
 Resolution No. 05-05 (2pp)
 Planning Commission Resolution No. 05-22 (AM)
 Resolution Serial No. 05-___

SUMMARY STATEMENT: The Susitna Area Plan, when it was adopted in 1985, recognized that a variety of special habitat, scenic and recreational values existed in the Knik River Watershed. That plan specifically recommended that the area surrounding Jim and Swan Lake be designated as a State Recreation site.

The plan specifically found that legislative designation of the area was important for the area because of the heavy public use of the areas lakes and streams for salmon and trout fishing, waterfowl hunting, canoeing, hiking and winter recreation activities. The plan further stated that use of the area was likely to increase as

the population of the surrounding area grew, and that the area should be managed to provide recreation while protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat and protecting visual quality.

In recent years we all have been hearing more and more frequently about conflicts between users of the area, concerns about personal safety and the need for active management of the area to help resolve these conflicts, protect important habitat areas from complete destruction while at the same time allowing the multitude of recreational activities that have occurred in the area over the years to continue.

With the recent process we have gone through as part of developing an asset management plan for borough owned land in the Butte area, the subject of management of the adjacent state land again became a major issue. While the public did not totally agree on how the area should be managed, they did point out that any action on Borough owned land is meaningless if not followed through by the adjacent public land owners and vice-versa.

Fortunately, the state Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW) had participants at all our public meetings and were involved in the review of our planning documents. Following the last round of public review (summer and fall of 2004) they took the message back that a plan for the entire watershed was the only sensible way to proceed to deal with the real and perceived conflicts that exist in the area.

The DMLW is now supportive of a legislative designation of the area (either a public use area or a public recreation area) neither of which prohibit any uses of the area, but allows the department to utilize a planning process to arrive at an enforceable management plan.

Legislation was proposed by DMLW and the Knik River Watershed Group to accomplish the above and a fiscal note was drafted to complete a management plan for the area within two years. Although no legislation was introduced a draft was prepared that could be used as a good vehicle for the public to review and discuss in preparation for the next legislative session.

RECOMMENDATION OF ADMINISTRATION: Because of the large amount of public, mainly state land in the Knik River Watershed and the amount of conflicts and safety concerns that we have all heard and read about, it is recommended that the Borough recommend to the state that a management plan for the area be adopted and the area be protected for its multiple-use recreational and habitat values. The administration supports the resolution and recommends adoption.

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD
RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. 05-05

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH PARKS RECREATION AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD REQUESTING THE ASSEMBLY TO SUPPORT THE STATE DESIGNATING LAND IN THE KNIK RIVER WATERSHED AS A STATE RECREATION AREA AND TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES TO DEVELOP A MULTIPLE-USE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE AREA.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough are the primary landholders of public land in the Knik River Watershed (KRW) and recognize the need to address management issues in the Jim Creek-Swan Lake-Knik River area; and

WHEREAS, the area includes over 250,000 acres of public land, the majority of which is owned and managed by the state DNR, and

WHEREAS, the draft Asset Management Plan for Borough Owned Land in the Butte Area (2004) recognizes that "use impacts [on state land] are so significant to warrant a special study area that should be established under cooperative management; the Knik Arm Wetlands Study (1981) and the Susitna Area Plan (1985) recognized important wildlife value, current and potential future impacts of unmanaged use, and recommended special designation for areas within the KRW; and the South Central Recreation Action Plan (1984) recommended a master plan for the Jim-Swan Lakes area of the KRW to more effectively serve diverse recreational interests; and

WHEREAS, this area consists of uplands, wetlands, anadromous streams and other water bodies, unique geologic features, waterfowl staging and nesting areas, and wildlife to include resident moose, black and grizzly bear; and

WHEREAS, citizens and users have expressed repeated concern about significant increases in unmanaged uses, vandalism and other unlawful violations, safety, pollution, littering, impacts to fish and wildlife resources, impacts on nearby residents and users, and have committed significant volunteer resources in attempts to educate local residents and visitors in order to improve the situation; and


WHEREAS, DNR has statewide experience in developing sustainable multiple-use plans that recognize and provide for a wide variety of users of state land, yet in a way that protects important areas; and

WHEREAS, a planning team led by DNR would include public and private land owners and managers, scientists, a wide variety of user groups that currently use the area, citizens, and adjoining private landholder representation, and would be developed using an open public process; and

WHEREAS, a management planning effort would enhance the opportunity for multiple-use management that would include partnering, collaboration and volunteerism for agencies, landholders, diverse users, residents and citizen groups.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board urges the Assembly to support the State designating a portion of the Knik River Watershed as a multiple-use State Recreation Area and to provide state funding to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources to develop and implement a management plan for public land in the area.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks Recreation and Trails Advisory Board this 25th day of April, 2005.


BISHOP T. BUCKLE, Chairman



MINUTES
Thursday, May 12, 2005
Lazy Mountain Community Council
General Meeting

Meeting started with President Will Peabody calling meeting to order at 7:35pm.
Attended by Board Members; Will, Doug, Dan, Michael, Ken & Helen,
In addition, 8 general members.

Pledge

Minutes from the March 10, 2005 meeting read by Dan Linden. Motion to approve by Lucy, second by Helen.

Ken Klunder gave an update on the Comprehensive Plan. Eilien Probasco is getting a survey together to be mailed to every land owner. The survey asks owners what is important to them. This information will be used for the 1st workshop, called "Vision Building". Ken stressed the importance of getting as many people as possible involved with the comprehensive plan by attending the 1st workshop and the meetings that are the last Thursday of every month.

Road Report by the RSA's Lucy Klebesadel, Ken Klunder, and Pat Larrabee. Lucy reports that there is \$20,000 left in the road budget. Mike Garner says that \$14,000 will be spent within the next 2 weeks. Most roads in Rancheete subdivision will be worked on. Robin Lane will have a new chip seal product applied but the resurfacing will only cost the community \$10,000.

Koperund requests residents to clean out culverts so that they may assecc which ones need replaced. Koperunds will be brush cutting and request that residents mark tress and/or shrubs that they do not want destroyed.

Lucy reported that our CIP list had been changed without approval or notification to the Lazy Mountain Community Council. It appears that Lynn Woods and Jim Culver added paving Robin Lane, at a cost of \$110,000 to the list.

Lucy concluded by reminding the council that the new fiscal year for road funds starts June 30.

Cecily Fritz and Robert Howard gave a presentation on the Knik watershed area.

They are spearheadinsg a group called The Knik Watershed Group in which their mission is to sustain the Knik River Watershed to insure use and enjoyment for current and future generation. After the presentation, Will Peabody made a motion to approve a resolution for support of a state DNR management plan. The full resolution is as follows:

This resolution was prepared by the Knik River Watershed Group for consideration by the Lazy Mountain Community Council and was presented at the council general meeting on May 12, 2005.

Whereas, the majority of public lands in the Knik River Watershed (KRW) are owned and managed by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land and Water (DNR).

Whereas, this area is popular for a wide variety of motorized and nonmotorized activity and offers exceptional hunting, fishing, trapping and nonconsumptive uses; and

Whereas, the KRW consists of uplands, wetlands, anadromous streams and other water bodies, unique geologic features, glaciers, waterfowl staging and nesting areas, and wildlife to include moose, black and grizzly bear; and

Whereas, recreation in the area has significantly increased and is expected to continue to increase, and the area is located in the most populated region in Alaska.

Whereas, citizens and users have expressed concerns about personal safety, vandalism, game and nongame violations, pollution and lack of sanitation, littering, impacts to fish and wildlife resources, impacts on resident's quality of life, impacts on responsible users, and impacts on hydrology and area aquifers; and

Whereas, the Knik Arm Wetlands Study (1981) and the Susitna Area Plan (1985) recognized important wildlife value, current and potential future impacts of unmanaged use, and recommended special designation for areas within the watershed; and the SouthCentral Recreation Action Plan (1984) recommended a master plan for the Jim-Swan Lakes area of the watershed to more effectively serve diverse recreational interests; and

Whereas, DNR has the experience and expertise to develop a management plan that shall involve a full public process, include scientific expertise, trail design expertise and invite the participation of all user groups, citizens and adjoining landholders; and

Whereas, DNR has statewide experience in developing sustainable multiple-use plans that protect important fish and wildlife resources; and

Whereas, a management planning effort would enhance opportunity for partnering, collaboration and volunteerism for agencies, landholders, diverse user groups, residents, and citizen groups.

Now, therefore be it resolved that the Lazy Mountain Community Council supports state DNR efforts to develop a sustainable management plan, in a full public process, for the Knik River Watershed that will protect natural resources and accommodate motorized and nonmotorized recreation.

Adopted by Resolution of the Lazy Mountain Community Council on May 12, 2005.

The motion was 2nd by Micheal Miller.

Vote taken. Vote was unanimous for acceptance of the resolution.

9:15 meeting adjourned by the president.

Mat-Su State Parks Citizens Advisory Board

Resolution #05-03

A resolution supporting state funding to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources for development of a management plan for Public Lands in the Knik River Watershed.

Whereas, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is the primary landholder of public lands in the Knik River Watershed (KRW) and the land is classified as generally managed state land;

Whereas, the draft Asset Management Plan for Borough Owned Land in the Butte Area (2004) recognizes that "use impacts [on state land] are so significant to warrant a special study area that should be established under cooperative management;

Whereas, the Knik Arm Wetlands Study (1981) and the Susitna Area Plan (1985) recognized important wildlife value, current and potential future impacts of unmanaged use, and recommended special designation for areas within the KRW;

Whereas, the SouthCentral Recreation Action Plan (1984) recommended a master plan for the Jim-Swan Lakes area of the KRW to address severe erosion from four-wheel drive vehicles and fire hazards from unmanaged camping, and to more effectively serve diverse recreational interests;

Whereas, the area includes over 7600 acres of wetlands, anadromous streams, unique geologic features, waterfowl staging and nesting, and wildlife to include resident moose, black and grizzly bear;

Whereas, citizens and users have expressed repeated concern for the increase in unmanaged uses, vandalism, safety, pollution, littering, impacts to wildlife resources, and impacts on residents and users, and have committed significant volunteer resources notifying agencies and troopers, organizing clean-ups, and educating residents and visitors in attempts to improve the situation;

Whereas, DNR has statewide experience in developing sustainable multiple-use plans for state land;

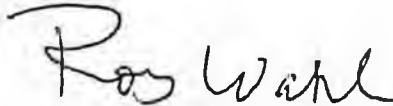
Whereas, a DNR led planning team would include land managers, scientists, user groups, citizens, and adjoining private landholder representation, and would be developed using an open public process;

Whereas, a management planning effort would enhance opportunity for multiple use management that would include partnering, collaboration and volunteerism for agencies, landholders, diverse users, residents and citizen groups.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Citizens Advisory Board of the Mat-Su district of Alaska State Parks supports state funding to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources to fulfill a management planning process for public lands in the Knik River Watershed.

This RESOLUTION #~~0503~~ was passed by the Mat-Su Citizens Advisory Board at its regular meeting held April 12, 2005.



Roy Wahl, Chair

Distribution:

Cecily Fritz, Chair, Knik River Watershed Group

PO Box 766
Talkeetna, AK 99676
March 25, 2006

Representative Jay Ramras, Co-Chair, House Resources
Alaska State House of Representatives

Dear Representative Ramras:

This letter regards HB 307, an Act Creating the Knik River Public Use Area. I am a member of the Mat-Su State Parks Citizen's Advisory Board, but I am commenting as an individual.

In late 2005, the Advisory Board saw presentations by the Knik Watershed Group and by Todd Clark, President of the Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance regarding the future of the Knik River Watershed and draft legislation creating the Public Use Area (PUA). Both presentations were quite informative. Both views were different, but not incompatible. Legislation can and should respect both views.

The current HB 307 is an improvement over earlier versions, but there is further to go if all user groups are to be treated fairly and if the qualities and values of the area are to be preserved over time.

Here are specific changes to HB 307 that I urge you to incorporate into the bill.

Page 1, line 14, after the word *vehicle*, insert "*and non-motorized recreation determined to be compatible with (1) and (2) of this section*" and delete the word *opportunities*. So, starting on line 13, (3) would read "Provide for the public to enjoy the full spectrum of public uses including off-road vehicle and nonmotorized recreation determined to be compatible with (1) and (2) of this section." This accommodates all user groups equally and provides for the sustainability of the important fish and wildlife resources of the area.

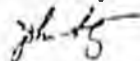
Page 2, line 7: In addition to public hearings, there should be an option for public meetings and/or informational workshops. And, I think the legislation should contemplate the establishment of a citizen's advisory oversight board, representing various perspectives and experience.

Section 200, (d) (1), page 3, line 6 should have a clause that ensures consistency of these activities with the overall purpose of the PUA. Without a compatibility caveat, the use of the area would be unmanageable, to the detriment of the resource, some user groups, or both.

Section 200, (d) (2), page 3, lines 11-16. This is an unclear provision that appears to give motorized use priority over both non-motorized use and the integrity of the natural resource values of the area, and it hamstring the planning process. Legislation should be clear in its statements, internally consistent, and not preclude proper planning in the public interest. Hence, (d) (2), lines 11-16 should be deleted.

Enforcement is important, and section 210 should include language that directs the commissioners of Public Safety, F&G, and other regulatory agencies to enforce the law in the PUA.

Sincerely,



John Strassenburgh

Below is a letter to the editor submitted by Carrie A. Gray Wolfe to the Anchorage Daily News, Wednesday, March 15, 2006. The letter is in reference to the ongoing dispute over HB307 and the redraft, CS HB307A.

Letters from

New medical center should remember it is still competing

The new Mat-Su Regional Medical Center is up and running. While some people may have glowing, loving stories to tell of the place, I recently ended up there, and while it is only 10 minutes away from my home, I discovered that it's still run by the administration that ran Valley Hospital. I'll resume driving right past it and into Anchorage for my family's hospital needs unless weather or extreme emergency requires I end up there instead, but I will transfer to Anchorage as soon as possible.

The medical center needs to remember that it's in competition with two hospitals in Anchorage that appear to direct their care to repeat business. The staff at Valley are nice people, but the procedures that govern what they do leave patients who want a choice in their care having to go to Anchorage. Flexibility where it won't harm the patient or significantly run up costs should be their standard. If TriCare truly cares about the Valley, they will find a way to work with their patients and not make us go to Anchorage to be treated like paying customers.

I volunteer for one of Anchorage's hospitals and take my business and very large family to both Anchorage hospitals every year. That's a lot of time and a lot of money that could be more easily spent at home.

— Kellie Coulson Davis
Waeilla

Knik River area needs some new legislation regarding use

Who are the people in your neighborhood? My "neighborhood" is bombarded with unrestricted gunfire, car explosions, vandalism and theft. Wouldn't you like to be my neighbor? It sounds as if I'm living in a war zone. But I live in the Knik River

Valley. Legislation (House Bill 307 and Senate Bill 197) supporting a Knik River Public Use Area fails to adequately address problems faced by local residents. The legislation neglects to address law enforcement planning and funding, public safety issues, incompatible recreational

uses, and the protection of critical wildlife habitats. Mike Erickson said in a Compass piece last month that more laws are needed ("Curbing Knik ATV access is no solution," Feb. 9).

What good are more laws without law enforcement? Erickson believes this legislation "preserves equal access to all." Not so. Many local residents avoid the area out of fear and disgust. I resent his implied message that most Alaskans access and enjoy recreation using motorized vehicles. Hiking, canoeing and skiing are a few nonmotorized ways Alaskans enjoy outdoor recreation.

Local residents have to live daily with the consequences of recreational activities in the Knik River Valley. The adverse effects of unrestricted use affect all outdoor enthusiasts. Let's encourage our legislators to write new legislation and not keep the status quo.

— Carrie Gray Wolfe
Palmer

Editor's Note: This writer is an ex-member of the Knik River Watershed Group steering committee. The views here are her own.

Tax exemption bill welcomed as relief for strapped seniors

Thank you to Rep. Vic Kohring for his support of seniors and disabled vets. His House Bill 299, if passed, will increase the current tax exemption from the first \$150,000 of property value to \$250,000 in value. As property values have increased substantially each year, this bill will help alleviate increased hardship from taxation for those in our community who have

The medical center needs to remember that it's in competition with two hospitals in Anchorage that appear to direct their care to repeat business.

Letters in
support
of HB 307

Additional letters of
support and
opposition are on file.

March 27, 2006

TO: Representative Jay Ramras

FROM: Stan Olsen
6620 e. 11th Ave.
Anchorage, AK 99504

RE: Stolze/Huggins HB 307/SB197

I am writing to oppose the above act on the Knick River Public Use Area. Unfortunately this area is no longer the "pristine" area as it was long ago unofficially turned over for use by motorized, free wheeling and fun loving folks who have relegated it into a area devoid of any possibility of use by families who enjoy the quiet, peaceful nature of the Alaska outdoor environment.

Currently this area is continually trashed (literally), fires are set without any regard to minimizing the effect on the environment. Streams, wetlands and dry lands are torn up by machines driven by people without any demonstrated respect / regard for the environmental degradation they cause. Not to mention the noise pollution which reaches areas distant from the actual physical use boundaries.

This area in general also suffers from the noise pollution of the nearby racetrack every weekend in the summer. There needs to be a place where individuals and families can go in peace and security without having to be subjected to the noise and generally "lawless" attitude of a few. Unfortunately is not a few when they are congregated in this small area. Law enforcement is not enforced.

For the benefit of a majority of the citizens I strongly request that this bill be killed and legislation be implemented to turn this area into the Knik River Valley State Recreation Area (under AS 41.21), for the benefit of all Alaskan's.

I'm sorry for the short notice but I was just made aware of this hearing and wanted to express my feelings. I trust that you will help uphold the use of Alaska lands for the majority of the users and not allow a small group to destroy a potentially wonderful state resource.

Thank you.



Emily Stancliff

From: Dot [dot.h@att.net]
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2006 12:54 PM
To: Rep. Jay Ramras
Subject: House Bill No. 307 comments

Representative Ramras:

Regarding House Bill No. 307, "An Act Creating the Knik River Public Use Area".

While substantial improvements have been made to the bill, I feel further changes would make it a better bill to ensure public recreation and safety for all Alaskans while protecting the natural environment, including fish and wildlife.

A: Include nonmotorized use: Page 1 Line 14: "Provide for the public to enjoy the full spectrum of public uses including off-road vehicle and nonmotorized recreation determined to be compatible with (1) and (2) of this section."

B: Expand the public process page 2 line 7: Include workshops and public hearings, or establishment of a citizen's advisory board. This is the best means to ensure that resident safety and quality of life concerns are addressed. Based on concerns I have heard from locals in the area, the safety issues are really important.

C: Fix the wording on incompatible use: Page 3 line 6: "allow the Knik River Public Use Area to be used for activities, as compatible with purposes, to include all-terrain vehicles..."

D. Provide for wise use of ORVs: Delete item (2) page lines 11-16 in Incompatible Uses. This section circumvents the required public planning process. ORV use is ensured in Section 41.23.180 (Purposes page 1 line 14). In particular, some existing trails or routes may need to be re-aligned or perhaps seasonably limited to result in sustainable trails where current routes may be contributing to erosion and having negative impacts on wetlands, fish, and wildlife. This is not an attempt to limit access, but rather to ensure that all can access the area in a reasonable way, for decades to come. This is where management and enforcement in the area is extremely important.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Dot (Dorothy) Helm
233 W. Beaver Ave.
Palmer, AK 99645

dot.h@att.net

Cecily Fritz, Chair
Knik River Watershed Group
P. O. Box 195
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Dear Cecily:

I live in the Chugiak, Eagle River area and am writing to express my support for state legislative funding of a DNR/Mat-Su Borough planning process for public lands in the Knik River watershed.

Jim Creek is a very special place for my family especially my two daughters. Over the past decade we have had huge fun there, mostly involving the water and dunes. When a nice hot summer day comes along, we drop everything and load up the truck with tubes, umbrellas, a cooler and sun screen. From our house in Chugiak, it takes 40 minutes with the last 20 minutes on a very rough 4 wheel drive road, some water crossings and then we are in an Alaskan heaven. The sand dunes at Jim Creek are a great spot for kids and their parents. Here you have warm water in the form of a gently flowing and shallow stream with a nice sand beach. You also have sand dunes steep enough to roll down into the water. On occasion, the sand will be so hot you have to run across it or burn your feet because the dunes face directly south. At this location, you are surrounded by beautiful mountains and looking way upriver you can see a wall of ice, which is the Knik Glacier. How very amazing, this may be a one of a kind place in the world. Come late summer, the fishing heats up. For all these reasons and many more, access to Jim Creek should be guaranteed forever. This place belongs to the people of Alaska. I am tempted to say we should improve the road in the hope of attracting more good people and possibly less hoodlums. A huge concern is safety since certain people sense there are no rules at Jim Creek. Vandalism, dangerous shooters and environmental destruction are occurring more and more frequently. These behaviors scare off the people who love and respect the area, leaving only the irresponsible users. The wrecked and burned cars certainly detract from the pleasant surroundings. I would love to see that problem solved but never at the cost of shutting it all down. Education and enforcement are key issues to take back Jim Creek.

I strongly support your efforts, and those of other community groups, user groups, citizens, and Mat-Su Borough and Department of Natural Resource planners, in working toward realization of a management plan for the area.

Sincerely,



Michael Hansen

March 11, 2005

Cecily Fritz, Chair
Knik River Watershed Group
P. O. Box 195
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Dear Cecily:

I live in the Butte area, and am writing to express my support for state legislative funding of a DNR/Mat-Su Borough planning process for public lands in the Knik River watershed.

The Knik River Valley is a beautiful, accessible area that provides exceptional opportunity for all kinds of recreation and has a rich diversity of wildlife resources. Each year, the area receives a significant increase in unrestricted use over the previous year without benefit of management. The list and degree of resultant problems is growing and includes littering, pollution, vandalism, wildlife violations, life-threatening target shooting and damage to the natural environment.

The two major access points/parking areas are within a mile of our home (Old Knik River Bridge and Pavilion) and are in close proximity to many other hundred homes. Residents have taken the brunt of these illegal and reckless activities at their back door. Our quality of life has been severely compromised due to the lack of management. These ongoing problems keep the legitimate user away. It is well known that our public lands have become the badlands. The resources, the residents and the multitude of responsible users deserve much better.

I strongly support your efforts, and those of other community groups, user groups, citizens, the Mat-Su Borough, Department of Natural Resources, and our legislators in working toward a management plan for the area which protects our property values, our quality of life, the natural resources, and the legitimate uses on our public lands.

Sincerely,

Brit Lively
Res: 5505 South Old Glenn Highway
Palmer
Mail: 259 South Alaska Street
Palmer AK 99645
907-745-7526

GREGORY S. NILSSON

259 South Alaska Street, Palmer AK 99645
Res: 5505 South Old Glenn Highway, Palmer
907-745-7526 / 907-227-1628

April 3, 2005

Senator Charlie Huggins
State Capitol, Room 417
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

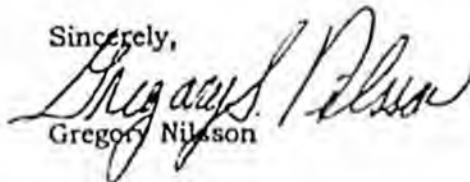
Dear Senator Huggins,

Please accept this letter as my endorsement of your efforts toward the momentum needed to generate a comprehensive management plan for the Knik River watershed area.

With the advent of spring the numbers of recreationists and the attendant problems are clearly already growing. The sooner we have education and enforcement presence here to help guide the public's use of this area, the sooner we will see fewer of the problems visited on this beautiful place.

A cooperative management plan involving the various landowners in the Knik watershed is what I see as the most effective means of developing recreational and environmental balance. The state and borough, as public entities, should take the lead in making this happen.

Sincerely,



Gregory Nilsson

To: Cecily Fritz, Chair Knik River Watershed Group

4/04/05

We support state legislative funding of a DNR/Mat-Su Borough planning process for public lands in the Knik River watershed. Currently there is no active management of the area. As the population of the Mat-Su and Anchorage area has increased so has use of the area with negative impacts on wildlife resources, watershed integrity, user enjoyment of the area, and local resident's quality of life. The rivers, lakes, wetlands & mountains sides support a tremendous variety of wildlife and recreational opportunities. A co-operative management plan is much needed and long overdue. It is an area of mixed land ownership and multiple users, who all need to be included in the planning process. We support the goals of Knik River Watershed Group

During the 30+ years we have lived in the Butte, we have enjoyed many days of canoeing, hiking, & birding in Mud/Jim/Swan lake areas and mountain biking along the Knik River. We have also helped organize and participated in many Spring Clean ups in the area. It is a truly beautiful area with relatively easy access for a variety of recreational users. We frequently take our out of town guests canoeing there, and they are always impressed with the scenery & wildlife in our "backyard".

Here are some of the problems we have personally seen:

-Trash & litter has increased

A bear bait station & other trash left at campsites by String Lake last fall.

-Vandalism

It is a frequent party spot, and place to burn old cars.

-Unsafe shooting

We have been canoeing on Mud Lake & had people begin shooting across the water.

We came around a bend in the road one day, to find someone shooting across the road.

-Destruction of terrain & wildlife –

We've seen the erosion caused by ATVs along streams and their tracks across wetlands,

We've seen motor boats running in circles at high speed in Swan Lake,

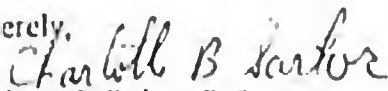
We've seen airboats creating large wakes as they speed up the channels

-Access points – Increased use puts pressure on nearby residents

The solution should include: Planning & on site management with, Increased enforcement of the rules, Education as to proper use of ATVs to prevent damage to the environment & wildlife, Education about safe shooting, Self policing by user groups, Increased user presence by those aware of problems, and Consideration by each user group of their impact on other groups.

We strongly support the idea of community groups, citizen users, the Mat-Su Borough and the DNR working together to plan for cooperative use in the area.

Sincerely,



Charlotte & Robert R Sartor

HC02 Box 7635

Palmer, AK 99645

4/9/2005

Cecily Fritz, Chair
Knik River Watershed Group
P. O. Box 195
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Dear Cecily:

I live on the south side of Knik River, directly across (~3 km) from Jim Creek Flats, and am writing to express my insistence for state funding of a planning process for lands in the Knik River watershed. Management plans and law enforcement are long overdue for this area.

Current management and law enforcement, or lack thereof, are far beyond being acceptable and are totally inappropriate for any part of the United States, especially in such a unique area of Alaska. The watershed and surrounding areas are incredible ecosystems with a diversity of wildlife and fishery habitats, other natural resources, and aesthetic scenery. Easy access for people to the area provides exceptional opportunity for recreational users, which results in both positive and negative effects. Positive effects to people include the pure enjoyment of nature, hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, and motorized use. Negative effects to people, especially residents such as myself, include noise pollution, vandalism, annoyance, diminished quality of life, and increased risk of damage to property, pets, and life. Simply put, many residents no longer feel safe to hike, hunt, fish, or even leave vehicles anywhere because of the legitimate fear of being harassed, shot, or returning to a vandalized vehicle.

Increased recreational use has resulted in prominent damage to the natural environment, which ironically, is what makes this area so incredibly unique. Littering, pollution, vandalism, poaching, unsafe and uncontrolled shooting, joyriding, vehicle abandonment, erosion, uncontrolled ATV and airboat usage, intentional and unintentional destruction of wildlife nests and habitats, and abandoned fires are becoming the "normal" activities, which are all unacceptable especially in such a unique and wonderful area. Something needs to be done now, before everything gets completely out of control in this "land of the lawless".

Because of exponential growth of the adjacent human population, this watershed is in dire need of long-term management plans to conserve the natural resources inherent to the area, including the unique and abundant wildlife populations and habitats. In the last decade, recreational use by people of this watershed has increased dramatically. Within the next decade, human population within the Mat-Su Borough is projected to grow to 100,000. Continued lack of management and consideration of public input will result in higher risks of impacts from human activities to wildlife distribution, populations, habitats, and ecosystems.

As a local resident, I insist on a management plan for this area IMMEDIATELY, as it is long overdue.

Scott A. Wolfe
Wildlife Biologist

Lynne Woods
P.O. Box 37
Sutton, Alaska 99674

March 28, 2005

Subject: Matanuska-Susitna Borough Resolution 05-22: Requesting State Funding for a Management Plan in the Knik River Watershed

Dear Ms. Woods,

Thank you very much for your support in introducing Resolution 05-22 at the up coming April 19, 2005 Matanuska-Susitna Borough Meeting. The Knik River Watershed has been a popular recreation area for many years. With the large expanding human population during the past 10 years in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley and in Anchorage, the area continues to receive significant increases of use without the benefit of a management plan. With so many people using the area, littering, pollution, vandalism, wildlife violations, unsafe shooting, and damage to the natural environment is taking its toll. Local residents are seeing a diminished quality of life from such large numbers of uncontrollable recreational users. A number of traditional users are becoming disenfranchised and no longer use the area due to serious conflicts with other user groups. A new management plan for the Knik River Watershed is well over due.

Senator Charlie Huggins and Representative Bill Stoltze conducted a Town Meeting at the Butte Elementary School Gymnasium on February 12, 2005 for area residents of Lazy Mountain, Butte, and Knik River Road. The agenda was an open discussion of area concerns. The Town Hall Meeting was well attended with approximately 100 people present. The concern that raised the most interest was that of recreational use in the Knik River Watershed. Numerous citizens brought up the many problems of recreational users and damage to important wildlife habitat. Several citizens spoke in support of an Alaska Department of Natural Resources Plan to manage the watershed. There was very little, if any, opposition to the plan expressed by citizens who spoke on the subject.

I often fly into the Knik River Watershed from Anchorage as it is only a 30 minute flight from Merrill Field. Visitors that fly with me enjoy the mountain scenery, wildlife and the many landing places on the gravel bars. I have noticed widespread changes in the past few years with larger numbers of users, increased wildlife disturbances, and increased damage to sensitive areas, especially the wetlands and sand dunes in the Jim Creek area.

I strongly support your effort along with all users groups, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and our legislators in working together to introduce and pass legislation that will provide the funding for a new management plan for the Knik River Watershed.

Wm. A. Quirk, III
William A. Quirk, III Pilot / Biologist
P.O. Box 212545 *Quirk, III*
Anchorage, Alaska 99521



Palmer Soil & Water Conservation District

259 S. Alaska Street, Palmer Alaska 99645
Phone: (907) 745-1441 • Fax: (907) 745-1443

CONSERVATION • DEVELOPMENT • SELF-GOVERNMENT

April 1, 2005

Cecily Fritz, Chair
Knik River Watershed Group
P. O. Box 195
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Dear Cecily:

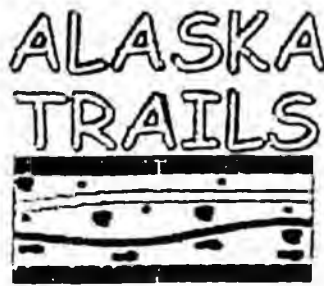
The Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District (PSWCD) supports development of an area-wide Alaska Department of Natural Resources/Mat-Su Borough management plan for public lands in the Knik River watershed.

Public lands in the watershed include coastal habitat, dunes, wetlands, several anadromous streams and upland habitat, and support a tremendous variety of wildlife resources and recreational opportunities. The area is just over a half hour drive from Anchorage, is easily accessible off the Glenn Highway and receives heavy recreational use from Mat-Su and Anchorage residents. Significantly increasing unmanaged use impacts watershed integrity, quality of life for nearby residents, wildlife resources, and user enjoyment of the area. We believe DNR and MSB planners have the experience and resources to conduct a public planning process that will accommodate a broad array of motorized and nonmotorized users, protect wildlife resources, and mitigate impacts on nearby residents.

We support your efforts, and those of other community groups, user groups, citizens, the Mat-Su Borough, Department of Natural Resources, and our legislators in working toward a management plan for the area. In addition, the PSWCD is very pleased with our successful application (in conjunction with the Knik River Watershed Group) to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Management Grant Program to conduct waterfowl surveys and wetlands inventory in the watershed this year. We look forward to this joint effort in providing current scientific data on the area to assist in the planning effort and to enhance KRWG development of educational tools.

Sincerely,

Bruce Bush, District Chair



PO Box 140264
Anchorage, AK
99514-0264
907-333-4442
www.alaska-trails.org

April 28, 2005

Cecily Fritz, Chair
Knik River Watershed Group
P. O. Box 195
Palmer, AK 99645

Dear Cecily:

Alaska Trails is very aware of the valuable habitat and the multitude of exceptional recreational opportunity on public lands in the Knik River watershed. We, too, are concerned about ongoing resource damage, the potential for long term impairment, and the diminished experiences for all users due to a marked upsurge in unmanaged use in recent years.

We support your efforts to call attention to the problems and to gain legislative support for an Alaska Department of Natural Resources planning process for the area especially if it involves on-site management presence. We believe the Knik River area should be managed for motorized and nonmotorized users, and that important wildlife and fishery resources should be protected.

We endorse your outreach efforts about the area values to the public and user groups. User education is important in achieving compatible, sustainable recreational uses as well as for developing support for a watershed management plan and, more importantly, its implementation.

Let us know how we can help in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jack".

Jack Mosby, President
Board of Directors

community planning



community building

Friends of Mat-Su

April 4, 2005

Knik River Watershed Group
Cecily Fritz
Palmer, AK

Dear Cecily:

Friends of Mat-Su (FoMS) supports a comprehensive planning effort between the Department of Natural Resources and the Mat-Su Borough for public lands in the Knik River Watershed.

Due to the rapid population growth and increased use by a wide variety of users from the Mat-Su Borough and Anchorage the lands within the Knik River Watershed are being negatively impacted. Nearby residents have diminished quality of life, responsible users have diminished experience, and natural resources are beginning to show damage from unmanaged use.

Comprehensive public planning can address issues such as: appropriate dedicated access points that are well marked and provide sanitation facilities to reduce impacts on residents and habitat; sustainable recreation/trails to reduce impacts of heavy use; assessment of wetland hydrology and value to area aquifer to protect water quality for everyone; assess importance of intact dunes as a water, wind and noise barrier for residents; identify areas requiring restoration; and provide better enforcement of game and all regulations that pertain to this area.

We strongly advocate that when funding is secured that it includes the support necessary for implementation and enforcement of the plan. Too often plans are created without this.

FoMS supports the efforts of the Knik River Watershed Group, and those of community groups, user groups, residents, the Mat-Su Borough, Department of Natural Resources, and our legislators in working toward realization of a management plan for the area and we look forward to participating in the process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathy Wells', written in a cursive style.

Kathy Wells
Executive Director

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
Palmer Field Office
1700 East Bogard Road, Suite 203
Wasilla, AK 99654-6563
(907) 373-6492 Ext. 111
(907) 373-7192 FAX
www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov

Cecily Fritz, Cha'r
Knik River Watershed Group
P. O. Box 195
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Dear Cecily:

I work for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as the District Conservationist Matanuska Susitna Service Center representing the Palmer District.

Our agency is aware of the valuable wetlands, coastal and upland habitats on public lands in the Knik River watershed and is concerned about resource damage and the potential for long term impairment due to a marked upsurge in recreation in recent years.

I have recently learned about your group's efforts to call attention to the problems through public and user group outreach, and to gain legislative support for a DNR management plan for the area. We agree that the Knik River area needs better management and commend the efforts of the Knik River Watershed Group to make this happen. Through my work I have been involved with several watershed planning efforts and may be able to offer your group some support and guidance. Please contact me to learn more about our work. Thank you again for your efforts, it is encouraging to see volunteers so motivated to keep our watersheds healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Schuman".

Michelle Schuman
Palmer District Conservationist

Alaska Frontier Trappers Association
PO Box 3208
Palmer, Alaska 99645

January 30, 2006

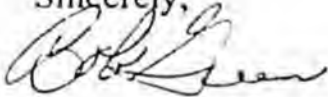
Dear Representative Stoltze and Senator Huggins,

The Alaska Frontier Trappers Association fully support House Bill 307 and Senate Bill 197.

The Knik River has been a favorite destination for all outdoor recreational users. Trappers have a history of trapping on the Knik River since the territorial days. One of the most talked about trappers was Tex Cobb. He trapped all over the South Central area and has been written about in such magazines as "Outdoor Life". Trappers are possibly the first to utilize the area as a means of support and are the first trail blazers.

With the passage of these bills as written, we will be assured of continued use without the threat of closure in the form of a State Park.

Sincerely,



Bob Green
President, Alaska Frontier Trappers Association

Emily Stancliff

From: Cliff Judkins [cjudkins@mtaonline.net]

Sent: Sunday, March 26, 2006 11:38 PM

To: Rep. Jay Ramras; Rep. Ralph Samuels; Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux; Rep. Harry Crawford; Rep. Mary Kapsner;
Rep. Jim Elkins; Rep. Kurt Olson

Subject: HB 307

Reps Jay Ramaras and Ralph Samuels Co-Chairs House Resources Committee and members-- The Alaska Boating Association appreciates your efforts to help outdoor enthusiasts protect their use of the Knik River drainage. This area has a long history of use by motorized outdoor recreationists. It is a great place to take friends and visitors for a close up look at the Knik Glacier. When I first began airboating the Jim Creek lake and slough system is where I learned to operate my boat. I have observed hundreds of families enjoying the river banks gravel and sand bars and the many 4 wheeler trails in the area. The earliest airboat use of the Jim Creek Lakes system that I have been able to document was by the Pudicombe family of Palmer in 1943. They used the area for duck hunting and fishing. I have harvested moose, silver salmon and Dolly Varden from the waters of Jim Creek. There are thousands of 4wheelers in the Anchorage/Mat Valley area and this is the only place that they have close by to use their machines. The area is a good alternative to the use of highway ROW's which produces constant complaints by adjacent residents and highway users due to the dust, noise and safety hazard involved. HB 307 will help to protect the existing uses and hopefully help to curtail the misuse and abuse that goes on along the River.

Again thank you for all of your hard work on this important legislation. Cliff Judkins, President, Alaska Boating Association

Emily Stancliff

From: Cliff Judkins [cjudkins@mtaonline.net]
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2006 12:11 AM
To: Rep. Jay Ramras; Rep. Ralph Samuels; Rep. Jim Elkins
Subject: HB 307

Dear Co-Chairs Rep Ramras and Samuels and Members House Resources Committee, I am writing to you as the President of the Alaska Boating Association to urge you to pass HB 307 to create the Knik River Public Use Area. The Knik River Drainage has been used for many years by motorized outdoor recreationists. It is not unusual to see several hundred families and groups using the Knik River, the Jim Creek Lake System and the many 4wheeler trails in the valley on any summer week end. Airboaters have used the River to take family, friends and visitors to get an up close look at the Knik Glacier and to fish and hunt in the Jim Creek Lakes System and the Knik River. The earliest documented use by airboats of Jim Creek that I can find was 1943 by the Pudicomb family of Palmer. They used the area for hunting and fishing. This area is ideally located to accommodate the thousands of Anchorage and Valley motorized recreationists looking for a place close by to go for the day or the week end. There is continual use of the gravel and sand bars, 4wheeler trails and water ways by hundreds of people every week end. Where else can they go? There are thousands of motorized recreationists with in fifty miles of the Knik River. The need a location that they know they will not be shut out of by groups that do not like their chosen method of recreating. HB 307 will assure the traditional uses of the Knik River drainage will be protected. Cliff Judkins, President, Alaska Boating Association.

To: Representative Jay Ramras, Co-Chairman
Re: Public Hearing on the Knik River Public Use Area
Date: March 27, 2006

Summary: Statement of Opposition to HB307 and the redraft, CS HB307A. Due to time restraints at the hearing, I may be unable to voice my concerns. Below is my statement of record regarding the Knik River Public Use Area legislation.

My name is Scott Wolfe and I am a south Knik River resident.

I wish to thank the legislatures and the public for their significant efforts for attempting to develop legislation for addressing concerns and conflicts that have developed because of repeated, irresponsible use of the Knik River area by recreational users. However, HB307 and the redraft, CS HB307A sounds as if it were written to perpetuate and enhance the problems instead of develop solutions.

For over 20 years, residents have expressed concerns to government personnel and enforcement officials about the following problems caused by overuse and abuse:

1. Burned and abandoned vehicles
2. Uncontrolled gunfire
3. Uncontrolled motorized use
4. Erosion, dust, and damage caused by ORVs
5. Pollution (Ground, air, water, noise)
6. Abandoned campfires
7. Poaching
8. Wildlife and fish harassment and disturbance
9. Trespassing
10. Alcohol and drug use
11. Incompatible uses (e.g.; airboats on Jim Creek adjacent to Jim Lake while canoes are present, lead shot in waterways)

This area is truly remarkable and provides breeding, summer, and winter habitats for moose, Dall's sheep, mountain goat, black and brown bear, lynx, wolf, wolverine, coyote, fox, weasel, snowshoe hare, American beaver, river otter, Arctic ground squirrel, red squirrel, passerine and upland game birds, shorebirds, raptors, gulls, ravens, over 20 species of ducks, trumpeter and tundra swans, and geese. Jim Creek, the biological heart of the ecosystem, is historically the 2nd largest recreational fishery in Knik Arm for silver salmon and, along with other creeks, lakes, and wetlands in the region, contain good numbers of red salmon, dolly varden, rainbow trout, and whitefish. As a wildlife biologist, it's hard for me to imagine that this place does not have active management, enforcement, and the funding necessary to sustain it for future generations.

Another astonishing thing to me is that target shooters have their rights completely protected in this proposed legislation but legitimate, responsible waterfowl hunters must use steel shot because of widespread research that shows lead toxicity to the entire wetland food chain. Has anyone tested the fish they catch at Jim Creek Flats for lead toxicity? As an avid hunter, I no longer hunt in this area because of noise disturbance, human to animal density, and the fear of being shot by target shooters, joy riders, or partiers. This ruins the hunting experience in this incredible habitat for wildlife and is a prime example of incompatible uses.

So, obviously to everyone involved, something needs to be done to curtail the destructive activities that have existed for far, far, far too long. Nevertheless, I strongly oppose HB307 and the redraft, CS HB307A because it seems to perpetuate and build further upon the reckless, irresponsible uses that have caused so much damage and got us to this point of

no return. I presented a full realm of objections, identified inadequacies, and suggested improvements to HB307 during the first public testimony at the Butte Elementary School, so all of that should be readily available on public record. I will not reiterate a step-by-step walk through the shortcomings of the proposed legislation but strongly recommend reviewing everyone's recommendations, making a much better attempt at improving the legislation, and allowing a more extensive public review process before approving any legislation for this critical area.

After the 2 public hearings, it should be very clear that much opposition still exists over what is our "best" alternative for managing the incredible wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities in this area. The redraft, CS HB307A doesn't even come close to addressing concerns expressed by many long-time residents or most speakers at either hearing. Land use decisions and a carefully thought out management plan are integral for developing a sustainable approach at wise-use for dealing with cumulative effects of an exponentially growing population.

Yes, the State must act on this ever-growing problem. However, HB307 isn't the answer. The Knik River area, and its residents deserve much, much better. I've heard ATVer's say, "hey, this is Alaska, where we can do whatever we want whenever we want" - "If you don't like it, just move!" This legislation paves the way for this illogical thinking in many of our back yards. Because no previous legislation has been developed specifically for the area, this is now the opportunity to pave the way for wise- and sustainable- use, instead of the "take what you can, give nothing back" attitude so prevalent with many current users and in HB307 (and the redraft). So, please reject this current legislative attempt to allow motorized users to continue taking over and affecting everyone else through disrespectful, irresponsible, and destructive use of these incredibly valuable natural resources.

Thank you.

Scott A. Wolfe
HC02 Box 7686-J
Palmer, Alaska 99645
Telephone: (907) 746-8008
Email: graywolfe@gci.net

To: Representative Jay Ramras, Co-Chairman
Re: Public Hearing on the Knik River Public Use Area
Date: March 27, 2006

Summary: Statement of Opposition to HB307 and the redraft, CS HB307A. Due to time restraints at the hearing, I may be unable to voice my concerns. Below is my statement of record regarding the Knik River Public Use Area legislation.

My name is Carrie Gray Wolfe and I am a south Knik River resident.

I oppose HB307 and the redraft, CS HB307A. I cannot fully address my opposition in 3-minutes; therefore I will concentrate on the biases, inadequate restrictions, and the inability to protect our fish and wildlife as the legislation is currently written.

The legislation is heavily biased towards off-road vehicle use. This bias is at the expense of most other user groups. For example, Page 1, Lines 13-14, states: to "Provide an area for the public to enjoy the full spectrum of public uses including maintenance and enhancement of off-road vehicle opportunities." And Page 3, Lines 11-16, is dedicated solely to the protection and rights of off road users. Where is the language that specifically includes the "recognition" of existing areas of non-motorized users, the "accommodations" of areas for non-motorized use, and the "maintenance and enhancement" of non-motorized trails and waterways? Page 2, Lines 7-11, state that "the commissioner may designate incompatible uses" but Page 3, Lines 5-10, state, "The commissioner shall allow the...area to be used for activities that include all-terrain vehicles, etc..." As written, there are no "incompatible uses." What if one or more of the stated activities is determined harmful to the perpetuation and enhancement of general public recreation, the public enjoyment of fish and wildlife, or the protection and maintenance of wildlife habitat? (Page 1, Lines 4-12)

Page 2, Line 29, and Page 3, Lines 2-4, fails to adequately address target shooting. It states, "The commissioner may not restrict the use of weapons...except in locations...that the use of weapons constitutes a threat to public safety." Where is it not a threat? Weapons are being fired into hillsides and across waterways with homes, residents, and recreational users on the opposite sides. Reckless shooting is destroying wildlife and vegetation. The fish and birds may be at greater risk to lead poisoning from excessive, non-hunting shooting practices. Local residents have to listen to weapons being discharged up to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We have no relief from the noise pollution. Many residents and outdoor enthusiasts avoid using the area in fear for their safety.

I ask you to reject this legislation. There are alternative solutions such as writing a new, non-biased bill or creating a Knik River Valley State Recreation Area. A State Recreation Area (SRA) under AS 41.21 will accommodate all user groups, support effective law enforcement, provide for a public planning process, and abide by the Susitna Area Plan. Two groups in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley already exist to help assist with the development of a SRA. This includes a state park Citizen's Advisory Board comprised of multi-users and The Friends of States Parks that provides supplemental park funding.

Thank you.

Carrie A. Gray Wolfe
HC02 Box 7686-J
Palmer, Alaska 99645
Telephone: (907) 746-8008
Email: graywolfe@gci.net

Mapmakers Alaska

From: "Carrie" <carrie@mapmakersalaska.com>
 To: "Mapmakers Alaska" <BritLively@mapmakersalaska.com>
 Cc: <carriewang@acsalaska.net>
 Sent: Wednesday, August 17, 2005 4:15 PM
 Subject: re: public hearing tomorrow (8/18)

T
 HB 307
 To: Rep. Jay Ramras

If you would like you can print and take the following to the public hearing tomorrow, it can either be read aloud or given as such.

The proposed House Bill No. 307 is a poorly written piece of legislation. It appears to have been hastily put together and is self contradictory (see Items (1), (3), (4), & (7) in Sec 41.23.180 - Purpose).

Section 41.23.190 - Management lacks foresight of provisions for planning and sustainable use, which again is contradictory to the stated purposes (Item (2) Section 41.23.180) of the proposed bill.

Section 41.23.200 - Incompatible Uses, is also in contradiction with the stated purpose of the bill. Incompatible uses would be those that prevent all or any users from using the area, which might occur in some areas in order to adhere to the purposes of this proposed bill.

This proposed bill indicates not effort in the area of proper planning, management, or public process, to incorporate ideas from all user groups as well as scientific data. It promotes un-restrained overuse with disregard for public safety and management enforcement. Un-restricted firearm use in a public area (outside standard hunting use) is ludicrous, if someone wants to target shoot there are firing ranges for that purpose. That the authors of this proposed bill would include such provisions shows them to have little regard for human life.

I would hope that this bill is withdrawn and replaced with one that reflects a need for planning and management to be carried out by all user groups in accordance to a management plan created with the help of DNR and other available resources.

Carrie Wang
 Anchorage AK
 8/17/05

Carrie Wang
 MAPMAKERS ALASKA
 119 South Alaska Street, Palmer AK, 99645
 (907) 245-1194

Emily Stancliff

From: Kim Bergey [blossoms@mtaonline.net]
Sent: Sunday, March 26, 2006 10:57 PM
To: Rep. Jay Ramras
Cc: Rep.Bill.Stoltze[Representative_Bill_Stoltze@legis.state.ak.us]
Subject: Knik River Public Use Area

Rep Ramras

I was told you are the chairman of the committee conducting hearings on HB 307. I am a resident of the Butte and I live next to one of the heaviest atv traffic areas. I have two concerns with the proposed legislation.

It is very important not to limit law enforcement in the area. We should not limit ourselves to only AST as the only law enforcement agency which can have jurisdiction in the area. It would be tragic if all the work that has gone into the area in terms of law enforcement be undone because AST redeployed and no longer had the manpower to service the area and no other agency is allowed fill the void.

The wording of the bill implies that the state currently has facilities in the area when it mentions picnic areas, boat launches etc. There are no such facilities on state land and very limited in the area in general. I read wording which states the commissioner can limit activities in these areas, but I read nothing about the commissioner being able designate any areas for the above mentioned purposes. The commissioner needs to have the mandate to propose areas for these facilities and seek a means to fund them.

Thank you for reading my comments.

Thomas Bergey
Butte resident

FAX TO REPRESENTATIVE RAMRAS
REGARDING HB307 (KNIK PUBLIC USE AREA)

March 26, 2006

Representative Ramras,

Please consider holding HB307 until it is rewritten to include some regulatory language so that it can be truly a MULTI- USE PUBLIC USE AREA. As things have been written and with a relatively recent (past 5 yr. Trend) Non-motorized users are being pressured out for safety and other practical reasons and those of us who live in this area and are truly multi-use users who are careful with the environment, feel violated and restricted in our use.

My family has lived in, and/or used this area for 40 years. We own and use snow machines, 4 -wheelers, horses, we ski, hike and canoe. In the past we have used the river bed and trails as far as the Glacier for horses and 3-wheelers....and have canoed and used small row boats in Jim Lake even going on down the creek to the river....we skied right along with snow machines etc.and would ride our horses year round on the trails...The motorized user of the past was quite considerate and were fewer in number. .Now this is becoming dangerous and difficult due to outsiders on motorized vehicles who travel very fast, tear up the trails (often deliberately trying to see how deep they can get in and still get out) the creek crossings have become so muddied and widened as to be dangerous on horses and impossible on foot or with bicycles etc. Skiiers , horseback riders and dog teams are no match for a high speed powerful motorized vehicle. Shooting is often in peoples BACKYARDS.... and is excessive and on high frequency trails and may include automatic weapons....MACHINE GUNS DO NOT BELONG IN A PUBLIC USE AREA.....THEY HAVE BECOME FREQUENT. NOR DO THEY HAVE A PLACE IN A RESIDENTIAL AREA.

Since the motorized users have not been regulating themselves and are often showing so much inconsideration to residents of the Knik Basin, the environment and to other users, I believe there will need to be some regulation and some form of enforcement acknowledged by the bill. Please consider holding this bill in committee until it can be changed in order to protect the true MULTI- USE INTENT. And also to protect the residents of this area and the environment itself.

Thank you, Margaret Runser (17005 E. Dorismae Cir., Palmer, Ak.99645)



HB 307

Representative Ray Rauras

Fax: 907-465-2070

"Ken-Doll" mercenary wannabe and buddies were observed feeling quite manly - and proud of it - defending themselves against a line of attacking trees across Bodenburg Creek, March 18, 2006. Some of the trees were hit, but all were still standing after a 30-minute assault. (Gregory Nilsson photo).

Ladies and Gentlemen: Thank you for trying to find a way for safe recreation in our community with HB 307. Have you considered the cost to the public? It is my understanding that the State of Alaska and local residents will pay all the cost, as we have been for the past 25 some years. Users are not expected to pay to go to Knik River Public Use Area.

I belong to Butte Area Residents Civic Organization. Most of us are in favor of Knik River Valley State Recreation area under AS 41.21. Why?

The simplicity of our draft legislation because of its statutory authorities gives strong responsibilities to DNR, Fish & Game, DEC, Dept of Public Safety, and a 15 member advisory committee from multiple user groups. It will start keeping residents and visitors safe as soon as our legislation becomes law, without having to go to the supreme court first to determine bailable offenses. That's all been done. You may be surprised, but this is the least costly option to utilize these public lands for recreation.

Public Use Areas don't charge user fees because such a designation denotes minimal management paid for with public funds. It is not fair for residents nor all Alaskans to keep underwriting emergency response, fire, State Troopers and to pay for the full range of services and management expected by the recreating public in Knik River while residents suffer the slumming down of their community from the overflow of recreation - noise, trash, dust, fecal contamination, vandalism, and ongoing danger from fire, shooting and fireworks. Why should we have to pay all the costs for the fun of a few, be they motorized or quiet users - while the Mat-Su School District doesn't have the funds to pay the decent wage their custodians deserve?

In a State Recreation Area under AS 41.21 users are expected to share in the cost of services in exchange for safe multiple use recreation in a healthy environment, rather than depend on free public services (except maybe for adjoining residents of limited means.) We were told that nationally and state-wide, user fees pay for 30% of the maintenance and operation. If caring residents are happy with the kind of recreation area they deserve to have in their community especially if such a designation gives them new economic opportunities, they are fully prepared to help seek funding from private and federal sources to contribute toward infrastructure, maintenance, restoration, upkeep and policing in the Knik River State Recreation Area.

Isn't the reduced cost a great incentive for you to support the Knik River Valley State Recreation Area rather than a Public Use Area? - Let's talk

Gregory Nilsson, Butte Property Owner and Resident
Co-Founder, Butte Area Residents Civic Organization
Mail: 259 South Alaska Street, Palmer, AK 99645, Phone: W: 907-694-7124, C: 1-907-227-1628

March 22, 2006

Honorable Jay Ramras - HB 307
Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska
FAX: 907-465-2070

Dear Representative Ramras,

My name is Kurt Marshall, my family has been in Alaska since 1934, when my grandparents settled in the Butte area of Palmer, as colonists.

Our family is outdoors and recreationally oriented and while we would like to continue using the Jim Creek, Knik glacier area as a family retreat, the increase of family danger due to vandalism, gunfire and chaotic behavior prevents our continuing to do that.

Because my family still owns a 171-acre farm near the Butte, I am very concerned about the continued degradation of the area. We have watched in frustration and horror as uncaring individuals have claimed the area as their own to systematically destroy.

We urge you as the chairman of the House Resources Committee to act quickly to enable the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop a short term education and enforcement plan to head off a situation which is rapidly deteriorating as the days warm and summer recreation increases.

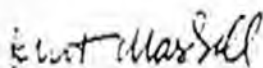
I am aware of numerous environmental studies and land use plans for the area, among them the Susitna Watershed Plan; there are numerous solutions offered therein.

High among my family's concerns is the reckless abandon of many ATV riders tearing up the beautiful countryside with apparent disregard for those who enjoy an unspoiled trail and quiet time.

It saddens me to see what has happened to this beautiful valley. Clearly, as the Valley population grows and more Anchorage residents find the Valley as a recreational area, the impact and pressure on the remaining wilderness area will continue to grow as will the abuse.

Our family has hoped that the ongoing destruction would eventually gain the attention of land managers who would act to address the critical problems here. We have asked at public meetings for an area plan that could sustain multiple use with a strong emphasis on law enforcement and public safety. Ideally as a special recreational area under Alaska Statute 41.21. However, a bill introduced on behalf of the motorized community by Rep. Bill Stoltze and Sen. Charlie Huggins essentially hands this area over to ORV recreation.

Sincerely,



Kurt Marshall
(907)351-2722
kmarshall@harrisak.com

cc: Senator Lyda Green

PO Box 766
Talkeetna, AK 99676
August .., 2005.

Senator Charlie Huggins
Alaska State Senate

via e-mail: Senator_Charlie_Huggins@legis.state.ak.us

Dear Senator Huggins:

Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend the meeting tomorrow (Thursday) regarding the Knik Watershed. Here is what I had prepared to say at the meeting/hearing.

To put it bluntly, the proposed legislation, SB 197, is not in the broad public interest, and it is poorly crafted

Basically, SB 197, and its companion HB 307, give *carte blanche* to ORV use. It subordinates not only all other uses, but also resource integrity, to that mandate. It is apparent to me that the writers of this legislation did not look at the problems that are occurring in the area today, they did not seek to address those problems, they did not identify the important resource and recreation values that this area offers, they did not establish a vision of what the public would like to see this place look like in the future, and they did not consider how to achieve that vision. Instead, they wrote special interest legislation governing use of lands that are owned by all of us.

So, what is going to suffer? The fish and wildlife resources and the use of the area by anybody who isn't on an ORV or out hunting or target shooting. I don't see anything in the draft that sets aside areas for quiet or non-motorized recreation, for wildlife protection (even wetland areas aren't protected), that provides for public safety, or that seriously considers sustainability.

And, I believe that the bill is poorly crafted not only because it lacks a vision that reflects the broad public interest, but because it contains incompatible stipulations. For example, it is impossible to mandate unlimited ORV use while at the same time protecting and maintaining "migratory waterfowl nesting areas, habitats for moose..." It is likewise, in my view, impossible for the Department of Fish and Game to engage in "rehabilitation, enhancement, and development of fish and wildlife habitat" under a mandate to accommodate unlimited ORV use and not restrict (even to a limited or temporary degree) "lawful fishing, hunting, or trapping rights."

To properly serve the public interest and to preserve the resource and recreational opportunities for future generations, it is necessary to provide a balance among fish and wildlife protection, public safety, segregated non-motorized use areas, and motorized and hunting areas. I urge you, Senator, and Representative Stoltze, to look at the problems that are occurring today, to look at the existing and potential resource and recreational values, to establish a future vision, to determine how to achieve that vision, and to write legislation that accommodates and protects a broad variety of public uses, protects wildlife resources, provides for management and public safety, and, most important, makes the management of this watershed sustainable so that it can be enjoyed by all in the future.

Sincerely,
[signed]
John Strassenburgh

With respect to HB307/SB 197 An Act Creating the Knik River Public Use Area.

I support Public Use or Recreational Area legislation if the current legislation is amended or new legislation is created to include the following:

Any legislation must mention multiple use: nonmotorized as well as motorized use.

Commitment to fund on ground enforcement of existing laws for safe and lawful use of the area. This is imperative not only for the safety of the nearby residents but also for the enforcement of existing regulations.

A planning process is needed that deals with the special problems confronting the different ecosystems within the Knik River Watershed. For example, shooting and car burning on the Knik River floodplain, the increasing trails and damages to the wetlands, new driveways (on Eklutna Land) to get trucks and trailers out of Mud Lake are a few examples. Some issues overlap different areas within the watershed but their solutions may differ. The public planning process would help sort that out.

Sanitation issues must be dealt with. I am tired of going to Jim Lake and finding piles of feces and toilet paper right out in the open. No attempt to dig a cathole. No respect for other users. During the spring cleanup of the area we will find diapers and more toilet paper, not to mention the tons of other garbage. Somehow this needs to be dealt with.

The language that eliminates any future establishment of State Park must be removed. The time may not be right now to establish a State Park for even part of the area. However the time may come that Park status will be the only way to maintain the viability of the area. We do not have a crystal ball that tells us how the population growth and increased use in this area will affect these lands.

Please refer to language used in other Public Use Legislation such as the Nelchina Public Use legislation to obtain wording that is more inclusive of all users and better describes the management of incompatible uses.

In order to ensure the continued viability of this area all users must be drawn into the development of a plan. The more the public is involved, the more investment we will all have to ensure the area is treated respectfully and will remain for recreational use in the future. **Please put the public into the PUBLIC USE legislation by including them in a planning process**

Testimony at the Knik River Public Use Area public hearing on Thursday October 20, 2005 by Nancy Moore.

January 12, 2006

Representative Gatto,

I'm writing about the proposed legislation to create a Knik River Public Use Area. As a wildlife ecologist and former management biologist for ADF&G in Palmer, I know the area, and the concerns of various users, very well. I have traveled in this area by foot, snowmachine, 4-wheeler, bike, canoe and airplane, and I support our ability to continue trapping, hunting, fishing and recreating in the area.

It appears the proposed bill lacks a few key elements, without which it may serve to divide the various user groups, not unite them to best protect this great area.

I would like to see the PUA legislation include provisions to:

1. Establish a thorough planning process that includes all user groups and evaluates all trails and activities/uses (i.e. does NOT automatically grandfather all trails and uses);
2. Allow for continued access by motorized vehicles, but only in areas where their use does not degrade wetland habitats or disturb wildlife during critical seasons;
3. Establish areas for non-motorized use;
4. Increase enforcement efforts to enhance human safety and protect sensitive habitats;
5. Establish a way to manage target shooting to protect users and area residents; and,
6. Prohibit air boat use of important waterfowl, salmon-rearing and moose foraging areas.

This is a fantastic area, but it is currently being degraded by the actions of inconsiderate users. And unfortunately, conflicts between user groups, and between users and residents, continue to escalate. The wildlife and habitat values in the Knik River are such that this area should really be a state game refuge. Given that it has not received that consideration, I urge you to strengthen the PUA bill with the aforementioned items.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Masteller, M. Sc.

P. O. Box 965
Palmer, AK 99645

My name is Carrie Wolfe. I am a resident of the Knik River Watershed.

The current 'Knik River Public Use Area' legislation proposal needs to be amended!

The legislation (1.) is completely biased towards motorized vehicle use at the expense of most other user groups.

As the legislation is now written, it is only maintaining the *status quo*, which is unacceptable. Otherwise, why would we be here tonight?

How does legislation (2.) hope to "perpetuate and enhance" general public recreational use the way it is now written? Increasing trails and access will not solve the conflicts between user groups. We should be thinking of restricting access not increasing access. Increasing access will only cause further damage to critical wildlife habitats.

The legislation (3.) does not allow the DNR the ability to adequately manage non-hunting shooting. To restrict target shooting only in high use areas is not enough.

This past weekend, I felt like I was living in a war zone. People were shooting automatic & semi-automatic weapons and something that sounded like a canon. This went on all day and all night. The noise pollution was sometimes deafening, especially combined with the ORVs, airboats, & snowmachine noise. Noise pollution has greatly detracted from my quality of life in the Knik River area.

The legislation (4.) does not mention the need for or provide the means for law enforcement or managers. Laws written on a piece of paper or on a sign have been, and will continue to be, disregarded.

For example, 60-some residents reported unlawful activities in July alone. How many warnings, tickets and arrests were cited due to those phone calls? And, how many other citizens decided not to bother reporting an incident because past history has shown that law enforcement is unable to arrive in time? Funding and support must be provided for on-the-ground law enforcement and managers to uphold the law. And, by the legislation maintaining the *status quo*, managers will be unable to maintain and protect critical wildlife habitat in the future.

The legislation (5.) states that the commissioner will be responsible for management of the recreation area. Do the current & future commissioners have the knowledge, skills, and capability to make wise land use decisions?

Professionals such as biologists, land planners, engineers, and hydrologists are needed to make sound land management plans.

Solutions are needed and a few ideas include:

- Providing adequate funding for law enforcement and land managers.
- Creating a telephone hotline to report crimes.
- Restricting access to critical wildlife habitat areas from motorized use.
- To lessen conflicts between all user groups, we could adopt a time share plan with ORVs allowed every other weekend or perhaps 2-3 weekdays and 1 weekend day.
- Airboats should not be allowed access into the critical wetland habitats, restricting use to the Knik River & other designated areas not only to preserve critical waterfowl nesting areas and salmon spawning areas but also to ensure the safety of humans in small watercraft.
- Horse power-limits or electric motorized watercrafts could be allowed access in wetlands along with all types of non-motorized watercraft.
- Snowmachines should only be allowed when there is 12-inches of snow or more.
- Restricting non-hunting shooting not just in high use areas.

Restricting or limiting access is not popular. But if we want to ensure the future enjoyment for all user groups and local residents... we cannot allow to let activities continue, as they are now, especially with the estimated future increase in human population of the Mat-Su Valley.



March 24, 2006

To: Representative Jay Ramras, Co-chair, House Resources Committee

Re: House Bill CS 307 "An Act Creating the Knik River Public Use Area"

Dear Representative Ramras:

Representative Bill Stoltze released committee substitute legislation on March 15, 2006.

We believe the legislation should be further improved and submit the following comments for your consideration during the scheduled hearing on Monday, March 27, 2006. Our proposed changes are underlined and in bold. I hope you also have the opportunity to review the contents of the material packet we mailed you earlier in the session related to HB 307.

A: Include nonmotorized use: Page 1 Line 14: "Provide for the public to enjoy the full spectrum of public uses including off-road vehicle and nonmotorized recreation determined to be compatible with (1) and (2) of this section."

B: Expand the public process page 2 line 7: Include workshops and public hearings, or establishment of a citizen's advisory board. This is the best means to ensure that resident safety and quality of life concerns are addressed.

C: Fix the wording on incompatible use: Page 3 line 8: "allow the Knik River Public Use Area to be used for activities, as compatible with purposes, to include all-terrain vehicles..."

D. Provide for wise use of ORVs: Delete item (2) page lines 11-16 In Incompatible Uses. This section circumvents the required public planning process. ORV use is ensured in Section 41.23.180 (Purposes page 1 line 14).

E. Ensure timely enforcement prior to adoption of a bailable offense schedule: Add intent language directing the commissioner of Public Safety, the commissioner of Fish and Game and other regulatory agencies to enforce existing laws in the area described in 41.23.230.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Cecily Fritz, Chair

To sustain the Knik River Watershed to ensure use and enjoyment for current and future generations

<http://knikriver.org> info@knikriver.org

Group and Individual Letters

April 8, 2005

To: All Legislators for this area

Copy:
Cecily Fritz, Chair
Knik River Watershed Group
P.O. Box 195
Palmer, AK. 99645

I implore you to support state legislative funding of a DNR/Mat-Su Borough planning process for public lands in the Knik River watershed.

I write to you because I feel an urgent need to act in regards to the Jim Creek-Swan Lake and Pavillion areas. I live almost directly across the Pavillion area. I fear for my safety and the safety of my family many nights during the week and especially on the weekend. I lay awake full of adrenalin from hearing loud explosions, high-powered rifle shots going in all directions, illegal and careless drag racing, shouting and more shots into the early morning hours.

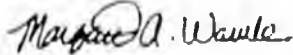
I am aware that that the Butte area has a bad reputation and comes off as an embarrassment for the Mat-Su valley to bear. I just don't understand why it has to stay this way? I worry that Anchorage and Juneau doesn't take the valley folks as seriously as they should because of these type of activities (naming us valley trash leaves little doubt).

Yet, there are many folks who live here, that take pride in where they live (I am one of them), keep their place neat and clean, work hard everyday and pay property taxes. We expect to have a safe place to live, where we don't have to worry about getting shot from a stray bullet or getting killed by driving too close to a meth drug deal.

We must devise a way to STOP the reckless shooting, stolen vehicles, vandalism, pollution of vibrant hunting and fishing resources and endangerment of residents that live in an area who worry about inebriated folks starting fires that could potentially destroy their homes.

Approving funding for a plan will start a long overdue step in working to find solutions to this problem. I am willing, as a resident of this area, to volunteer my time to help clean up, patrol---whatever it takes to help out in this matter.

Finally, I appreciate the work that you do, I am sure it is not easy...thank you for your time and for your efforts regarding this matter.

Sincerely, 
Margaret A. Wamke
P.O. Box 4709
Palmer, AK. 99645

March 30, 2005

Dear Senators and Representatives and Planners,

As one of your constituents and a concerned resident, I ask you to support funding for a DNR/Mat-Su Borough plan for the Knik Watershed area.

I believe it is time to focus our attention on this before we come to regret it by allowing these abuses to continue virtually un-checked. I know the State Troopers have been on increase in the area and have begun to make more arrests. We have a long way to go though towards enforcement of the area and we should support the troopers who risk their life by forming a plan, getting the community together and backing them up, so that the impact will be swifter, we can catch more criminals in the act and possibly save a life. The life could be of someone's kid of a neighbor or friend. Please think about that.

As a hunter and fisherman, I am concerned and enraged that my rights are being infringed upon by people that have no responsibility when it comes to guns and tearing up the habitat of the resources that my family and I depend on for food. It looks bad for hunters, gun owners and outdoorsmen, when these irresponsible people shoot in any and all directions whenever they feel like it. When I hear people talk about the Jim Creek (people that don't live in the area or depend on it for resources and unrivaled beauty) area it is viewed as a place to do whatever you want, whenever you want because no one cares or stops you!

This is my backyard and the consequences of that "do whatever you want" thinking results in mass shooting of automatic weapons night and day, vehicles stolen and vandalized all the way from Anchorage and even from the residents in the area nearby to Jim Creek, during the dry months drunk visitors set campfires when there is a ban on any fires period and sometimes take gasoline spill it on the ground, connecting the campfires, very close to the forest, vehicles set on fire and dumped in the creek, shot up with lead and this is where some of the prime fishing areas are! I wonder how much lead is in the water? I think we should be better stewards of the land in this area so that our resources will continue to be healthy and abundant for hunting and fishing and all the outdoor activities people enjoy. At least if we had a planning process all the people could weigh in from the area and we can send a message out the public that this kind of idiotic abuses won't be tolerated and that we are serious about putting an end to this recklessness. Maybe there would be a way to form a combined user group patrol to scout the area and report to the troopers.

I am looking forward to getting your feedback. I appreciate your attention to this matter. Thank you very much.

Truly,


Brad R. Subers
17495 E. Sullivan Ave.
P.O. box 4709
Palmer, AK 99645
subers@pobox.mtaonline.net

April 4, 2005

Honorable Lyda Green, Senator
Alaska Legislature, Juneau Alaska

Dear Senator Green,

My name is Kurt Marshall, my family has been in Alaska since 1934, when my grandparents settled in the Butte area of Palmer, as colonists.

Our family is outdoors and recreationally oriented and while we would like to continue using the Jim creek, Knik glacier area as a family retreat, the increase of family danger due to vandalism, gunfire and chaotic behavior prevents our continuing to do that. Because my family still owns a 171-acre farm near the Butte, I am very concerned about the continued degradation of the area. We have watched in frustration and horror as the uncaring individuals have claimed the area as their own to systematically destroy.

We urge you as our representative to act quickly to enable the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop a short term education and enforcement plan to head off a situation which is rapidly deteriorating as the days warm and summer recreation increases.

I am aware of numerous environmental studies and land use plans for the area, among them the Susitna Watershed Plan; there are numerous solutions offered therein.

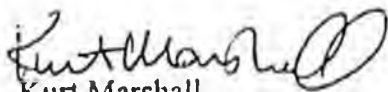
High among my family's concerns is the reckless abandon of many ATV riders tearing up the beautiful countryside with apparent disregard for those who enjoy an unspoiled trail and quiet time.

It saddens me to see what has happened to this beautiful valley. Clearly, as the Valley population grows and more Anchorage residents find the Valley as a recreational area, the impact and pressure on the remaining wilderness area will continue to grow as will the abuse.

Please, I urge you to help.

You have my family's strong support in resolving this enormous issue.

Sincerely,



Kurt Marshall

(907) 351-2722

kmarshall@harrisak.com

Emily Stancliff

From: Butte Area Residents [resource@buttealaska.org]
Sent: Monday, February 20, 2006 12:53 AM
To: Rep. Jay Ramras
Subject: HB307 Knik River Public Use Area
Attachments: ButteAreaResidentsFlier.jpg

Dear Representative Ramras,

HB307/SB197 for the creation of a Knik River Public Use Area (AS 41.23) was referred to your Resources committee after it was introduced last year by Representative Bill Stoltze on behalf Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance/Alaska Outdoors Council (AOAA/AOC).

As long-time residents of Butte in the Knik River Valley, we fear that this legislation, particularly under AS 41.23, will continue the degradation of our quality of life and prohibit economic development opportunities which other communities enjoy, who live in similar spectacular world-class environments close to major population centers as we do.

The reason for this email is to let you know of our hope that you will consider alternative legislation to HB307 rather than passing or amending the bill as introduced. We believe that the creation of a Knik River Valley State Recreation Area under AS 41.21 will work to everyone's benefit and will be the most practical and cost-effective solution. I shall bring a briefing packet to your office and the other members of the Resource Committees of both houses early this week when I shall be in Juneau for a legislative fly-in with a trade association I belong to.

Our packet will include a legal analysis of the deficiencies of HB307, draft legislation for the creation of a "Knik River Valley State Recreation Area," and exhibits which, of course, are intended to convince you how we have increasingly suffered under an admittedly sacrificial management regime. A Public Use Area under 41.23, even with amendments, just does not have the statutory teeth to give us an open public process for multiple use planning, nor give us good resource management or most important of all, effective law enforcement. AS 41.21 does. A State Recreation Area designation would also follow the mandate of the Susitna Area Plan.

You may ask, "why don't you go to your own legislators?" Please be assured: "we did." After meetings with DNR and the Mat-Su Borough, we had asked Rep. Stoltze and Sen. Huggins to try and appropriate \$250,000 to DNR so they could prepare an open, public management plan with no preconceived idea of any preferred legislation, but based on past studies, realistic science and user input. Mr. Stoltze was aware of our several years' futile efforts to educate the public and towards a cooperative management agreement among the public land owners.

Instead, Sen Huggins and Rep Stoltze introduced, on behalf of and written by AOC/AOAA, the HB307/SB197 legislation. Several of us have tried to contact Rep. Stoltze since repeatedly with no results. Sen. Huggins has publicly declared war on us at a AOAA/AOC rally in favor of unlimited, free-for-all motorized access.

There are so many issues and problems where 3-minute per person testimony during committee hearings can not even come close to convey the problems. May we therefore suggest that as part of your hearings and deliberations on SB197 you invite representatives from Alaska State Troopers, AST Fish & Wildlife Enforcement, Mat-Su Borough Code Compliance, Mat-Su Borough Land Management, Mat-Su Borough Emergency Services, including Butte Fire Chief, those DNR land manager representatives who have at one time solicited incident reports, such as Mr. Adam Smith and Dave Kelly, DEC representatives, DNR Habitat representatives and Alaska State Forestry. These are the people who are able to convey the extent of the problems here and their associated costs to the State of Alaska and to the public.
Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Please call or write if we can be of assistance.

Best regards,

2/21/2006

From: Butte Area Residents

To: Rep. Bill Stoltze ; aklynne@gic.net ; Cecily at KRWG ; brit@alaskadreamer.com ; John Duffy

Cc: Senator Huggins

Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2006 12:46 PM

Subject: Re: Work Draft for Knik River PUA Legislation

Mr. Stoltze, Mr. Huggins,

Thank you for submitting the draft for CS HB307/SB197 to us.

Late February, when Brit was in Juneau, she dropped off a packet at Rep. Gatto's office from Butte Area Residents Civic Organization, which included our request from legislators to substitute HB 307/SB 197 Public Use Area legislation under AS 41.23 with the Knik River Valley State Recreation Area under AS 41.21.

Since we were under the impression that you chose not to have any contact with us, we asked Mr. Gatto to give the packet to you. If you would like to have additional packets, please let us know and we shall send them to you. The packet also includes a legal analysis on the statutory shortcomings of legislation under AS 41.23** public use area.

Please, consider our alternate legislation for a Knik River State Recreation Area. By statute, it would allow an open public process to accommodate all user groups and would have built-in tools for immediate and effective on-the-ground-around-the-clock law enforcement. It may be of interest to you that the Mat-Su Borough's Code Compliance office has been trying to approximate the "Peace Officer" status. They have to go to court for every citation which is challenged. This is a very expensive process for the Borough. In addition, their personnel are too afraid to give citations to people when they see infractions, such as shootings or fireworks. Their presence does nothing to deter unlawful activities.

Because of the little snow cover this year, most of the area was accessible to 4x4s, ORVs and accompanying shooting, dumping and reckless partying. This accelerated mayhem has been very hard on those of us who live here. We can't rest on weekends because of explosions and gun fire at night. We can't go about our chores, nor can we enjoy the trails behind our house, during the weekend days because of ongoing shooting and us having to go to "educate" the shooters in person to protect ourselves and our properties. One of the frequent mud boggers even told us that it was no longer "safe" for them to take their rigs across the "beaver pond" because of all the metal and wrecks on the bottom. An abandoned car has been contaminating the Bodenbug Creek Overflow since late fall; vandals have shot up and tried to ram down more signs and have blacked out the no-shooting signs.

We appreciate you giving your consideration to our request.

Best regards,

Brit Lively and Gregory Nilsson

Co-Chairs

Butte Area Residents Civic Organization

SUBJECT: Disturbance to Swans in the Knik River Watershed

Page 2

Nesting Swan Disturbance

Six of the seven pairs of trumpeter swans and their broods in the KRW in 2005 were continually disturbed during the latter part of the summer and fall by numerous encounters from operators of boats and ATCs pursuing recreational activities. The impairment or harm to the swans by the motorized disturbance is, as follows: (1) Swan families that were forced out of their traditional nesting habitat walked one or more miles to an adjoining lake to obtain relief which was not forthcoming; (2) Swans showed up missing and were assumed to be killed as they were never found on succeeding surveys; (3) Frequent disturbance in the summer months interrupts the swans ability to properly feed and rear the cygnets so that they will be fully developed and capable of flight during the fall migration; (4) The swan pairs which had a mate killed is destroying a life-long bond that results in instability in maintaining swan populations; (5) Six of the seven nesting pairs of swans and their broods were being disturbed to a level beyond sustainability for the swans to successfully raise a healthy brood of cygnets in the Knik River Valley in 2005; (6) The trumpeter swan has been placed on Audubon Alaska's Bird Watchlist in December 2005. It is already on the National Audubon Watchlist as several hundred trumpeters are dying of lead poisoning each year on their wintering grounds in Washington and southern British Columbia. We don't need additional problems affecting the swans in Alaska; and (7) We are educating Alaskans that this irresponsible and misplaced use of motorized recreational vehicles is an acceptable practice as there are no management plans or guidelines for use of ORVs and boats on this State land.

Recommendation

First and foremost a recreational management plan is needed. The plan must address the swan disturbance issues and place in the plan safeguards and protections so that the migrating and nesting swans can use the habitat in the KRW without the overwhelming disturbance from motorized use. Once the plan has been approved, it will be absolutely necessary to have in place conservation officers to ensure that the approved plan is implemented to the fullest.

Memorandum Prepared By

William A. (Bill) Quirk, III Pilot / Biologist
P.O. Box 212545
Anchorage, AK 99521

Tel. (907) 333-7840

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Swan Disturbance in the Knik River Watershed

February 20, 2006

Introduction

Thirty (30) comprehensive aerial surveys were flown in the spring, summer, and fall of 2005 to monitor the trumpeter swans in the Knik River Watershed (KRW). The surveys include the important Jim Creek Basin (JCB) where 22 lakes and numerous ponds are located in a wetland environment. Jim Creek empties into the lower Knik River 2 miles southeast of the Butte community. The aerial survey data was recorded in tables and reports were written to document swan temporal and spatial distribution, nesting success, disturbance to the swans, and other factors. The swans returned to Southcentral Alaska from their wintering grounds on April 7, 2005. Several hundred swans use the lakes in the JCB as a staging area during the spring and fall migration periods in April / May and again in September / October. An aerial survey conducted on October 27, 2004 showed a total of five hundred twenty-eight (528) swans using the JCB. The summer surveys showed a maximum number of nine (9) pairs of swans nesting in the KRW in 2005. Non nesting swans are found in singles, pairs, and / or flocks in the JCB. Non nesting swans averaged approximately fifteen (15) birds in 2005.

Migrating Swan Disturbance

Swans arriving in Southcentral Alaska in early April seek out the JCB as it usually has the only open water at this time of the year. The open water in early spring is due to the thermal effects on the south slopes of the nearby Chugach Mountains that create warm springs that flow into the lakes. The first open water areas show up as small openings in the ice on the northern end of Mud and Jim Lakes. The swans that use these open water areas in early spring are constantly being disturbed by recreational vehicles (usually trucks) driving the Rippy Trail and parking near the shoreline of the lakes. Activities such as target practicing with rifles or pistols and fireworks displays immediately displace the swans by driving them off the open water. They often relocate on the ice of one of the nearby lakes.

The swans are also being disturbed by motorized recreational vehicles during the latter part of the spring migration period, e.g., in May, after the ice on the lakes has melted. The swans on the lakes are disturbed by air and motor boats that approach the swans at too close a range, by making too much noise at close range, or by traveling too fast in close proximity of the swans. All-Terrain Cycles (ATCs) drive through wetlands in the JCB to lakes where swans are present. Large numbers of ATCs highly disturb the swans.

The swans are frequently disturbed in September and October when large numbers of air and motor boats are frequenting the lakes in the JCB. Swans up to a hundred or more that were displaced from the JCB have been observed on naked gravel bars (no food) along the nearby braided Knik River during the fall migration period.

Representative Jay Ramras
House Resources Committee
State of Alaska
Juneau, Alaska

SUBJECT: Kill House Bill 307

March 25, 2006

This refers to HB 307 and the redrafted version CS HB 307A. This introduced Bill including the redrafted version, 307A, will not provide the necessary tools for the State to draft a management plan that will ensure protection of area residents from noise, dust, and dangerous firing of firearms. The plan will not be able to restrict motorized vehicles from rutting and destroying valuable wetlands in the Jim Creek Basin. In addition, the plan will not be sufficient to reduce the high level of motorized disturbance and harassment of wildlife in the Knik River Watershed. The latter is contributing to a deteriorating condition for waterfowl and moose in the rich wetland habitat in the Jim Creek Basin. Attached is a Memorandum (dated February 20, 2006) entitled 'Swan Disturbance in the Knik River Watershed' which clearly shows that nesting trumpeter swans and their cygnets are being disturbed by motorized boats (including air boats and motor boats) and all-terrain cycles (ATCs) to a level that is beyond sustainability for the swans to raise a healthy brood of young in the Knik River Watershed.

Recommendation is to kill HB 307 since it is inadequate to deal with current problems and protection of the wildlife resources in the Knik River Watershed. In lieu of HB 307, I am recommending support of the Knik River Valley State Recreation Area under AS 41.21. This would be a much better way to provide a sufficient management plan for the Knik River Watershed and the conservation officers needed to enforce the plan.

William A. Quirk, III Pilot / Biologist
P.O. Box 212545
Anchorage, Alaska 99521

Tel (907) 333-7840



Yellow = ORV trails

Red = road, Red E. of Mud Lk. (r. square) = Maude Rd. extension

White = Middle of Sec, 22 and extent of old logging trails

Turquoise = What is left of Rippy Trail

Blue = Friday Cr. Trails – so far, singletrack

(note- the turquoise line beyond Chain Lks. is not a mistake - ATVs have been hauled in by air boat)

This is a rough line drawn graphic representation from my knowledge of these trails and is not a GPS map! Use at your own risk.

The Rippy portion of ad-hoc ORV traffic was single track only from White box to approximately the Friday Creek airstrip prior to the Maude Rd. Extension project.

This, along with other documentation, gives you overview about what is happening to the Jim/Swan Wetlands with no Management or adequate Law Enforcement.

Other documentation and photos available by request.

STATE OF ALASKA

Matanuska Valley Fish & Game Advisory Committee

Frank H Murkowski, Governor

Wayne Kubat, Chair
PO Box 874867
Wasilla, Alaska 99687
ph. & fax: 376-9568
email: args@mtaonline.net

November 23rd, 2005

Senator Huggins and Representative Stoltze,

The Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee unanimously supports House Bill 307 and Senate Bill 197, the bills to create the Knik River Public Use Area as written and introduced by yourselves.

The Knik River has historically been a destination for many visitors. With Anchorage, Palmer, and Wasilla home to over 50% of Alaska's population, this recreational area will provide access for many diverse users of the area. Adjacent to this area is Chugach State Park that restricts those Alaskans looking for an off-road vehicle experience.

Along with the specific management the legislation will create, we believe that additional education and enforcement will create an enjoyable destination for all recreational users and this legislation is a step in that direction. Thank you for your efforts!

Sincerely,

Wayne Kubat
Chairman - Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee

**Comments to House Resources Committee hearing on HB 307, March 27, 2005, 2:00 pm
In Opposition to HB 307 Knik River Public Use Area
By Brit Lively, long-time resident and property owner in Butte.**

Here are my specific comments to HB 307:

My concerns start with the purpose of this legislation and the ambiguity of language in the rewrite of HB 307 which seems to contradict its purpose/intent. Of course, I'm sure you all are aware that any management plan can only be as good as the stated purpose.

The role per statute and mission of Department of Natural Resources, is to "Develop, conserve and enhance natural resources for present and future Alaskans." Telling DNR in this PUA legislation to perpetuate and enhance 1) general public recreation, and 2) public enjoyment of fish and wildlife, before dealing with habitat is putting the cart in front of the horse.

Items for Purpose should be reversed because only if we perpetuate, mitigate, protect and maintain a healthy habitat, will the public be able to enjoy fish, wildlife and public recreation. *If you put recreation ahead of protection of habitat and wildlife along with the limited and expensive enforcement in this legislation, you may well end up with a gravel pit and a dust bowl extending well beyond the boundaries of this proposed Public Use Area. You may not realize that anywhere from 1,000 to 3,000 people are using this area on every sunny weekend.*

Page 1, line 7-12: Comment:
Therefore, I suggest #1 purpose should read:)

- 1) Perpetuate, mitigate, protect and maintain migratory waterfowl nesting areas and fish and wildlife habitat for sustaining and enhancing
 - a) traditional public use of fish and wildlife populations and
 - b) general public enjoyment and recreation

Line 10: Paragraph 2: Delete, because it is not necessary to name all wildlife species, since they are all included. If we do that, we should also name all the fish and waterfowl species.

Page 1, line 13: Paragraph 3 will then be paragraph 2.

- 2) Provide an area for the public to enjoy the full spectrum of public uses, including maintenance and enhancement of off-road vehicle and quiet recreation opportunities.

Page 2, line 1:

- A) Change "Owners of private property" to "Owners of Inholdings" in Knik River Public Use Area and add "utilizing the existing RS 2477 right-of-way" where possible.

Page 3, Line 2: Change to: The Commissioner may restrict the use of weapons, including firearms, in the Knik River Public Use Area except for the purpose of legal hunting, in order to protect the public and to comply with DEC and federal regulations which prohibit discharging shot into a watershed.

Page 3, Line 11: Delete (d) 2 and either Replace with:

(2) adopt regulations under AS 44.62 (Administrative Procedure Act) which are necessary to achieve the purposes of HB 307 and shall adopt such additional regulations as may be necessary to implement the plan adopted. The regulations must designate incompatible uses, and prohibit and restrict such uses. ,

Or

change as follows:

The commissioner shall

(2) recognize the existing trails and the access those trails provide to areas in the Knik River Public use area, determine the carrying capability of this area for public use and determine which of these trails are best suited for motorized or non-motorized recreation according to soils, habitat and compatibility with the purposes of HB 307 and accordingly enhance these trail for motorized or non-motorized recreation.

Page 3, Line 20: Enforcement. Use the same language as in Hatcher Pass PUA or in our proposed Draft Legislation for Knik River Valley State Recreation Area.

After this hearing I will have had 6 minutes total (3 minutes at the Stoltze/Huggins hearing at Butte School last fall tell you how our home area has deteriorated over the last twenty-five years. We have spent thousands of dollars in cash and ten times more in lost work and lost sleep defending our homes, our neighborhoods and the quality of life we have every right to enjoy in the beautiful area surrounding us. Land managers and others in authority have writ this area off so that our home area has become a mecca for uncivilized and disrespectful behavior. This afternoon, "counseled" a party of approx 12 people who had been shooting toward homes on Republican Way for 2 hours from the Knik River. They had driven past no-shooting signs which had been blacked out by vandals. So they thought the signs didn't mean anything.

Butte Residents Area Civic Organization has spent several months putting together a packet of facts, reflecting years of documentation and local knowledge to help you plan for multiple use recreation in our area. Knik River Valley of national significance as the northern-most birthplace of the Pacific Ocean, is recognized for its world class scenery and is one of south-central Alaska's most important fish, wildlife and migratory waterfowl habitats

We condensed this into a small packet and delivered it to most members of your committee and the leaders of the House and Senate personally in Juneau. We ran out of time and did not show you photo documentation and explanation of problems with ATVs, 4x4s, the incredible amount of "targets," trees and dogs that were executed erosion and damage of the dunes, shot-up cars, fireworks and spent shells on private property, nor the dead alders

lining Jin. Creek whose roots have eroded from the motor boat waves. I told most of your staff people that it would take about one hour of time to view the videos and printed material to show you why we don't think HB 307 Knik River Public Use Area will do the job.

The latter part of last week, I called as many of your offices as my time allowed, and asked if the legislators had a chance to go over our packets and if there were any questions. Everyone told me they were too busy with the oil to look at our material except for two. But - we learned that the House Majority Caucus has already agreed to vote in favor of HB 307! So why would you want to even look at what we sent you or hear what we have to say? And we learned that you have scheduled only one hour for this hearing which is THE opportunity we have prepared for and waited for so many years, to make things better - to protect our homes, families, and outstanding natural resources from the effects and overflow of "recreation gone wild."

Does anyone who has since looked at our material have any questions?

This issue should not be decided along partisan lines. This community and our incredible environment deserve more respect than that. You are our leaders. We are looking for you to enhance our quality of life and our economy and repair and enhance our natural environment long before enhancing the amount of motorized recreation at no cost to the users while our community bears the burden. *I oppose HB 307 because by statute it is like a temporary coat of paint, which will peel off and will not provide a foundation for something lasting but will have to be patched and repaired forever. We'll have to battle forever hoping for a white knight with backbone to come to the rescue of a beleaguered community.*

Instead, please give us the proper tools for high-end visitor experiences and economic development which this borough sorely needs. Give DNR and the advisory committee the authority to accommodate motorized and quiet users equally, but secondary to the responsibility of protecting and enhancing our natural resources. The stated mission of Department of Natural Resources is, "To develop, conserve and enhance natural resources present and future Alaskans."

Let's start on the high side with our draft for Knik River Valley Public Recreation Area under AS 41.21 which will give us these tools. Let its 15-member advisory committee from all user groups develop a management plan which will assure strong management and responsibility by Department of Natural Resources and, guaranteed recreation all kinds where DNR will contract out the enforcement to rangers from Alaska State Parks, and still retain all responsibilities and management. Give DNR, along with the advisory committee, the authority to determine which the trails are better suited for motorized, or horses, or foot traffic. Make it possible to build restrooms at the parking areas. When people arrive there after an hour's drive from Anchorage, they DO need a place to go. Neighbors have kept their children away from these areas for sanitary reasons. At Jim Lake, the shore is littered with human feces along with other garbage and spent cartridges.

Make quiet times in the Valley possible - whether it's along the river for those visitors and residents who want to picnic without the noise and dust from ORVs and "just watch the river go by," or for residents so they know for sure that on a certain day of the week they can have a barbecue in their backyard without choking on the exhaust of airboats and not being able to have a conversation over their noise along with that of snow machines and wave runners on the water and dirt bikes on the shores.

Quiet days provide economic opportunities for those who want to invest in our community and provide high-end visitor services. Butte has horses and facilities where national competitions are held. There are several horse board facilities. Give the Butte horse community and those who travel here with their animals a chance to take guided trips to Knik Glacier. Locals who used to do that have stopped since the motorized traffic interferes too much. Let Butte entrepreneurs cash in on guiding visitors on the canoe trails through the wetlands on quiet days. Visitors wouldn't be interested if they knew they'd be overrun and swamped by airboats. Let visiting hiking enthusiasts be guided by Butte or Mat-Su residents on day trips or overnights to feel the overwhelming silence and grandiose splendor. Make it

possible for me to show off my beautiful back yard to my visiting business clients without embarrassing myself and my community. I know some of them would love to go fishing at Jim Creek, but I would shame myself, my business and my community if they experienced the Mad Maxx scenario being played over and over again. Just as guided tours add to the economy with guided tours for the less physically able and are not being challenged by other motorized, so should mountain bikers have their times to provide guided to the glacier without being screamed at and get out of the way. And, of course, let guided ATV tours provide the less physically able with one of the most unique experiences traveling into our own back country.

Please realize that with a Knik River Valley State Recreation Area, you also give us the tools to apply for grants or matching moneys for in-kind work to help pay for the infrastructure, trail mitigation and even law enforcement. Not all of us who want to use the area, when it's safe again, should be willing to pay a user fee to offset the costs of operation and management. Motorized and non-motorized users should be expected to pay for the privilege of using this beautiful area to somewhat offset the cost of running it. Provisions might include reduced or no-fee passes for local persons of limited financial means.

If you haven't yet read our draft legislation, please do so now, and ask us questions of concern.

Our packet consists of a professionally produced video of "*Bodenburg Butte - Knik River Valley - Beauty at our Back Door,*" and a companion DVD titled, "*No Respect in Knik River Valley,*" that shows a small excerpt from our collection of results of destructive activity. It includes maps, photos, a cover letter why we did not think a HB 307 Public Use Area under AS 41.23 would protect us by statute from the devastating effects of recreation gone wild for the last 20 some years, and why we reasoned that legislation for a State Recreation Area under 41.21 would. I am faxing a spreadsheet along with this which goes with these maps, showing over 260 incidents, from dumped trash to burned cars to ducking from flying bullets, which were observed by only 9 residents over several years. Three observers' notes and maps are still missing, including Gregory Nilsson's, Tom Bergey's and some of my own which will add at least 100 more incidents to the list. These incidents are dynamic in that they keep repeating themselves even after the evidence was cleaned up. There's always more trash, more poaching, more shot down and cut down trees, more burned and shot up cars, batteries, paint cans, paper plate and plastic bottle targets, human waste, springs turned into mudholes, exposed roots to document yet another year of more erosion on the dunes, etc etc

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

Brit Lively
March 27, 2006

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3rd Area Residents
Civic Organization

Provisions in bills protect those who break law with ATVs, firearms

Having read Sen. Higgins' Senate Bill 197, and Rep. Stoltz's House Bill 307, one wonders if Mike Erickson took his own advice and read those bills himself ("Curbing Knik ATV access is no solution," Feb. 9).

Although Mr. Erickson acknowledges that Rambo-range shooting parties invade the area on a regular basis and agrees we need more effective laws and law enforcement, he apparently supports Sec. 41.23.290 (C) which states "the commissioner may not restrict the use of weapons, including firearms, within Knik River Public Use Area except in sites of high public use." So the needless endangerment, vandalism, dumping and habitat destruction that accompany these shooting parties as well as the cost of dealing with the mess can continue as long as it happens out in the woods somewhere?

Also, although we have a state statute that permits ATV use on state lands as long as riders avoid destroying the terrain, Mr. Erickson apparently supports (e) of that section: "the commissioner shall allow for the use of existing off-road motor vehicle trails in existence. . . ." So, present trails that have caused the destruction of streambeds, and wetlands with deliberately created mudholes for ATV joyriding should be grandfathered in?

Mr. Erickson's Compass piece makes me wonder why two legislators would write legislation that protects the activities of lawbreakers at the expense of law-abiding citizens, including responsible gun and ATV users?

— Marian Elliott
Wasilla

Knik River area needs some new legislation regarding use

Who are the people in your neighborhood? My "neighborhood" is banked with unrestricted gunfire, car explosions, vandalism and theft. Wouldn't you like to be my neighbor? It sounds as if I'm living in a war zone, but I live in the Knik River

Valley. Legislation (House Bill 307 and Senate Bill 197) supporting a Knik River Public Use Area fails to adequately address problems faced by local residents. The legislation neglects to address law enforcement planning and funding, public safety issues, incompatible recreational uses, and the protection of critical wildlife habitats. Mike Erickson said in a Compass piece last month that more laws are needed: "Curbing Knik ATV access is no solution," Feb. 9.

What good are more laws without law enforcement? Erickson believes this legislation "preserves equal access to all." Not so. Many local residents avoid the area out of fear and disgust. I resent his implicit message that non-Alaskans access and enjoy recreation using motorized vehicles. Hiking, canoeing and fishing are a few nonmotorized ways Alaskans enjoy outdoor recreation. Local residents have to live daily with the consequences of recreational activities in the Knik River Valley. The adverse effects of unrestricted use affect all outdoor enthusiasts. Let's encourage our legislators to write new legislation and not keep the status quo.

Carolyn White
Kenner

Editor's Note: This writer is an ex-member of the Knik River Watershed Group steering committee. The next legislative session.

8-8 Saturday, July 25, 2006

*Snake Area Resident
Civic Organization*

State recreation area concept for Knik basin dates back to 1960s

Mike Erickson should have done the homework before writing "Curbing Knik ATV access is no solution" (Feb. 9).

The most vocal of HB 307/SB 197 supporters have based their campaign on fear and misinformation, which seems to work. Sen. Charlie Huggins publicly declared "war" ("Up a creek?" Frontiersman, July 24, 2006) on citizens who approached asking for overdue solutions to the documented problems in the area.

Let's examine Sen. Huggins' claim to "high ground" and the basis used by proponents of the bills.

The concept of a state recreation area did not originate with the Alaska Center for the Environment. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 1961 Anadromous Fish and Wildlife Study of 1961 recommended the area's significance. In 1964, Bill Sheffield introduced legislation to create the Jim/Swan Lakes SRA. The Snake Area Plan of 1965 involving more than 40 public hearings, workshops and six full-time inter-agency staff over a 2-plus-year period called for creation of an SRA in the Knik basin.

In 1968, the Mat-Su Borough, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the Snake Area Trails Advisory Board voted unanimously for this area to be an SRA with funding to develop and implement a plan.

Agencies from USFWS to NOAA are on record regarding the value of the area. Many make specific recommendations ignored by these bills and supporters.

Unbearable damage and easy access to 200,000 population demands awareness.

— Robert Howard Palmer

Trails belong to everyone, not just ATV users who trash environment

Eagle River resident Mike Erickson's contention that ATV use in the Knik watershed is environmentally benign would be laughable were it not for his trivializing the enormous problems created here by the regular influx of thousands of off-road vehicle recreationalists. ("Curbing Knik ATV access is no solution," Feb. 9). Flying at 2,000 feet we observe myriad trails and attendant erosion, dust and trashed "campsites." Walking watershed trails, we are horrified to see waterfowl crushed and dying, wetlands churned to anaerobic goo, trails we have used 50 years impassable because they were "discovered" and destroyed by ATVs.

Knik River Watershed Group advocates sustainable multi-use activities. However, like the region Mr. Erickson does not seem to want to ignore damage ATVs cause. If allowing responsible use will preclude ATV use in some areas, he falls back on his right to go there, demanding all trails be grandfathered. Since ATV use is harmless, but as to the economic benefits derived from ATV operations, we have found that have behind much more than this trash.

HB 307/SB 197 does not seem to recognize use, grandfathers all existing trails, demonstrates effective trail management, and encourages behavior and promotes the health and achievement of traditional users. This area belongs to all Alaskans and designation as a state recreation area under AS 41.81 and inclusion of all user groups in a management plan is a better solution than this study in mediocrity: HB 307/SB 197.

— Gregory Nilsson Palmer

BY SENATOR'S NOTE: The author is on the planning committee of the Knik River Watershed Group and a founder of Snake Area Watershed Civic Organization. The views here are his own.

Butte Area Residents

Civic Organization

289 South Alaska Street - Palmer AK 99645 - 907-745-7526 - resource@buttealaska.org

DRAFT KNIK RIVER VALLEY STATE RECREATION AREA AS 41.21.***

Proposed legislation

Estimate of Cost (Fiscal Note).

Ideally, first year enforcement should be funded for a minimum of 1, but preferably 1-1/2 or 2 Rangers with SUV, ORV and dirt bikes.

First Year: Law Enforcement

Minimum: 1 Ranger, full time + vehicle = \$150,000

(if 1 1/2 Rangers, + vehicle + ORV/dirt bikes = \$225,000)

(if preferably 2 Rangers for first year for officer safety and Effectiveness + 1 vehicle + ORV/dirt bikes = \$250,000)

(Area Enforcement to be assisted by occasional AST support at current level for Butte area)

Planning: \$ 25,000

First Year Total \$175,000 - \$250,000

Funding Source: State of Alaska 100%

Second Year: Law Enforcement \$175,000 - \$250,000

Infrastructure \$ 30,000

Planning: \$ 30,000

Second Year Total \$235,000 - \$310,000

Funding Source: State of Alaska 80%
Grants 20%

Third Year: Law Enforcement \$175,000 - \$250,000

Infrastructure \$ 50,000

Planning/Education: \$ 10,000

Third Year Total \$235,000 - \$310,000

Funding Source: State of Alaska 60%
Grants 30%
User Fees 10%

Grants include Department of Fish & Game, USFWS, and private foundations

This is an estimate of costs and will have to be verified by experienced DNR personnel.

Butte Community - Incident List

ID	MapIC	X-ID	What	Details	Where	Month	Year	Date
1	1	1	Unauthorized Construction	by MatsU Borough, see DNR letter '82	Jim Lake	September	1988	198809
2	1	2	Illegal Dumping	Sanitation issues, no responses	Jim Lake	September	1988	198809
3	1	2	Shooting	personally almost shoot	Jim Lake	September	1988	198809
4	1	3	ORV Traffic in Anadromous	DNR posted trailhead - no longer anadromous	Jim Creek	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
5	1	3	Wildlife Harassment	family clubbing fish - 1993 fish incident	Jim Creek		1993	199300
6	1	4	ORV Traffic in Wetlands	see comparison photos	Rippy Trail	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
7	1	5	ORV Traffic in Anadromous	see photos of crossing	Rippy Trail	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
8	1	6	ORV Traffic in Wetlands	destruction of vegetative mat, see photos	Rippy Trail	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
9	1	7	Illegal Camps	bat station, docks, garbage, fuel barrels, posted by DNR and partially cleaned up	Chain Lakes	October	2004	200410
10	1	7	Illegal Bat Station	posted by DNR, partially cleaned up	Chain Lakes	October	2004	200410
11	1	7	Illegal Docks	posted by DNR, partially cleaned up	Chain Lakes	October	2004	200410
12	1	7	Illegal Fuel Barrels	posted by DNR, partially cleaned up	Chain Lakes	October	2004	200410
13	1	8	Illegal Bat Station	reported but was not followed up on by authorities	Chain Lakes	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
14	1	9	Illegal Fuel Barrels	fuel barrels on wetlands, not cleaned up	Chain Lakes	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
15	1	10	Illegal Fuel Barrels	pending still	Chain Lakes	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
16	1	10	Illegal Docks	pending still	Chain Lakes	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
17	1	11	New ORV Trail	initial observation of new trail in wetlands, AKQuirk aerial photo	Rippy Trail	April	2005	200504
18	1	12	New ORV Trail	see photos	Jim Lake	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
19	1	12	New ORV Trail	see photos	Swan Lake	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
20	1	13	Wildlife Harassment	very good beaver dam destroyed by motor traffic, see photos	Wolf Point		1988	198800
21	1	13	Illegal Kill	poached sheep, see article				
22	1	14	ORV Traffic in Wetlands	on vegetative mat, see photo	Swan Lake	April	2005	200504
23	1	14	ORV Traffic in Wetlands	on vegetative mat	Swan Lake	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
24	1	15	Abandoned Vehicle	overturned with fluids spilling, reported & after hassle got results from F&G, Palmer	Jim Lake		1993	199300
25	1	16	Illegal Kill	cow moose, reported - no response - short handed	Rippy Trail		1994	199400
26	1	17	Illegal Kill	swan, not reported	Jim Lake		1994	199400
27	1	18	Illegal Dumping	trash	Sand Dunes	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
28	1	18	Vegetation Destruction	live tree cutting	Sand Dunes	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
29	1	18	Shooting	fully automatic weapons	Sand Dunes	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
30	1	18	Vegetation Destruction	live tree destruction	Sand Dunes	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
31	1	19	Illegal Fishing	fish snagging, observed several times over the years	Jim Creek			
32	1	20	Shooting	dodged bullets, left bicycles on ground, hid son behind tree, confronted perpetrator	Knik River		1993	199300
33	1	21	Shooting	Joe Blaasien dodged high power rifle fire while musing	Mud Lake		1997	199700
34	1	22	Property Destruction	destruction of "No Shooting" sign	Maud Road	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
35	1	23	Illegal Kill	owl	Rippy Trail		1994	199400
36	1	24	Illegal Dumping	some response	Pavilion Lot	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
37	1	25	Shooting	some response	Pavilion Lot	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
38	1	26	Wildlife Harassment	airboat chasing swans	Knik River	October	2004	200410
39	1	27	Unattended Fire	unattended fire spreading	Friday Creek		1997	199700
40	1	28	Illegal Dumping		Mud Lake	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
41	1	28	Vegetation Destruction	live tree cutting	Mud Lake	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
42	1	28	Illegal Dumping	sanitation issues	Mud Lake	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
43	1	28	Motor Traffic on River	Assisted woman with broken hip, took to ambulance at trail head	Knik River		1997	199700
44	2	1	Burned Vehicle	jeep Cherokee set on fire, observed occupants of a black pickup set fire, called 911 arrived to late to get perps	Badenburg Creek	July	2005	200507
45	2	2	Abandoned Vehicle	abandoned van near bridge	Knik River	October	2005	200510
46	2	3	Property Destruction	junk cars and trash in trees	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
47	2	3	Illegal Camps	squatters living on river bar	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
48	2	4	Property Destruction	burned out car on sand bar	Knik River	May	2001	200105
49	2	5	Illegal Dumping	trash dumped in brush and bridge base	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
50	2	6	Burned Vehicle	shot-up burned cars on river bar	Sexton Trail	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
51	2	7	Vegetation Destruction	shot-up trees, initial observation	Knik River Road	May	1997	199705
52	2	7	Vegetation Destruction	shot-up trees	Knik River Road	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
53	2	7	Burned Vehicle	burned car, initial observation	Knik River Road	May	1997	199705
54	2	7	Burned Vehicle	burned car	Knik River Road	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
55	2	8	Illegal Dumping	trash and cars	Mud Road Ext	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
56	2	8	Vegetation Destruction	shot-up trees	Maud Road Ext	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING

Butte Community - Incident List

ID	MapID	X-ID	What	Details	Where	Month	Year	Date
57	2	8	Abandoned Vehicle	wrecked cars	Maud Road Ext.	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
58	2	9	Illegal Dumping	huge trash pile at waters edge	Mud Lake	July	2002	200207
59	2	9	Illegal Camps	abandoned camp at waters edge	Mud Lake	July	2002	200207
60	2	10	Illegal Dumping	trash	Maud Road Ext.	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
61	2	10	Vegetation Destruction	shot-up trees	Maud Road Ext.	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
62	2	11	Illegal Dumping	trash left in brush	Jim Lake	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
63	2	12	Illegal Kill	rotting moose carcass floating in creek	Jim Creek	June	2001	200106
64	2	13	Property Destruction	abandoned duck blinds, initial observation	Swan Lake	1998	199800	
65	2	13	Property Destruction	abandoned duck blinds	Swan Lake	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
66	2	14	Illegal Dumping	trash left on ridge	Jim Creek	June	2003	200306
67	2	14	Illegal Dumping	trash left on ridge, cleaned up	Jim Creek	June	2004	200406
68	2	15	Illegal Dumping	trash on sandbar, from jim creek outlet to friday creek outlet	Jim Creek	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
69	2	15	Burned Vehicle	burned car on sandbar	Jim Creek	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
70	2	16	Illegal Dumping	trash	Jim Creek Forks	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
71	2	16	Vegetation Destruction	shot-up cottonwoods	Jim Creek Forks	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
72	2	17	Illegal Dumping	trash	Manmade Lake	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
73	2	17	Abandoned Vehicle	cars	Manmade Lake	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
74	2	17	Illegal Camps	squatters	Manmade Lake	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
75	2	17	Shooting		Manmade Lake	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
76	2	18	Shooting	automatic & semi-automatic weapons fire after dark, into water by headlights	Bodenburg Creek	October	2005	200510
77	7		NON-USUR	b/c of junk, parties, and concern for personal safety	Butte Area	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
78	3	1	Burned Vehicle	burning vehicles, 20-30+ per year, seen from home	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
79	3	2	Property Destruction	transformer feeding Knik River Rd shot out, leaving ~200 residents w/o power 8 hrs, lump in teens	Knik River Road	January	2002	200301
80	3	3	Illegal Dumping	used motor oil, used diapers, etc	Knik River Road	1998	199800	
81	3	4	Illegal Dumping	trash dumped, perpetrators id'd and contacted, mess was removed	Knik River Road	April	1999	199904
82	3	5	Illegal Fireworks	plans landed and set-off fireworks during statewide ban, July 6th	Knik River	July	2004	200407
83	3	6	Illegal Fireworks	fireworks observed on Swan Lake, driving off adult nesting swans, leaving cygnets behind, July 4	Swan Lake	July	2003	200307
84	3	7	Illegal Dumping	dirty diapers, requiring Borough HazMat team for clean up	Caudal Road			
85	3	8	Unattended Fire	abandoned camp fires, often requiring Mat-Su and Fore. y intervention to put out	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
86	3	9	Dangerous Vehicle Operation	two ~10 yr old boys on 4-wheelers crossed the road in front of vehicle w/o looking, required evasive action	Old Glenn Hwy	July	2005	200507
87	3	10	Dangerous Vehicle Operation	three girls (ages 11-14) traveling W on a 4-wheeler, straddling center line, required serious evasive action by driver going E, blind curve 8/13	Knik River Road	August	2005	200508
88	3	10	Dangerous Vehicle Operation	~10 yr old boy riding 4-wheeler straddling center line, on blind curve, required serious evasive action by driver, 1/20	Knik River Road	August	2005	200508
89	3	11	Illegal Motorized Vehicle Op	snowmachine operated like jet skis on swimming hole, sometimes sinking, area posted "Swimming Only, No Motorized Vehicles"	Knik River Road	ONGOING	2003	200300
90	3	11	Dangerous Vehicle Operation	jet boats operated in "Swimming Only" posted swimming hole, while children swam	Knik River Road	July	2005	200507
91	3	11	Dangerous Vehicle Operation	jet boats operated in "Swimming Only" posted swimming hole, while children swam	Knik River Road	August	2005	200508
92	3	12	Illegal Kill	moose shot by headlights at 2am, after butchering guts left at a school bus stop	Knik River Road	September	2002	200209
93	3	13	Wildlife Harassment	air boat harassing swans, causing swans to move to non-traditional areas	Swan Lake	October	2005	200510
94	3	14	Unattended Fire	forest fire due to abandoned camp fire, required Forest Service intervention mtn side above swan lake	Mtn Side	August	2004	200408
95	4	1	Irresponsible Trapping	dog caught in snare for 3 or 4 days, dog OK	Republican Road	November	1977	197711
96	4	2	Irresponsible Trapping	dog caught in conbear trap, dog killed instantly	Plant Materials Center	December	2000	200012
97	4	3	Shooting	while canoeing on mud lake shots fired over the water from shore	Mud Lake		2001	
98	4	5	Shooting	bullets come through our property often, bullets have hit, building, swing sets, and parking areas	Knik River Road	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
99	4	6	Dangerous Vehicle Operation	2 kids on 4-wheeler die due to trespassing issues originating at Manmade Lake	Knik River Road		1996	
##	4	10	Shooting	popular shooting area, shots fired out across knik river	Sexton Trail	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
##	4	11	Shooting	popular shooting area, shots fired out across knik river	Knik River Road	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
##	4	12	Shooting	popular shooting area, shots fired out across knik river	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
##	4	13	Shooting	popular shooting area, shots fired out across knik river	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
##	4	14	Abandoned Vehicle	ford 7, stl by side of road	Knik River Road		1970	
##	4	15	Abandoned Vehicle	car left on bank	Knik River Road		1985	
##	4	16	Abandoned Vehicle	car left on bank	Knik River Road	April	2005	200504
##	4	17	Shooting	popular shooting area, shots fired west along river bank	Knik River Road	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
##	5	1	Vegetation Destruction	indiscriminate tree cutting, living trees on private property, and downed trees left to rot, accessed by snowmachine	Oriskany Road	January	2004	200401
##	5	2	ORV Traffic in Stream	an easy forded creek crossing (pedestrian & equine, which once had a foot bridge) turned to mucky mire, no longer crossable	17N02E Sec 24	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
##	5	3	ORV Traffic in Wetlands	former horse/ski trail ruined by motorized traffic, no longer usable for non-motorized users	17N03E Sec 19		2003	
##	5	3	ORV Traffic in Wetlands	former horse/ski trail ruined by motorized traffic, no longer usable for non-motorized users	17N03E Sec 19	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING
##	5	4	Unattended Fire	campfire smoldering in a stump at the creek crossing, area was dry, lots of fuel available	17N03E Sec 18	September	2005	200509

Butte Community - Incident List

A	B	C	D	E	F	H	I	J	K	
3	ID	MapID	X-ID	What	Details	Where	Month	Year	Date	Initials
195	##	B	1	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
196	##	B	2	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
197	##	B	3	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
198	##	B	4	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
199	##	B	5	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
200	##	B	6	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
201	##	B	7	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
202	##	B	8	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Sexton Trail	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
203	##	B	9	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Sexton Trail	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
204	##	B	10	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Sexton Trail	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
205	##	B	11	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Sexton Trail	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
206	##	B	12	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Sexton Trail	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
207	##	B	13	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Sexton Trail	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
208	##	B	14	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Sexton Trail	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
209	##	B	15	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
210	##	B	16	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
211	##	B	17	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
212	##	B	18	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
213	##	B	19	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
214	##	B	20	Burned Vehicle	Butte FD call to burning car fire	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING	ONGOING	C
215	##			Tree Shot Next to Residence	Someone shot through woods	Mile 9.8 Old Glenn				BL
216	##			3 GIS shoot towards corrals	From trail off Knik River, 3 GIS were plinking away shooting at a tree toward horses in corrals	Mile 9.8 Old Glenn				BL
217	##			Unoccupied Home vandalize	Vandals broke into unoccupied home during night. And partied. Neighbors observed.	Mile 10 Old Glenn				BL
218	##			Car Stolen from Driveway	Car Stolen from Driveway	Mile 9.8 Old Glenn				BL
219	##			ATV chased horse on road	ATV would not stop on non-motorized bike path and chased a young woman in mini-horse cart onto the Old Glenn	Mile 9.7 Old Glenn				BL
220	##			ATV harassed horse/riders	ATV played chicken with horse and rider on Old Glenn non-motorized pathway. Horse yielded.	Mile 9.5 Old Glenn				BL
221	##			Dirt Bike crashed into area	Dirt Bike jumped driveway and crashed into tree. Had to call Butte Ambulance	Mile 9.8 Old Glenn				BL
222	##			Drive-by shooting at night	People kept firing gun from pickup at night	Mile 9.8 Old Glenn				BL
223	##			Drive-by shooting Sunday pm	People from beige pickup kept firing from pickup. could hear they started at Knik Bridge and kept firing after going by house	Mile 9.8 Old Glenn				BL
224	##			Explosives thrown into driveway	Explosives (dynamite??) thrown out of car onto driveway. Shook house	Mile 9.8 Old Glenn				BL
225	##			Shouting toward house	Two boys from Anc shot at house through woods hunting rabbits on private property. Said, "This is Mt-Su. There's no law against it."	Mile 9.8 Old Glenn				BL
226	##			Unoccupied Home vandalized	Vandals threw rocks through all windows in unoccupied house	Mile 9.7 Old Glenn				BL
227	##			ATVs and Dirt Bikes on Path	ATVs and Dirt Bikes jump driveways on non-motorized pathway. Sometimes 250-300 on weekend	Mile 9-Mile 11/12	ONGOING	ONGOING		BL
228	##			Beer Bottle thrown at person	Beer Bottle thrown out from pickup hit older man on head	Mile 9.8 Old Glenn				BL
229	##			Moose poached	Moose poached	Off Bodenburg Lp North				BL/Vis
230	##			Moose poached	Moose poached, belly burned	Jim Creek Trail				Anc/Vis
231	##			Found raven shot	Found shot Raven on Knik River Bar	Knik River upstream				BL
232	##			Shooters in woods	Shooters in woods off non-motorized MSB trail	Off Old Glenn	ONGOING	ONGOING		BL
233	##			Vagrants camp in woods	Vagrants camped in woods fired shots after horse/ride went by. Called Troopers	Off Old Glenn				BL
234	##			ATVs and Dirt Bikes on high	ATVs and Dirt Bikes on Old Glenn					BL
235	##			Heavy Explosions	Heavy Explosions at Knik River, heard at Mile 9.8. sometimes shake house	Knik River	ONGOING	ONGOING		BL
236	##			ATV speeding on woods trail	ATV speeding on woods trail, river on horse had to jump off the trail several times	Woods on MSB bar	ONGOING	ONGOING		BL
237	##			Near Collision with Cars	On Sexton Trail, near head-on collision with two racing cars	Sexton Trail				BL
238	##			Shooter near Pavilion	Shooter near pavilion shoots toward paper plate targets on stump with rifle	Pavilion Lot				BL
239	##			Plastic bottle targets	Plastic bottle stuck on tree branches. Targets in direction of residence	Knik River Downstream				BL
240	##			Construction Pile with staples	Construction pile with staples was burned at upstream side of Knik River, then disappeared in Bodenburg Creek overflow	Knik/Bodenburg				BL
241	##			ATV chasing salmon	Kids on ATVs were chasing salmon in bodenburg Creek	Bodenburg Creek	ONGOING	ONGOING		BS
242	##			Jetboat in Bodenburg Creek	Jetboat in Bodenburg Creek	Bodenburg Creek	ONGOING	ONGOING		BL
243	##			Salmon Poaching	Salmon poaching in bodenburg Creek	Bodenburg Creek	ONGOING	ONGOING		BS
244	##			Boats and motors getting dirty	Bodenburg Creek - boats, jetboats, boat motors and airboats using creek to wash off mud	Bodenburg Creek				BL
245	##			ATVs tearing up Hwy shoulder	ATVs tearing up Hwy shoulder, cutting patterns	Knik River Bridge				BL
246	##			Moose and baby shot	Moose and baby shot at Mile 5 Old Glenn pond one year	Old Glenn Hwy				Resident
247	##			Moose and baby shot	Moose and baby shot at Mile 5 Old Glenn pond next year	Old Glenn Hwy				Resident
248	##			Shoot at Bottle at Tail Race	Throw up bottles and shoot into Elkhina Tail Race	Old Glenn Hwy				Resident
249	##			Oil Drums Dumped	Waste Oil in barrels and bottles dumped on private property	Knik River Access	ONGOING	ONGOING		BL
250	##			Stolen Cars & Trucks dump	Stolen Cars and Trucks burned and dumped on private property	Knik River Access	ONGOING	ONGOING		BL
251	##			Shooting	Shooting into water, into trees, across hwy, toward homes	Knik River Access	ONGOING	ONGOING		BL
252	##			Shooting	Shooting into water, into trees, across hwy, toward homes	Knik River Access	ONGOING	ONGOING		BL
253	##									
254	##									
255	An additional 200 plus incidents by observations of three residents have yet to be mapped.									

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January 2, 2006

Via email

Rep. Carl Gatto
Rep_Carl_Gatto@legis.state.ak.us

Re: House Bill 307 "Creating the Knik River Public Use Area"

While I applaud the efforts of the diverse groups working towards an inclusive management plan for the upper Knik River, I feel Rep. Stoltze's current bill needs modification. It appears to enshrine specific uses without regard for their needed evolution in the face of increased use. Some historical perspective may help.

The only permanent residence in the area was the Ezi site at Swan Lake, a great subsistence location where a fish trap or net across the creek easily captured all the salmon desired, moose were available year round, with sheep and swans right there in the spring. In the late 1960's, a classmate on a BLM fire crew ran into Chief Billy Ezi near Burnt Butte and tried to explain that setting fires to enhance moose browse was no longer permitted. Now, none of those subsistence activities are allowed.

The first time I fished on Jim Creek was in the mid 1950's. Loggers put a bridge across in the woods to access the eastern forest. I don't think permits were needed then. The bridge and road were soon washed out by a larger than normal Lake George breakup. We need permits now to log, mine, or build roads and bridges to get there.

It's been over 40 years since Lake George taught us the vagaries of "normal high water". We might not live long enough to again see annual flooding over the Old Glenn or boating in what are now the Plant Material Center's fields. We can't count on the river washing our trash away off the bar, but the notion might temper how we plan and build.

The early 1960's were lean times when the mines closed. On the last week of moose season, the Elks club would collect unfilled moose tags from needy families, find a supercub and 6x6, and head up the Knik. Dick was the pilot and dad was the designated shooter; nobody went hungry. We can't do that anymore, and luckily, don't have to. We can't build recreational or trapline cabins wherever we want, either. Our winter scout camp could be revisited, but we're too soft.

For the past 30 years, we hike up there in early April to see the swans. Sometimes, we could sneak up on a flock near the mountain - their trumpeting echoing off the rock amphitheater is



Chief Ezi's place, '82:
"Please Do Not Burn the Boards Thats Around Here. Bill Ezi"

unforgettable. Since roads and trails have increased access, the swans are more skitterish. We'll probably have to keep our distance or use blinds if we want to preserve close encounters.

We try to take several canoe trips up Jim Creek each summer for fishing, birding, or hunting. The stabilized portage is nice. It's sometimes dangerous when a big airboat tries to pass in the narrow creek. Most travelers are considerate, but lack of etiquette will lead to increased conflicts.

Yes, I've yahooped all over and up to the glacier in ATVs, trucks, boats, and planes. There are problems. It's hard to keep out of the water, either because it's in the way or just because. Playing in the water makes a mess. Those ruts and mud kicked up on the silty bar might be gone next summer, and all we did was add dust to the air and noise pollution. Our tracks in the marsh, however, are long lasting scars and will drive away critters we love. Playing in the clear water stirs up silt and kills fish. Clearly, we shouldn't mess up the sensitive habitats.



My bad. Pull it out by hand, drive it home before it freezes

Decades ago, off-road vehicles were less common and conflicts between them rare. Now, on a single day a river trail may see hikers, skiers, snow machines, bicycles, horses, motorcycles, four stroke ATVs, two stroke racers, tracked rigs, dune buggies, pickups, and monster trucks. Compatible trail use may be prolonged with good manners and slow speed, but fatal conflicts are inevitable. Off-trail racing and motocross activities on the river bar have no established etiquette; the monster truck rodeo might not safely share space with the family 4 wheeler picnic.

Remote gravel pits and river bars foment teenage anarchy, fueled by booze, guns, and gasoline. Prohibition didn't work for us then, either, and we buried the unlucky. What worked best was the landowner, whether pit owner, neighbor, local cop, or even road foreman, would simply explain the rules of ownership – respect others, and don't trash the place. When that didn't work the owner blocked access. It seems like we're close to that now with the Knik River.

What's missing is the sense of neighborhood ownership, understandable when the Knik is now the closest uncontrolled free fire zone to Anchorage. Consequently, a public use area management plan is appropriate. All of us are the owners, and our grandkids too.

Over the past half century we've drastically curtailed our "traditional public use" rights and privileges in using the river area; the resources have largely been preserved with more people enjoying them as a result. Looking towards the next few decades, it's clear we can't keep all of our current favorite uses and current trends without continuous modifications.

A trail may need to be abandoned or moved to protect a stream, and additional trails restricted in some areas but encouraged in others. Certain vehicles may need to be restricted at different times from sensitive areas, and other areas may be reserved for them. Roads, bridges, picnic

sites, and campgrounds will be built. Future management requirements can hardly be guessed at now. Certainly, enforcement will be needed – a responsibility of ownership.

I've studied information and positions taken by the various interest groups, reviewed legislation for similar areas, and suggest the following revisions for this bill:

- Keep the area multi-use; do not favor one current use over another. Use the Nelchina legislation as a model.
- Do not limit the state's ability to manage its resources by any appropriate means, including management as a state park or with park rangers and managers.
- Recognize critical, unique, and sensitive habitats for preservation, including natural and scenic resources. This might mean limiting access and time for vehicles, boats, and hikers.
- Also, recognize less sensitive areas such as the river bars where off-trail riding and racing may occur, but only if consistent with other uses, such as other users' safety and nearby residents' rights to peace and safety.
- Encourage compromise between user groups. None will be shut out, all have much to lose and gain; cooperation will maximize benefits to all. Various groups have done much to repair damage, remove trash, haul out burned vehicles, enhance habitat – thank them all and encourage their continued involvement, because without them we won't succeed.
- Most importantly, take control. The real outrage is not about responsible use, but about activities that are now illegal or obviously rude. These threaten all users and nearby residents. Once the lawless free fire mentality is reigned in, sane management begins.

Thanks, and good luck in this session.

Raph