

ALASKA LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE FILES, 1989-1990

86/2

6222 SENATE COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS

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are about to ~~be~~ ~~come~~ ~~the~~ ~~people~~
 talk first when they did not come first??
 The meeting is scheduled at 5:30 and then
 members of the assembly have noted that
 lobbying efforts will be directed
 towards it first and write out their
 remarks in an appropriate manner.

TELECOPY COVER SHEET

Matanuska-Susitna Legislative Information Office

Office - (907) 376-3704

Fax - (907) 376-6180

TO: Sen Szymanski FAX: _____ PHONE: _____

FROM: _____ PHONE: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: to Sen CIRA committee re
teleconference on 2/20 on SB 430

RECEIVED: Date 2-20-90 Time _____

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SENT BY: _____



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the Senate Community + Regional Affairs committee name

committee on SB 430 , dated Feb. 20, 1990.
bill/subject

My name is Nancy Michaelson and I have come to the Wasilla Legislative Information Office tonight to testify in favor of SB 430 - a bill establishing the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area. I was unable to use the microphone - ~~so I need~~ send you this quick summary. I am here representing my family and myself, which represents my husband - who is employed (11 yrs.) at the UA Ag. Experiment Station - and my two children (ages 6 and 9).

I refuse to any longer accept the concept that any setting - aside of public lands for any use other than development is a "lock up". To the contrary, this bill would save this beautiful area for all of us to recreate, enjoy, and love.

I also refuse to any longer accept the local generalization that anyone who wants to use the land for uses other than instant development is a newly arrived Cheechako - or an Anchorageite. Our family of 4 has a total of 69 years residence in the Susitna Valley, so I know of which I speak.

(OVER)

Signed: Nancy Michaelson
Testifier

Representing (Optional)

HCO 1 Box 6916 F, Palmer, AK 99645

Address

745-6673

Phone No.

Fact 1: The present state planning effort has not even addressed whether the logging is economically appropriate, therefore it is not true that it is logically feasible.

Fact 2: Interests that originally inspired all of us to even think of this in the 1st place long ago withdrew their interest.

Fact 3: I am a local resident. I have been a local resident for 15 years. Within the walls of my house, eating food on my table that I buy at local stores (or grown from seeds bought at local stores) and wearing clothes bought at local stores are 3 other family members - all born in the valley - representing 69 years of residency in the valley. We not only live here, we use the resource.

I will be sending a complete testimony to you over the FAX tomorrow. Thank you for this opportunity. Sincerely,

Nancy Michaelson

SUMMARY OF THE SUSITNA VALLEY REMOTE RECREATION AREA PROPOSAL

PURPOSES - The purposes of the SVRRA is to perpetuate and enhance the present character and existing uses of a portion of the Susitna Valley. Specifically, the SVRRA has six main purposes:

1. Protection and maintenance of fish and wildlife populations and habitat;
2. Continued public enjoyment of fish and wildlife;
3. Continued remote recreation while protecting natural integrity and scenic values;
4. Continued remote commercial recreation in a quality environment;
5. To perpetuate and enhance the remote character upon which the recreational uses and community lifestyles depend; and
6. To allow additional public uses in a manner compatible with the above purposes.

ALLOWED ACTIVITIES - Addresses only activities on state lands. Except as noted in the next section, all existing uses would be allowed, including:

1. Personal-use timber sales for individuals and commercial facilities.
2. Adequate and feasible access to private land, existing mining claims, borough land, and other valid occupancies.
3. Local roads not connected with the existing interstate highway system.
4. Trails.
5. Construction of commercial recreation and tourism facilities.
6. Land disposals.
7. Mineral leasing.

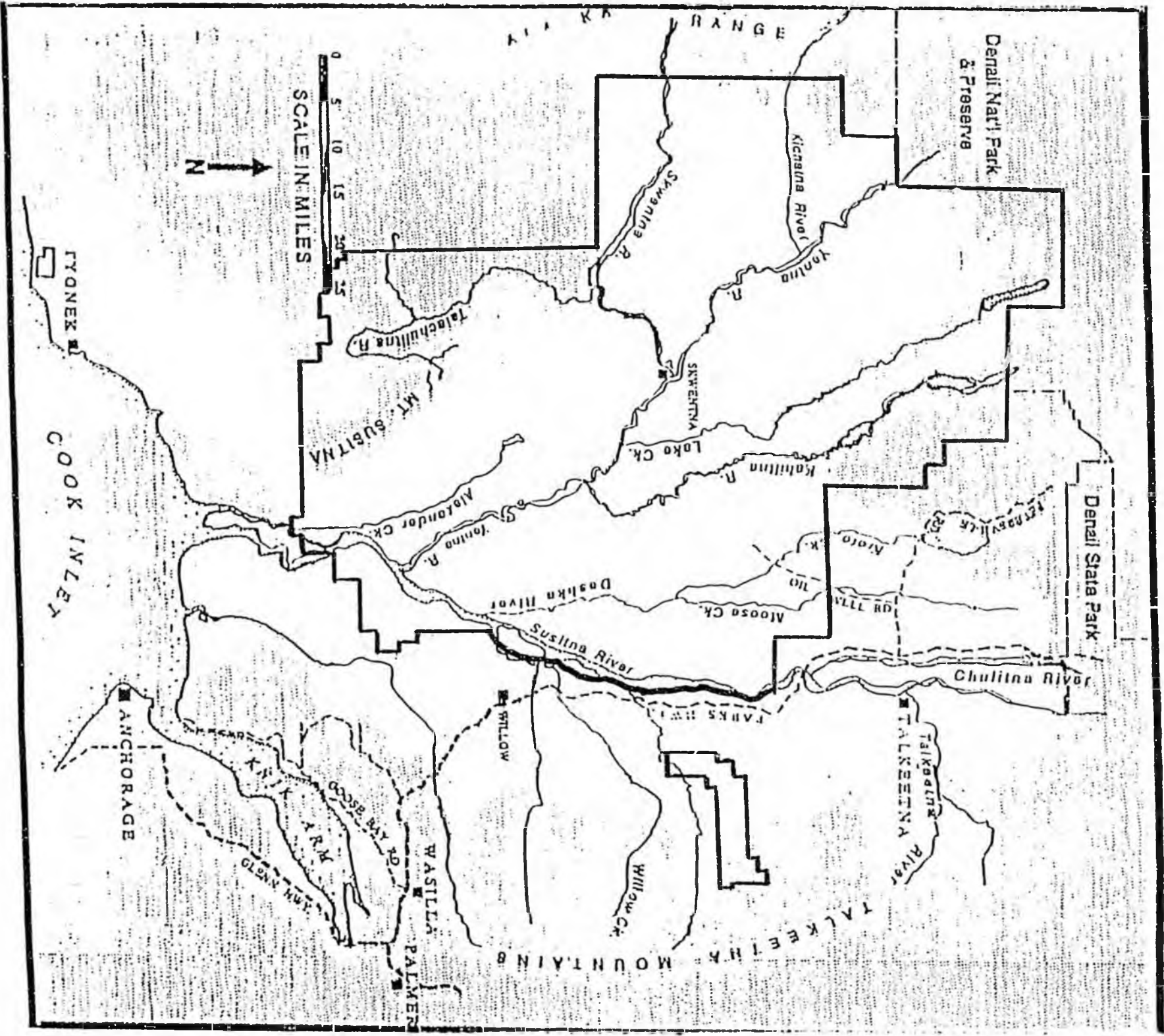
The legislation assures that traditional access, both motorized and nonmotorized, such as by boat, plane, ATV, snowmachine, dogsled, snowshoes, skis, etc., will continue.

INCOMPATIBLE ACTIVITIES - the following activities would not be allowed:

1. Commercial logging on state land. (Existing commercial firewood sale areas are all outside the SVRRA boundaries and would not be impacted.)
2. Publicly financed or maintained roads connected to the highway system.
3. Mining claims. (Valid existing rights would continue.)

MANAGEMENT - The SVRRA will be managed by DNR, through a management plan, requiring public review and comment. ADF&G has management responsibilities for fish and wildlife resources. The commissioner of DNR may determine that a use is incompatible or needs to be modified, but only after public review and comment.

SUSITNA VALLEY REMOTE RECREATION AREA



Susitna Valley Association
9600 Slalom Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99516
346-1943

**Economic Values of Remote Recreation, Tourism, and
Commercial Fisheries In the Susitna Valley**

The Susitna Valley is an intensively used remote recreation and tourism area which also supports a valuable commercial fishery. A highly complex pattern of both developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities has evolved which is supported by thousands of people and which channels millions of dollars into the local economies. Following is a synopsis of various valley activities and resource uses which the Susitna Valley Association (SVA) has compiled:

Real estate. Over the past twenty years the state has encouraged recreational use of the Susitna Valley by selling thousands of properties in state land disposals in the area, mostly for recreational purposes. Just within the SRF planning area, there are 17,609 private properties, and many more still for sale. (Borough Tax Assessment Office, 12-19-89) These are widely scattered throughout the valley. Land sales were a high priority of the state and borough during the '70s in the form of various land disposal programs, and even earlier with the Open-to-Entry program, homesteading and remote parcel distributions. As one would expect, this resulted in the formation of a potent constituency for protecting those values that attracted people to the area. The property owners have a vested interest in their lands and cannot be expected to remain silent on what happens in the valley. The assessed value of the private property is \$14.8-million.

Lodges. According to the Department of Fish and Game, there are 52 lodges which operate in the Susitna Valley, most of them remote. SVA has surveyed 23 of the lodges. Based on that survey, the total gross income for the 52 lodges was estimated at \$7.5-million, with a total employment of approximately 283 people. All but two of the lodges surveyed were owned and operated by Alaskans. 93% of their clients were from out-of-state, bringing new dollars into the Alaskan economy.

Air taxi services. 38 air taxi charter services presently fly clients into the valley for recreational activities and flightseeing. They service lodges, year-around residents, recreational cabin owners, and their own remote camps. 24 of those companies are based in Anchorage, and 14 in the Borough. Based on an SVA survey of ten of the companies, a total combined gross income derived from servicing the Susitna Valley in 1987, for only those 10 companies, was \$4-million, with employment of 145 people. The companies estimated 74.5% of their clients were non-residents. (Note that 28 of the companies are not included in the above figures.)

Commercial fishery. The entire Susitna drainage serves as a vast spawning and fish rearing habitat for a highly productive commercial fishing industry. According to

Economic Values

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the ADF&G Division of Commercial Fisheries, the direct income to commercial fishermen dependent upon fish reared in this drainage is between \$8-million and \$11-million per year. In 1986, the total economic activity generated in Southcentral Alaska attributed to this harvest, excluding processing, was just under \$18-million.

Sportfishing. The ADF&G Division of Sport Fisheries established that 242,850 days were spent sportfishing in the Susitna Valley in 1986, with associated expenditures of \$10.4-million. 84 percent of those days was spent at streams with no road access. The lack of roads, rather than being a barrier, was very likely what attracted people to the area. It also indicates the complex economic network which exists just to get people to and from their fishing sites. According to Fish and Game, salmon stocks in the Susitna Basin are already fully allocated.

Moose and bear hunting. The annual expenditures for moose and bear hunting in the Susitna Valley is estimated by ADF&G at up to \$18.9-million dollars. This includes activities of game guides and outfitters, as well as the independent hunters.

Recreational pilots. There are over 5000 registered pilots in the Anchorage area and 800 in the Mat-Su Borough. The Anchorage pilots own a total of over 2000 airplanes. SVA surveyed 208 of the pilots and found that the Susitna Valley was their destination 81 percent of the time. Based on data from our survey, the total value of the airplanes based just in Anchorage can be estimated at \$90-million. Total plane related expenditures for 1987 was estimated at \$7.4-million.

Hotel expenditures. According to a study by the Alaska Hotel/Motel Owners Association, approximately 3 percent of the occupied rooms in Anchorage are related to clients traveling to or from hunting and fishing destinations in the Susitna Valley. The economic value of these rooms is \$6.8-million.

Tour companies. Tour operators sell the Susitna Valley as an accessible "Alaska wilderness experience". The valley is marketed for independent and adventure tours such as flightseeing trips, riverboat fishing and camping, sportfishing and hunting, remote lodge vacations, and rafting trips.

The valley is also an important component of the large package tours. According to information SVA received in 1988, Westours and Princess Tours had purchased and were renovating 14 railroad dome cars at an investment of \$8-million. These dome cars travel through the east side of the Susitna Valley. The tour companies are anticipating related gross revenues during 1990 of over \$100-million dollars.

Other users. The Alaska Boaters Association estimates there are approximately 20,000 boats in the Anchorage area, a high percentage owned to access the Susitna Valley streams. There are 20 to 30 riverboat charter services doing business on the streams of the valley. Many activities such as river freight services, mushing, skiing, trapping, and snowmachining remain to be quantified.

Economic Values
Page 3

Related services. Also to be taken into consideration are the local businesses in adjacent communities that are economically supported by these activities and industries; the multiplier factor. These factors would take into account such items as the purchase of construction materials; maintenance costs of buildings and equipment; advertising; insurance; purchase and maintenance of airplanes, boats, motors, and snowmachines. It would include employee expenses; gas, oil, and propane; generators; radio equipment; food and supplies; purchase of camping equipment, guns, fishing gear, and clothing; fish and game packing and processing; taxidermy services; and money spent at eating and drinking establishments when going to and from the valley.

(DATED: January 1, 1990)

Recreational boating's popularity and impact on the United States' economy is well documented.

According to the National Marine Manufacturer's Association:

- About 75 million Americans participated in some form of boating in 1989, including 14 million who tried the sport for the first time.

- One out of every seven American households now owns a boat.

- Boating industry sales (including motors, trailers and accessories) more than doubled during the 1980s, from about \$7.5 billion in 1980 to more than \$17 billion in 1989.

- The boating industry employs approximately 600,000 people.

- Boating industry sales rank fourth in the United States among all leisure activities, ahead of such traditional favorites as movies, magazines and books and spectator sports.

The NMMA also has a state-by-state breakdown of boat, motor, trailer and accessories purchases for 1988 (the most recent year for which statistics are available). No. 1 in sales, not too surprisingly, is Florida, with \$854.2 million in retail sales. At the bottom of the list is New Mexico, with \$2.9 million in sales.

Only two states are not included in the NMMA's listing, for lack of information. Hawaii. And Alaska.

Very little — almost nothing, in fact — is known of recreational boating's economic impact on the Alaska economy, despite the sport's popularity in our state.

According to U.S. Coast Guard statistics, nearly 29,000 boats were registered in Alaska in 1988, or about one boat for every 20 people. But that figure doesn't reflect total boat ownership for a couple reasons. First, the Coast Guard requires only that motorized boats be registered; non-motorized canoes, kayaks, rafts and sailboats are not included. Second, it's likely that a significant number of the state's rural boat owners haven't registered their boats.

Boating industry impact on Alaskan economy unknown

Given those circumstances, Steve Morgheim estimates that Alaskans own 50,000 to 60,000 boats. Or more. "I think it's safe to say that at least one out of 10 Alaskans owns a boat, which is right in line with the national average," says Morgheim, executive director of the Alaska Marine Dealers Association.

Beyond Coast Guard statistics, several other bits of evidence suggest that recreational boating is among Alaska's most popular outdoors activities.

Many Southcentral rivers are clogged with boat fishermen during the salmon season. Sea kayaking is widely recognized as one of the state's fastest-growing sports. Conflicts between boat owners — big boats vs. small, motorized vs. non-motorized — are steadily rising as waterways become increasingly crowded during the spring and summer. Increased boating impacts on the environment and safety concerns have already resulted in regulations requiring horsepower limits on the Kenai River and have prompted the state to formulate a recreational river management plan for the Susitna Basin.

Yet for all that, data that demonstrates the recreational boating industry's importance is noticeably lacking.

"We can't tell anyone what's happening with the Alaska boating industry because we don't have the information. It doesn't exist anywhere,"

says Dave Benesch, co-owner of Alaska Mining & Diving and a member of the AMDA Board of Trustees.

But Benesch and Morgheim hope that situation will soon begin changing.

The AMDA is in the process of completing an economic survey of its membership, which includes 50 boating-related businesses, primarily within the Southcentral region.

The survey's findings — scheduled to be released in March — won't paint a complete picture, but should at least provide an a data base from which economic trends can eventually be determined.

"Right now we're in the building stages," Morgheim says. "The survey will provide a snapshot of where we're at in 1990. With that in hand, we'll be able to track the Alaskan (boating) market on an annual basis and take a more realistic look at growth patterns and trends."

As data becomes available, ADMA members hope state lawmakers will come to them for information when making decisions that affect recreational boating.

"It's not our goal to become lobbyists or be controversial. But we want our state's decision-makers to understand the economic consequences of legislation they pass. Some decisions are being made without adequate information," Morgheim says. "As we gather information, we'll do a better job of defining our industry's role. And we'll gain more more credibility (with lawmakers) in the process."

Susitna Valley Association
9000 Sialom Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99516
346-1943

Is the Necessary Volume Available for a Wood Products Industry in the Valley?

Timber industry representatives, as well as DCED, have stated that a minimum of 50-million board feet a year would be needed for a successful wood products industry in the Susitna Valley.

According to the Division of Forestry, in the Susitna Valley it takes an average of 367 acres to produce 1-million board feet of timber. This calculation is based on an average volume of 940 cubic feet of wood per acre, and a conversion factor of 2.9 board feet per cubic foot. The volume is not comparable to Southeast timber.

In the Susitna Valley, 18,350 acres would have to be harvested per year to produce 50-million board feet. That's equal to 1 1/2 Point McKenzies being cut and accessed every year. Over an 80-year rotation, almost 1.5-million acres of commercial timber would be needed from the valley to meet this demand.

The Susitna Valley simply does not have that volume of timber. There's not even a third that volume; and what is there is spread out over a 2-million acre area. The SRFP has identified 450,000 acres with commercial potential that is in a land-use designation that would allow forestry as one of the uses. But not all that acreage is available for forestry. Much of it is in areas where "forestry" is only a secondary use, and must not conflict with the primary uses. In some cases "forestry" is allowed, but only for local personal use. Buffers for wetlands must be discounted from the timber base. Mitigation measures to minimize conflict with other values will further reduce the base. The final volume will be substantially less than the 450,000 acres being analyzed. The forest lands will not be contiguous and much of it will not be economically accessible.

In short, the Susitna Valley Association believes that, while existing small-scale timber harvest can and should continue in certain areas to accommodate commercial firewood sales and personal use wood lots, large-scale commercial harvesting is out of the question. The resource simply isn't there.

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF HABITAT

STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

BOX 3-2000
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99802
PHONE: (907) 465-4106

February 8, 1990

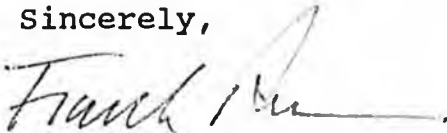
RECEIVED
FEB 13 1990

The Honorable Mike Szymanski
Alaska State Legislature
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Senator Szymanski:

With reference to your letter dated January 22, we have already prepared a response to Ms. Becky Long in which we explained how our recommendations to protect fish and wildlife resources were developed and submitted for consideration by the Matanuska-Susitna Forest Management Plan Steering Committee. I agree with your suggestion that it is important to develop immediate habitat protection plans for any future level of timber harvesting. For your information, I have enclosed a copy of the letter sent to your constituent and a copy of our comments prepared for the Borough. I am also enclosing a copy of the forest management guidelines for the protection of fish and wildlife resources that we recommend be included in the Borough's forest plan.

Sincerely,



Frank Rue
Director

Enclosures

Dw.

June 7, 1989

Mr. Bill Luria
Resource Management Associates
P.O. Box 100741
Anchorage, AK 99510

Dear Mr. Luria:

As per your request, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has reviewed the 14 Forest Management Units (FMUs) developed for the Mat-Su Borough Forest Management Plan. Along with the short resource summary we have included recommended land use designations for these units. We urge the land allocation working group to include Fish and Wildlife Habitat as a co-primary use designation in all FMUs. Timber harvests in these units should be planned and managed to maintain and improve existing wildlife habitat, especially moose habitat, maintain water quality and stream productivity and sustain opportunities for public recreation in a high quality environment. The department assumes that the Mat-Su Forest Plan Steering Team will adopt the habitat guidelines developed by the Susitna Regional Forest Plan and will follow the land use designations and guidelines in the Susitna Area Plan and Willow Sub-basin Plan. Existing public hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities should also be maintained in all FMUs. A copy of the resource summaries for each unit is enclosed.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this document and provide input to the planning process.

Sincerely,

Steven W. Albert

Steven W. Albert
Habitat Biologist
Region II
Habitat Division

Enclosure

cc: L. Trasky, ADF&G
D. McKay, ADF&G
D. Bader, ADF&G
C. Grauvogel, ADF&G
L. Engel, ADF&G
G. Liepitz, ADF&G

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOREST MANAGEMENT UNIT FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE SUMMARIES

FMU 1 - SPH 3b + PR 2e (Whiskers Creek-Chulitna Corridor)

Whiskers Creek is an important drainage and supports coho and pink salmon rearing and spawning, and has abundant populations of rainbow trout, grayling and Dolly Varden char. This watershed has moderate to heavy use by moose for summer and winter range. Black bears are fairly common with brown bears utilizing mainly the upper elevations in this unit. The upland forests have a high potential for supporting increased amounts of high quality moose forage if proper forestry practices occur.

There may be several old flooded gravel pit ponds located within this FMU. There is great potential for increased public recreational opportunities through lake stocking programs if such an enhancement program is feasible. In the Chulitna River corridor wildlife values are considered moderate with moose and black bear fairly common. Local residents are the primary users of this resource. Timber management activities could enhance moose habitat values if properly planned.

Classification Recommendation: Fish and Wildlife Habitat,
Forestry, Public Recreation

FMU 2 - SPH 4b

This FMU parallels the Alaska RR and includes the upper end of the Wiggle Creek watershed. This creek is not known to support anadromous fish. However, a different unnamed creek crossing the railroad ROW at approximately Mile 236 and its tributaries do support chinook and coho salmon spawning with all five species of Pacific salmon having been documented in this drainage. This FMU provides both summer and winter range for moderate numbers of moose. Black bears are abundant with some brown bears in the subalpine habitats.

Classification Recommendation: Fish and Wildlife Habitat,
Forestry

FMU 3 - SPH 5d (No. Bartlett Hills)

This FMU has no documented anadromous fish streams. Wildlife populations and habitat are believed to be of low to moderate value depending on local conditions. Moose, black bear, and

some brown bear can be found in this area. This FMU is likely an important hunting and trapping area for local residents.

Classification Recommendation: Forestry, Public Recreation (hunting and trapping opportunities should be maintained), Fish and Wildlife Habitat

FMU 4 - SPH 11 + 12c (No. Sheep Creek)

This FMU contains no known anadromous fish streams but is considered important wildlife habitat. The unit supports a high diversity of wildlife species. The area is used on a year-round basis by moose, brown bear, black bear, a number of furbearer species, upland game birds, and small game species. Moose are generally considered abundant and thus attract comparatively large numbers of hunters. Based on continuing research studies, seasonal concentrations of moose have been observed in sections 32, 33, 5, and 4 within this FMU. Black bears are more common than brown bear. Many other forms of public recreation also occur in this area.

Classification Recommendation: Fish and Wildlife Habitat, Public Recreation, Forestry

FMU 5 - PR 3e (West Fork Moose Creek)

This FMU is bisected by the Petersville Road and the West Fork of Moose Creek with the mainstem of Moose Creek flowing along the eastern perimeter. Both the West Fork and mainstem of Moose Creek support rainbow trout, grayling, and Dolly Varden char; chinook, coho, and sockeye salmon spawn and rear in the mainstem with pink salmon also being present. Part of this unit lies within the Moose Creek Recreation River Plan corridor and should be managed according to the policies developed in that planning process. Most of this unit and the adjoining lands contain very important wildlife habitat and are heavily used by the public for hunting and trapping. Moose and black bears are abundant in this unit. Moose tend to congregate in winter in the riparian habitats; the area is also used for breeding and calving habitat. Because the area adjacent to Petersville Road is heavily hunted, moose are dependent on the existing timbered areas for escape cover. Properly planned timber harvesting could improve habitat quality for those wildlife species, such as moose, that depend on early successional vegetation. The easy access results in heavy recreational use by many different user groups, especially hunters, fishermen, trappers, cross-country skiers, dog mushers, snowmobilers, et al. Moose Creek is also a favorite put-in point for people floating the river.

Classification Recommendation: Fish and Wildlife Habitat, Public Recreation, Forestry

FMU 6 - Pr 6b, 6d + addition

Much of this FMU lies along the Susitna River. Rabideaux Creek supports coho spawning and coho and chinook rearing habitat and an unnamed tributary of the Susitna River in the furthest south portion of the west bank parcel also supports coho salmon rearing habitat. Many of the clearwater sloughs of the Susitna River are used for spawning and rearing areas for chinook and coho salmon. This area is heavily used by moose as winter range and supports a high-density concentration of animals. The more mesic cover types are also important calving habitat for moose in late spring. Because of the relatively large amount of boat and road access, this area receives heavy use by moose and black bear hunters, sport fishermen, and various other recreational users.

Classification Recommendation: Fish and Wildlife Habitat, Forestry, Public Recreation

FMU 7 - PR 7d, 7e (West Susitna River)

Most of this FMU borders the Susitna River. Trapper Creek flows through the northern portion of the unit and supports coho rearing and spawning. Many of the clearwater sloughs of the Susitna River are used for spawning and rearing areas for chinook and coho salmon. This area is heavily used by moose as winter range and supports a high-density concentration of animals. The more mesic cover types are also important calving habitat for moose in late spring. Because of the relatively large amount of boat and road access, this area receives heavy use by moose and black bear hunters, sport fishermen, and various other recreational users.

Classification Recommendation: Fish and Wildlife Habitat, Forestry, Public Recreation

FMU 8 - SL 10a (Chijuk Creek)

Low to moderate numbers of moose are found throughout this FMU in summer but are relatively scarce during winter because of a lack of available browse. Some calving probably occurs in the eastern portion of the unit in the more mesic cover types between Pear Lake and Parker Lake. Black bears are more common in the western portion of the unit. Moderate to abundant numbers of marten, beaver and other furbearer species occur throughout this FMU. Chinook and coho salmon spawn and rear in Chijuk Creek. Rainbow trout, Dolly Varden char, whitefish and grayling are also resident to Chijuk Creek. Winter access to the area is readily available from Oil Well Road, numerous seismic trails, and skiplanes. The primary recreational uses include dog mushing, snowmobiling, ATV's, sport hunting and fishing, and trapping. We believe that the resources within this FMU offer exceptional potential to improve wildlife habitat and recreational values in

this FMU if the appropriate timber management objectives and guidelines are put in place.

Classification Recommendation: Forestry, Public Recreation, Fish and Wildlife Habitat

FMU 9 - GH 6a (Moose Range-Premier Creek)

This unit is less than 400 acres and is intersected by Premier Creek in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range. The Buffalo Mine Road serves as access to this area. The department has no evidence of anadromous fish presence in Premier Creek. The unit probably provides some escape cover for moose and likely has limited forage value. The general area experiences heavy use during moose hunting season and in fact is part of an area with a high harvest success rate in comparison to the adjoining area. Moose Creek receives moderate recreational fishing use. Timber harvests could improve moose habitat quality if conducted properly.

Classification Recommendation: Forestry, Public Recreation, Fish and Wildlife Habitat

FMU 10 - North Matanuska River

Local residents use the area for various purposes including hunting and trapping. This FMU is not known to support significant wildlife resources. Timber harvests of hardwoods in the vicinity of the Glenn Highway should be limited to avoid increasing the potential for for moose-vehicle collisions.

Classification Recommendation: Forestry, Public Recreation

FMU 11 - SPH 14a + additions (Kashwitna River-Iron Creek)

This FMU includes several important anadromous fish streams. Caswell Creek is an important coho salmon spawning and rearing system. The Kashwitna River with its many oxbows and sloughs provides habitat for pink and chum salmon spawning in this FMU. Chinook and coho salmon also have been documented in this system. It also support rainbow trout, grayling, and Dolly Varden char fisheries. Chinook salmon rearing habitat has been documented to the upper reaches of 196 Mile Creek. The Little Willow Creek drainage is important for chinook and coho salmon spawning and rearing with Iron Creek supporting only chinook and coho rearing. Much of the FMU contains high value moose habitat and supports high concentrations of moose. Black bears are common with occasional brown bear use. Although navigable access up the Kashwitna is limited by boulders, there is a very active sport fishery. The existing timber and associated vegetation provide important wildlife cover habitat and forage. Wetland swamps are

common throughout the area and support a diverse number of wildlife species. The scheduling of any timber harvests in this unit need to be closely coordinated with harvest schedules for adjoining state lands within the Kashwitna Unit.

Classification Recommendation: Fish and Wildlife Habitat, Forestry, Public Recreation

FMU 12 - Willow Creek South

This FMU is bisected by a tributary of Willow Creek which provides rearing habitat for coho salmon. Moose are common throughout this unit as they migrate to and from riparian habitats along the Susitna River and Willow Creek. Some calving activity occurs in May or early June. Generally this unit is of moderate value to moose. Other wildlife species such as black bear and some of the furbearer species use the area but are not abundant. Because of the relative ease of access, this area is likely used by local residents for hunting, trapping, and other winter recreational pursuits.

Classification Recommendation: Public Recreation, Forestry, Fish and Wildlife Habitat

FMU 13 - Pt. McKenzie (Lost Lake-Twin Is. Lake)

Comments: This FMU contains no known anadromous fish streams and receives moderate use by wildlife. Moose are distributed throughout the area but the habitat suitability is probably marginal to moderate. Consideration should be given to recreational users on the two large lakes adjacent to this unit. Appropriate harvesting techniques should be used to protect existing recreational values and ensure continued public access.

Classification Recommendation: Port Development, Public Recreation, Forestry, Fish and Wildlife Habitat

FMU 14 - Mt. Susitna 2a (Olson-Pretty Ck.)

Comments: This parcel is isolated, remote, and somewhat inaccessible. Three important anadromous fish stream drainages (Theodore River, Pretty Creek, Olson Creek) course through this FMU. These streams are important for chinook, coho, sockeye, and pink salmon spawning and rearing. This parcel borders the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge (SFSGR) and contains high value moose, black bear, brown bear, and furbearer habitat. After migrating down from the Little Mt. Susitna-Mt. Susitna complex, moose utilize the white spruce cover and the riparian habitats in late winter. Some calving occurs in late spring. During the summer the three streams receive moderate use by sport fishermen. It appears that the most likely road access to this

unit would require crossing the SFSGR. The department will probably not support such a proposal within the Refuge.

Classification Recommendation: Public Recreation, Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Straight talk on evolving forest management plans

1-27-90

By BECKY LONG

is have some straight talk on the two current logging forest management plans that will affect Valley residents and users.

State and borough plans are blueprints for logging and road access. The state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) plan, called Susitna Remote Forest Plan, is planning timber harvests for 150,000 acres. Public hearings should occur in 1990. The Mat-Su Borough plan, called Borough Use Forest Management Plan, covers 12,000 acres in 14 forest management units. Comment was due Dec. 26. After that, the bill will go through the Borough Planning Commission and the Borough Assembly, with its own public hearings.

People want to propose to the governor and Mat-Su Borough administration that these timber harvest plans be put on hold until the Susitna Remote Forest Plan (SAP) is revised publicly in 1990. SAP is the guiding plan for land management decisions. Passed into law in 1985, the plan does call for modifications and amendments if needed. The public has been asked if they want large-scale commercial logging on their state and borough public lands. This crucial public policy question can be re-addressed through the 1990 revision. The governor's and the borough administration are under a great deal of criticism for these plans.

The state is a multi-million dollar industry in the Susitna Valley now. People are not going to sit back and watch the tourism, recreation, hunting and fishery, that they have invested in and built their lives and communities around, to be threatened for the sake of a few logging jobs subsidized



by the state and borough.

Specifically, a 1990 public revision of SAP is needed for the following reasons:

- Since SAP was signed in 1985, land-use patterns have evolved into social and economic conditions with different demands on public lands than envisioned in SAP. Data, which has been gathered by the Habitat Division and the Susitna Valley Association, shows this. State and borough agencies continue to ignore this data in their professional planning. Thus, the public is proposing a special legislative designation, the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area, in order to recognize and protect these outstanding public values that support Valley economies, and have been ignored by the agencies.

- To the detriment of all land uses, the 1985 SAP mandates have not been followed. It was mandated in SAP that "Each land management division within ADNR and ADF&G will need to prepare detailed regional implementation programs built around the land-use designations and guidelines specified in this plan." So far, ADNR has only gone ahead with planning for annual timber sales, access improvements and timber marketing. We have no program for wildlife habitat, public recreation, or water quality. This is a bias favoring a special use.

- The current forest management process is flawed, leading to an unrealistic planning agenda.

For instance, the draft report "Economic Impact Potential for Forest Products in the Mat-Su Borough," prepared for DNR, is not adequate to responsibly plan a wood-products industry in the Valley. The report's timber harvest data base is incomplete, the forest acreage is incorrectly overestimated and the annual allowable harvest is miscalculated. Thus, all sorts of unrealistic and misleading assumptions could be made to advocate a large-scale intensive timber harvest program. And, of course, the existence of the current economic uses of the Valley is not addressed adequately. This certainly makes for a litigious situation.

All of this points to the need for a revision of our guiding plan.

There is a viable logging industry in the Valley now. Admittedly, it is hard to document the current use. Perhaps that should be the job of the state and borough, rather than creating pie-in-the-sky plans.

Borough consultants in their June 1989 report "Economic/Market Feasibility; Timber Sale Implementation; Timber Sale Contracts/Agreements," state that in the Mat-Su Borough there are annual timber sales of one to two million board feet each year on state lands, and the borough timber sale program has averaged over one million board feet annually and 12,000 to 13,000 cords of firewood.

Borough Assemblyman Ted Smith stated in a 1989 Spectrum article that 200,000 board feet in 1988 were harvested in the Valley.

Valley legislator and co-chairman of the House Resource Committee, Rep. Curt Menard stated in a

July 7, 1989 letter to the editor that "approximately 19 million board feet of timber are to be offered for sale in November 1989. This compares with 4.5 mbf in 1988 and 5-7 mbf in 1987. Moreover, there are currently 11 mbf of timber in the Mat-Su which have been contracted out for sale but have not been cut."

Whatever the statistical reality is, translate this into everyday language: logging is occurring now on public lands. The public is clearly saying through community council, comprehensive plan, and environmental group meetings that we do not need massive clearcut harvests and roads that favor corporations exporting our forests for chips. They are not saying "no" to logging, for there is a need for firewood, house logs and roughcut lumber in our communities.

Let us continue the present cutting agenda with better management and environmental improvements. Let us favor small independent loggers in the Valley and personal use for firewood and building materials. This benefits our communities, the Susitna Valley, and the Anchorage Bowl for many years to come.

The state constitution states that "Fish, forests, wildlife, grasslands, and all other replenishable resources" must "be utilized, developed, and maintained on the sustained yield principle." With responsible use and recognizing the limits of the land, the Susitna Valley has this now. Why won't the state and borough recognize this?

Becky Long is a Upper Susitna Valley resident active in land-use issues.

FORUM

Wilderness means jobs, lifestyle in Talkeetna

By PAUL BRATTON

TALKEETNA — "Make jobs, not more wilderness."

I first saw this bumper sticker plastered on a fancy Cadillac parked in Wasilla. Redcorp and other timber industry promoters are distributing this to promote their philosophy.

In Talkeetna we don't have many Cadillacs or any Redcorp bumper stickers, but if we did plaster a slogan on our Super Cubs, fishing boats, pickups, or dog sleds, it would read "Wilderness produces our jobs."

Commercial fishing and processing employs more people in Alaska than any other private industry. I make my living gillnetting salmon and herring. There's no place on this Earth that has been able to maintain a healthy salmon fishery once the wilderness is gone. There's no reason to believe Alaska would be an exception.

But you don't have to look out to the coast to see the jobs that the Susitna basin wilderness produces. I've been around Talkeetna for 17 years and have seen a few changes, but the major one is the development and growth of a wilderness-based recreation economy. In the early '70s, Ray Genet guiding climbers and a couple air taxis flying them was about it.

Now I couldn't begin to list all the air taxis, riverboat charter services, guides, outfitters, tour operators, and other businesses that depend upon the tourism and outdoor recreation economy.



People in Talkeetna didn't just sit around waiting for the state or borough to develop a ski area or park hotel or timber industry to hand them a subsidized income. Instead they built an economy using renewable natural resources but not destroying those resources.

Local initiative found the niches where an individual, family, or small business could survive and make a profit.

Today this economy is threatened with ruin by the state and borough's reckless attempts to create timber industry jobs at any cost.

In coming weeks, the Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission will hold public hearings on a plan to encircle Talkeetna with blocks of land dedicated to commercial timber harvest. That means road construction and clear-cutting on some of the most valuable wildlife habitat and remote recreation areas in our community.

There is no surer or quicker way to destroy the community character and wild country that makes Talkeetna an economically viable community.

This isn't just one man's opinion. At a half-dozen community meetings over the past three months I have yet to hear a single resident support the borough's timber plan. In 17 years I've never seen this kind of unanimity before.

Unfortunately, this community consensus hasn't deterred the borough's single-minded drive to implement widespread clear-cutting in the Upper Susitna Valley. This is especially distressing as more than 150 area residents are now participating in the Talkeetna and Chase Comprehensive Planning processes to determine appropriate land uses and development directions for our community. Many who have dedicated their energies to this planning effort view the unseemly rush to impose clear-cutting units here as a slap in the face to community self-determination.

In this age of perestroika, when people all over the Earth are insisting on their right to determine their own destinies, the borough appears to be telling Talkeetna that we have little choice but to accept the dictates of a handful of special-interest promoters and logging bureaucrats.

I know the timber industry consultants, pressure groups, and promoters along with their friends in government will not believe it but they occupy exactly the same position that the Communist Party had in Eastern Europe until recent weeks.

When I made this analogy at a planning

commission meeting, some found it objectionable. But I contend the comparison is valid. I am not ascribing evil motives merely pointing out that this group occupies the position of a party elite certain they know better than those of us who from and on the lands, they intend "develop."

In contrast, the community comprehensive planning process is a fine example of decentralized Jeffersonian democracy. It may be slower and seem awkward, but in the long run it is the only way excellent decisions can be made about the proper use of public lands. I encourage borough residents to attend hearings and contact planning commission members to stop the clear-cutting juggernaut which threatens to raze down our forests.

I hear that Palmer, Wasilla and Houma are talking about pulling out of the borough. In Talkeetna people are beginning to talk about incorporation if the borough attempts to impose their timber-cut plans on our community.

Unless the borough learns to listen to its citizens, rather than just a handful of special-interest promoters, borough officials may one day find themselves administering a borough only the size of Rhode Island.

Paul Bratton is a Talkeetna resident.



ALASKA OUTDOOR COUNCIL, INC.

3180 MITCHELL ST. JUNEAU, AK 99801
(907) 789-3450

P.O. Box 34097
Juneau, Ak. 99803
(907) 463-3830

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Legislators

FROM: Ed Grasser, Director
Legislative Affairs

RE: Susitna Valley Association's proposed legislation

DATE: February 5, 1990

Recently you received a packet of information from the Susitna Valley Association supporting legislation for a remote recreational parcel in the Susitna River Drainage. Within the packet were listed several organizations which purportedly participated in the drafting of this proposal. The Alaska Outdoor Council, along with several member affiliates were so listed.

In order to clarify any misconceptions which may or may not have been inferred by the presence of our organization on SVA's list, we would like to inform you that we currently are not in support of their proposal, nor did we participate in any of their discussions leading to this proposal. Also, several of our member affiliates have indicated they are currently opposed to SVA's proposed legislation.

We regret any inconvenience or misconception SVA's inclusion of our name on this proposal may have caused. We appreciate your consideration of our concerns on this matter and look forward to a more constructive level of participation on this legislation after our members have had time to relate their concerns and comments to us.

cc: Member Clubs

Mat-Su assembly criticizes Susitna recreation-area bill

By CHARLES WOHLFORTH
Daily News reporter

PALMER — The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly on Tuesday denounced a bill in the legislature that would turn most of the Susitna Valley into a recreation

area rather than allowing the logging industry the assembly prefers.

The Susitna Valley Association, an anti-logging group, proposed the bill to create the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area,

which was introduced by Sen. Pat Rodey, D-Anchorage, and faces a long, uncertain course through three Senate committees.

The association was formed in 1987 by local residents, conservationists, tourism operators and outdoors groups to fight a massive state timber sale proposed for the Susitna Valley. The sale was blocked and an elaborate land-use planning process was begun, but is still incomplete.

But Loisann Reeder, president of the association, said the state's planning process has focused too much on timber development.

The Mat-Su assembly was predictably unenthusiastic. The borough government badly wants the jobs it hopes would come from large-scale timber cutting, and even joined a logging

industry lobbying group in which all the other members are private sector companies that stand to gain from it.

The assembly's resolution says Rodey's bill would halt all forms of development, including tourism, although the bill says its purpose is to promote recreation, including lodges, guides and riverboat charters.

The resolution also says the bill would make the borough's own land in the area useless for its intended purpose of development and that it contradicts the state's own plans for the area. Borough Manager Don Moore wrote to the assembly that there is already enough recreation land in the borough.

Assembly members said the bill was wrong to favor tourism over all other land uses. They criticized Rodey as an interloper.

"The majority of lodge owners and people flying tourists out to that area are coming out of Anchorage, so it's appropriate that it's an Anchorage legislator locking up our land," Assemblywoman Eleanor Malapanes said. "I think it would be good if we could come up with a bill that would lock up Anchorage so we could show Senator Rodey how it feels."

Mark Begich, an Anchorage assemblyman and the aide to Rodey who wrote the bill, said the bill would block commercial timber harvest on state lands, but leaves alone borough land and allowed access to it.

Martha Welbourn, who has for two years run the Department of Natural Resources efforts to draft a Susitna Regional Forest Plan, said the bill would

remove from consideration about two-thirds of the area the plan addresses.

Welbourn said the plan hasn't been drafted, so it is too early for Rodey or anyone else to react to it. But she said the plan is mandated by the Susitna Area Plan, which calls for multiple use of the land, including forestry. She said it would not be within the power of the plan writers to outlaw commercial logging in a large area, as Rodey's bill would.

Reeder's complaint is that by drafting a forestry plan, the state gives that use priority. She said a recreation plan should have been drafted at the same time to give it equal weight.

But Welbourn said the forest plan work has addressed recreation, fish and wildlife resources, and other competing uses.

OPINION

Frontiersman

Duncan Frazier
Publisher
Sean Hanlon
Managing Editor
Susan Morgan Howk
Associate Editor



Fight brewing: Tourism vs. timber

As the Mat-Su Borough's 1991 budget winds its way through government halls, it is subject to a variety of pressures that push it this way and tug it that way. Politics and the clash of competing interests sometimes disrupt the process, which could be the case in one budget section this year.

A small segment of the Borough Assembly appears interested in diminishing the borough's commitment to our developing visitor industry. That lessening of commitment would likely take the form of a shrunken Matanuska-Susitna Convention and Visitor's Bureau, the borough's leader in adding to this important industry in the Valley.

Interestingly, those who would have the borough lessen or abandon its efforts in tourism are the same ones who seek to develop a viable timber industry in the Valley. It appears the stage has been set for a duel between two industries, tourism and timber, with the future shape of the Valley stuck right in the middle.

Development of a timber industry in the Mat-Su remains a topic of much debate. The lifestyle-versus-jobs argument is often heard, and in a way it is a basic force in the collective borough psyche. We can add to only one or the other, some wrongly believe. We must have both.

The borough's foray into tourism development is still young. Building and expanding the visitor industry is a long-term project with a long-term payback. Diminishing the local commitment to tourism now would set the borough back years, and it would guarantee that we would see no more tourism success stories like those in Talkeetna and Big Lake.

A large group of European and Japanese travel agents was recently hosted by the MSCVB and Talkeetna's tourism vendors as part of a marketing strategy that can mean important growth in local tourism. The agents' enthusiasm for the country, even in the village's sub-zero cold, was palpable. The Europeans' desire for independent travel and rustic accommodations in a unique setting was perfectly suited to Talkeetna and the rest of the Valley, and we expect greater demand for that in the future from Europeans and Americans alike. But only if we manage to let people know we are here, and that task falls to the young visitor bureau.

It's one thing for the Borough Assembly to support development of a timber industry in the Valley, but it shouldn't be at the expense of an already-established visitor industry with tremendous future potential. The upcoming borough budget will tell us much about borough priorities.

As for the lifestyle-versus-jobs argument, the voters of the Valley will eventually rule on the wisdom of this Assembly's actions, and it is those same voters who will ultimately decide if we have a growing tourism industry, a timber industry, both, or neither.

'What is your favorite part of Fur Rendezvous?'



Dixie Summerlin, housewife, Wasilla: This is my first year to see the Fur Rendezvous. I lived in Dutch Harbor before moving here. I'm most excited about seeing the ice sculptures.



Jerry Johnson, warehouseman, Anchorage: We usually start with the fireworks and then go to the Grand Prix, weight pulls, trade shows, ice sculptures. I guess you could say we just do everything.



Melissa Reynolds, student, Wasilla: My favorite part is the rides, because they're fun and scary. I also like the ice sculptures and eating french fries.



Kristen Egbert, student, Wasilla: I like the rides. I get cold but it's OK because it's fun. I also like eating candy apples and I want to watch the car races on the streets.

In Talkeetna 'wilderness means jobs'

By PAUL BRATTON

Make jobs not more wilderness. I first saw this bumper sticker plastered on a fancy Cadillac parked in Wasilla. REDCOR and other timber industry promoters are distributing this to promote their philosophy.

In Talkeetna we don't have many Cadillacs or any REDCOR bumper stickers, but if we did plaster a slogan on our super cubs, fishing boats, pickup trucks or dog sleds, it would read "Wilderness Produces Jobs."

Commercial fishing and processing employs more people in Alaska than any other private industry. I make my living gillnetting salmon and herring. There's no place on this earth that has been able to maintain a healthy salmon fishery once the wilderness is gone. There's no reason to believe Alaska would be an exception.

But you don't have to look out to the coast to see the jobs that the Susitna basin wilderness produces. I've been around Talkeetna for 17 years and have seen a few changes, but the major one is the development and growth of a wilderness-based recreation economy. In the early '70s, Ray Genet guiding climbers, and Don Sheldon and Cliff Hudson flying them was about it. Now I couldn't begin to list all the air taxis, riverboat charter services, guides, outfitters, tour operators and other businesses that depend upon the tourism and outdoor recreation economy.

"People in Talkeetna didn't just sit around waiting for the state or borough to develop a ski area or park hotel or timber industry to hand them a subsidized income. Instead they built an economy using renewable natural resources but not destroying those resources. Local initiative found the niches where an individual, family or small business could survive and make a profit.

Today this economy is threatened with ruin by the state and borough's reckless attempts to create timber industry jobs at any cost. In coming weeks the Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission will be holding public hearings on a plan to encircle Talkeetna with blocks of lands dedicated to commercial timber harvest. That means road construction and clearcutting on some of the most valuable wildlife habitat and remote recreation areas in our community.

There is no surer or quicker way to destroy the community character and wild country that makes Talkeetna an economically viable community.

This isn't just one man's opinion. At a half dozen community meetings over the past three months, I have yet to hear a single resident support the borough's timber plan. In 17 years I've never seen this kind of unanimity before. The timber plan has



achieve something I wasn't sure was possible. It has all elements of the Talkeetna community.

Unfortunately this community consensus hasn't deterred the borough's single-minded drive to implement widespread clearcutting in the upper Susitna Valley. This is especially distressing as more than 150 area residents are now participating in the Talkeetna and Chase comprehensive planning process to determine appropriate land uses and development directions for our community. Many who have dedicated their energies to this planning effort view the unseemly rush to impose clearcutting units here as a slap in the face to community self-determination.

In an age when people all over the earth are insisting on their right to determine their own destinies, the borough appears to be telling Talkeetna that we have little choice but to accept the dictates of a handful of special interest promoters and logging bureaucrats. I know the timber industry consultants, pressure groups and promoters, along with their friends in government, will not believe it, but they

occupy exactly the same position that the Communist Party has in Eastern Europe until recent weeks.

When I made this analogy at a Planning Commission meeting, some found it objectionable. But I contend the comparison is valid. I am not ascribing evil motives, merely pointing out that this group occupies the position of a party elite certain that they know better than those of us who live from, and on, the lands they intend to "develop."

In contrast the community comprehensive planning process is a fine example of decentralized Jeffersonian democracy. It may be slower and seem awkward, but in the long run it is the only way excellent decisions can be made about the proper uses of public lands. I encourage borough residents to attend hearings and contact Planning Commission members to stop the clearcutting juggernaut which threatens to mow down our forests.

I hear that Palmer, Wasilla and Houston are talking about pulling out of the borough. In Talkeetna people are beginning to talk about incorporation if the borough attempts to impose their timber-cutting plans on our community.

Unless the borough learns to listen to all its citizens, rather than just a handful of special interest promoters, borough officials may one day find themselves administering a borough only the size of Rhode Island.

Paul Bratton is a resident of Talkeetna.

Police invaded privacy

By W. MICHAEL MOODY

The United States and Alaska Constitutions guarantee each citizen a right to privacy and a right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures. On Oct. 3 and 4, 1989, the Anchorage Police Department occupied the Administration Building of the Anchorage School District, and searched the premises for two days. This unprecedented intrusion raises many serious questions which must concern every thoughtful member of our community.

The search appears to have been a fishing expedition in the broadest sense. The search warrant sought evidence pertaining to one named teacher. Yet the search as conducted was a wholesale invasion of the privacy of others. It included the reading of children's test scores, personnel records of many teachers and employees, curriculum and facilities reports and numbers of other files totally unrelated to the specific teacher.

One of the worst examples was the reading of files of special education students. Who is more deserving of privacy, protection and consideration than special education students and their families? Their files contain extensive: personal, medical, family and psychological information. The files are specially protected by state and federal status. What possible justification was there for this invasion? Who will be next?

We are also greatly concerned with the attempt of the Anchorage Police Department to seize files of attorneys for the School District. Communication between attorney and client are privileged. The work product of the attorney is also protected by qualified privilege. These files should be inviolate, except in the most exceptional circumstances. What possible justification was there for this wholesale seizure of attorney-client materials? Which citizen? (Continued on Page 5)

Don't let Susitna Valley Association lock up land

By ROBERT W. LANG

It's time that this merry-go-round between Preservationist and sound Multiple Use Management Practices ceases. I am referring to the front page article in the Frontiersman, on Jan. 17, about the proposed two thousand acre "Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area."

Are we, the residents of Alaska, going to sit back and let a person, to wit, Lois Reeder and her adherents in the Anchorage-based Susitna Valley Association (SVA) tell us how to run our state and the Mat-Su Valley?

Who is the SVA? Look at their roles. They are individuals, organizations and businesses of whom the majority are not from the Mat-Su Valley, but rather, from the Anchorage area. They are preservationists, a group of people who already have land holdings, remote cabins, lodges, riverfront lots, etc., within the Mat-Su Valley who do not want any more people to encroach upon them. They have existing roads and trails to their places. They are a well organized group that have what they want.

They do not want anyone else to build roads and trails to land which they might acquire from individuals or the state in the future, or to use its full potential of Natural Resources under the Multiple Use Management Concept, the SVA is totally against the concept of Multiple Use Management.

Apparently the SVA forgot to read the Constitution of the State of Alaska. Article VIII, "Natural Resources" reads in part: "Section 1 - Statement of



Policy. It is the policy of the State to encourage the settlement of its land and the development of its resources by making them available for maximum use consistent with the public interest. Section 2 - General Authority. The legislature shall provide for the utilization, development, and conservation of all natural resources belonging to the State, including land and waters, for the maximum benefit of its people.... Section 4 - Sustained yield. Fish, forests, wildlife, grasslands, and all other replenishable resources belonging to the State shall be utilized, developed, and managed on the sustained yield principle, subject to differences among beneficial uses. Section 5 - Facilities and Improvements. The legislature may provide for facilities, improvements, and services to assure greater utilization, development, reclamation, and settlement of lands, and to assure fuller utilization and development of the fisheries, wildlife, and waters."

There are 18 sections in all. Take the time to know your Constitutional rights. Pick up a copy of the Constitution of the State of Alaska at your nearest Legislature Information Office. In Wasilla, the

Mat-Su Legislative Information Office is in the Krenik Building. The telephone number is 376-3704.

Are you also aware that there are still 22 surviving Delegates of the People of Alaska, who wrote our Alaska Constitution, which was adopted by the Constitutional Convention, of February 5, 1956? I cannot begin to imagine what must be going through their minds when they see such organizations as the SVA deliberately violating our State Constitution.

The SVA say they are not in opposition to small-scale logging. Therefore, small-scale logging to them must be nothing more than personal use permits. They have been at the back door of every timber sale presented and voiced their objections. Did you know that in calendar year 1989, there was not a single timber sale offered for public auction in the Mat-Su Valley, due in part to the endeavors of the SVA? Did you know that the workload of forest activities at the Big Lake office of the Alaska Division of Forestry, is such, that two foresters are able to handle this workload on the approximately 1.2 million acres, administered by that office? Of the dozen or so forest technicians that work out of that office, only one is on year round, and his primary duties are fire-related. The remainder are all seasonal employees because there is such a small workload.

Compare this to any other such comparable forests in the Lower 48 or Canada. You would be astonished at the amount of forest activity that should

be in progress on some 1.2 million acres. On Jan. 10, there were only four timber sales offered at public auction at the Big Lake Office. It's a miracle that these four ever made it through all the obstacles created by such organizations as the SVA.

Did you notice that the cost of local forest products, i.e., lumber, firewood, house logs, timbers, slabs, posts and poles, etc. went up in price this past winter, re: Frontiersman Jan. 19, page three, and may go even higher, state officials said in the article. A lot of this can be attributed to such organizations as the SVA, so long as they continue their attempts to lock up our land.

Our forests are growing older just as we are, and expiring too. We have almost as much over mature dead and dying commercial timber in the Mat-Su Valley as we do healthy stock, in part because we are unable to harvest it. Dead and dying forests invite disease and insect infestation, and if left unchecked by sound forest management practices.

The SVA talks about tourism, however I do not believe the tourists, who sometimes spend thousands of dollars to come to Alaska, want to look at millions of acres of dead and dying or blackened forests.

If we are ever going to save our land from a total "Land Lockup" and maintain it for Multiple Use Management for all Alaskans to enjoy, now is the time to step forward and speak out.

Robert W. Lang is a resident of Palmer.

RECEIVED

FEB 12 1990

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION SERIAL NUMBER 90- 014

"A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY RECOMMENDING THAT THE ALASKA LEGISLATURE OPPOSE THE CREATION OF THE PROPOSED SUSITNA VALLEY REMOTE RECREATION AREA."

WHEREAS, legislation has been proposed to create a Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area; and

WHEREAS, the State and Borough through a open public planning process adopted the Susitna Area Plan as management guidelines for public lands within the Susitna Valley; and

WHEREAS, the Susitna Area Plan does not recommend the creation of a Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area; and

WHEREAS, approximately fifty-five percent of all State lands within the Matanuska Susitna Borough are already classified a Public Recreation and Wildlife Habitat lands; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area will severely retard the State's and Borough's efforts to diversify their economies by halting all forms of development including tourism; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area will subvert the rationale for past decisions for selecting lands under the Municipal Lands Entitlement program by rendering the lands selected under this program useless for the uses they were selected for; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area will provide an economic windfall to existing property (lodge) owners by restricting competition.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Assembly of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough strongly opposes the creation of the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area and respectfully recommends that the Alaska State Legislature oppose this legislation.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Assembly of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough this 6 day of February, 1990.

Dorothy A. Jones
Dorothy A. Jones
Mayor
Matanuska-Susitna Borough

ATTEST:

Linda Dahl
Linda Dahl
Borough Clerk

(SEAL)

SUBJECT: Proposed Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area Legislation

For Agenda of: 02/06/90

No. AM90-034

ATTACHMENTS: Proposed Legislation Resolution 90-014

Route to:	Dept/Committee/Individual	Initials	Remarks
	(Please review & return to originator)		
1	Planning Director	JD	Originator
	Borough Assessor		
	Public Works Director		
2	Finance Director		
3	Borough Attorney		
4	Borough Manager		
	Mayor		

STATEMENT The Susitna Valley Association (SVA) and several environmental organizations, e.g., Sierra Club, have proposed legislation that would establish a remote recreation unit within the Susitna Basin. It is expected that Senator Rodey will introduce the legislation during the last week of January, 1990; a House sponsor was not identified at the time this memorandum was written.

The proposed legislation, if adopted, would not allow commercial timber harvesting, land disposals, mining nor the construction of publicly financed roads within the Susitna Valley. The restrictions, especially the restrictions on road construction, will severely restrict the

FISCAL ACTION (TO BE COMPLETED BY FINANCE) FISCAL IMPACT? YES/NO _____

AMOUNT REQUESTED \$ 0, at this time FUNDING SOURCE _____

FROM ACCOUNT # _____ PROJECT # _____

TO ACCOUNT # _____ PROJECT # _____

VERIFIED BY: [Signature] CERTIFIED BY: [Signature]

DATE: 1-29-90 DATE: 1-24-90

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The Borough Administration respectfully recommends that the Borough Assembly strongly oppose the proposed Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area legislation.

APPROVED BY: [Signature]
Donald L. Moore
Borough Manager

economic development of the Borough in all phases of the economy including tourism and recreation. The proposed legislation violates and subverts the public land use classification process undertaken by the State and Borough through the Susitna Area Plan. Moreover the proposed legislation will convey an economic windfall on existing property (lodge) owners since entry by new lodge owners via existing and future land disposals will not be allowed. The proposed legislation, if adopted, would also subvert the land selection decisions made by the Borough since the Borough would not be allowed to use the lands for the reasons it selected them. Finally, a cursory analysis of present land use classifications (see Table 1) within the Borough indicates that approximately 55% of State lands within the Borough are already classified as either Public Recreation (20%) or Wildlife Habitat (35%) and very little as Forest Management (6%) and Agriculture (1%); therefore, it does not appear that additional remote recreation lands are needed.

RECOMMENDATION The Borough Administration respectfully recommends that the Borough Assembly strongly oppose the proposed Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area legislation.

TABLE 1
STATE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS
IN MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

(ACRES X 1000)

	PUBLIC RECREATION	WILDLIFE HABITAT	FOREST MANAGEMENT	SETTLEMENT	AGRICULTURE	TOTAL
WILLOW SUB-BASIN PLAN	16.6	371.0	66.5	5.5	44.5	504.1
SUSITNA AREA PLAN (1)	1,555.1	3,126.6	521.5	4,391.2	26.1	9,620.5
LEGISLATIVELY DESIGNATED:						
GOOSE BAY STATE GAME REFUGE		10.9				10.9
PALMER HAY FLATS		26.0				26.0
SUSITNA FLATS		300.8				300.8
MATANUSKA VALLEY MOOSE RANGE	16.6	101.7	85.1			203.4
WILLOW MOUNTAIN CRITICAL HABITAT		23.0				23.0
DENALI STATE PARK	421.1					421.1
NANCY LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA	22.7					22.7
WILLOW CREEK STATE RECREATION AREA	3.6					3.6
HATCHER PASS PUBLIC USE AREA	5.1					5.1
SIX RECREATION RIVERS	240.9					240.9
TOTAL	2,281.7	3,960.0	673.1	4,396.7	70.6	11,382.1
PERCENT	20.0%	34.8%	5.9%	38.6%	0.6%	100.0%

Note: (1) Includes 4,391,244 unverified acres in Settlement - this is based on conversation with DNR personnel regarding survivor classifications.
Includes 19,897 unverified acres in Agriculture - total Agriculture figure is based on narrative in plan.

Willow Sub-Basin Plan, Susitna Area Plan and Matanuska Valley Moose Range figures include many areas with more than one primary designation.

All figures for Willow Sub-Basin Plan taken from narrative of plan except Public Recreation. Public Recreation taken from information supplied by DNR personnel.

SUMMARY OF THE SUSITNA VALLEY REMOTE RECREATION AREA PROPOSAL

11-2-89

1. PURPOSE - the purpose of the SVRRA is to perpetuate and enhance the present character and existing uses of a portion of the Susitna Valley. Specifically, the SVRRA has five main purposes:

- a. Protect and maintain fish and wildlife populations and habitat;
- b. Perpetuate and enhance public enjoyment of fish and wildlife;
- c. Perpetuate and enhance remote recreation while ensuring the scenic and natural integrity of the area;
- d. Perpetuate and enhance continued remote commercial recreation in a quality environment;
- e. Protect and perpetuate the remote character upon which present and future recreational use and community lifestyles depend.

2. ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES - except as noted in (3) below, all existing uses would be allowed, including:

- a. Personal use logging, including house logs and firewood for private or commercial facilities;
- b. Local roads not connected to the existing road system;
- c. Adequate and feasible access to private lands, existing mining claims, or other valid occupancies;
- d. Traditional means of access.

3. INCOMPATIBLE ACTIVITIES - the following would not be allowed:

- a. Commercial logging;
- b. Future land disposals by the state;
- c. Publicly financed and/or maintained roads connected to the highway system and intended for use by highway vehicles.
- d. Exploration, development, and the extraction of minerals (except for valid existing rights).

4. MANAGEMENT - The following management considerations apply:

- a. Management of the area will be by DNR, with ADF&G being responsible for management of fish and wildlife resources;
- b. A Management Plan is required to be prepared by DNR with the consultation of ADF&G, and with public review and comment;
- c. The commissioner of DNR may prohibit or restrict incompatible uses, after public review and comment.

DISCUSSION DRAFT

11-2-89

For an Act entitled: "An Act establishing the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area."

SECTION 1. PURPOSE. The purpose of this act is to establish the area described in this act as the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area. The Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area is established to

(1) manage, protect, and maintain fish and wildlife habitat so that traditional public uses of fish and wildlife populations may continue on a sustained yield basis;

(2) perpetuate and enhance public enjoyment of fish and wildlife and their habitat including fishing, hunting, trapping, viewing, and photography;

(3) perpetuate and enhance remote recreation including camping, boating, cross-country skiing, dogsledding, hiking, flightseeing, snowmobiling, and all-terrain vehicle use, while ensuring the scenic and natural integrity of the area;

(4) perpetuate and enhance continued remote commercial recreation, including air taxi and flightseeing services, lodges, guided hunting and fishing, adventure tours, riverboat charter services, and commercial operations supporting these industries, in a quality environment;

(5) Protect and perpetuate the remote character which has historically attracted people to the area, and upon which present and future recreational uses and community lifestyles depend;

(6) allow additional public uses of the area in a manner compatible with the purposes specified in (1) - (5) of this section.

SECTION 2. MANAGEMENT. (a) Management of the surface and subsurface estate within the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area is the responsibility of the commissioner. The commissioner shall adopt and may revise a management plan for the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area after public hearings. With regard to the management of land within the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area described in this act, the commissioner shall consult with the Department of Fish and Game in the adoption and revision of the management plan.

(b) The Department of Fish and Game is responsible for the management of fish and wildlife resources and public use of fish and wildlife in the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area consistent with the purposes of this act. Nothing in this act

shall be construed to prohibit the Department of Fish and Game from engaging in protection and maintenance of the fish and wildlife habitat within an area described in this act. The Department of Public Safety and the Department of Fish and Game shall have necessary access for fish and wildlife management, research, and enforcement purposes.

(c) Subject to valid existing rights, the commissioner shall not dispose of the surface estate in state land within the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area.

(d) Consistent with the purposes of this act and the management plan adopted under this act, the commissioner may allow the construction and operation of commercial recreation and tourism facilities, by

(1) leasing land under AS 38.05.070; or

(2) contracting for the construction and operation of a facility under AC 36.30 so long as the facility is not in competition with a private facility or enterprise.

(e) Publicly financed and/or maintained roads connected to the public highway system and intended for use by vehicles designed and licensed for highway travel shall not be constructed within the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area.

(f) The commissioner shall not dispose of timber under AS 38.05.110 - 38.05.120, AS 41.15, or AS 41.17 within the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area. The commissioner may permit the harvesting of timber for personal use, including house logs and fuelwood for private or commercial facilities.

(g) Subject to valid existing rights, the commissioner shall not allow for exploration, development, and the extraction of minerals under AS 38.05.135 -- 38.05.275

(h) The commissioner shall give such rights as may be necessary to ensure adequate and feasible access to private lands, existing mining claims, or other valid occupancies within or effectively surrounded by the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area. Such access rights shall be subject to regulations to protect the natural and other values of the land and water within the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area, and does not necessarily mean access by road. The construction of roads to provide access shall not be allowed unless the commissioner determines other modes of access are not adequate or feasible.

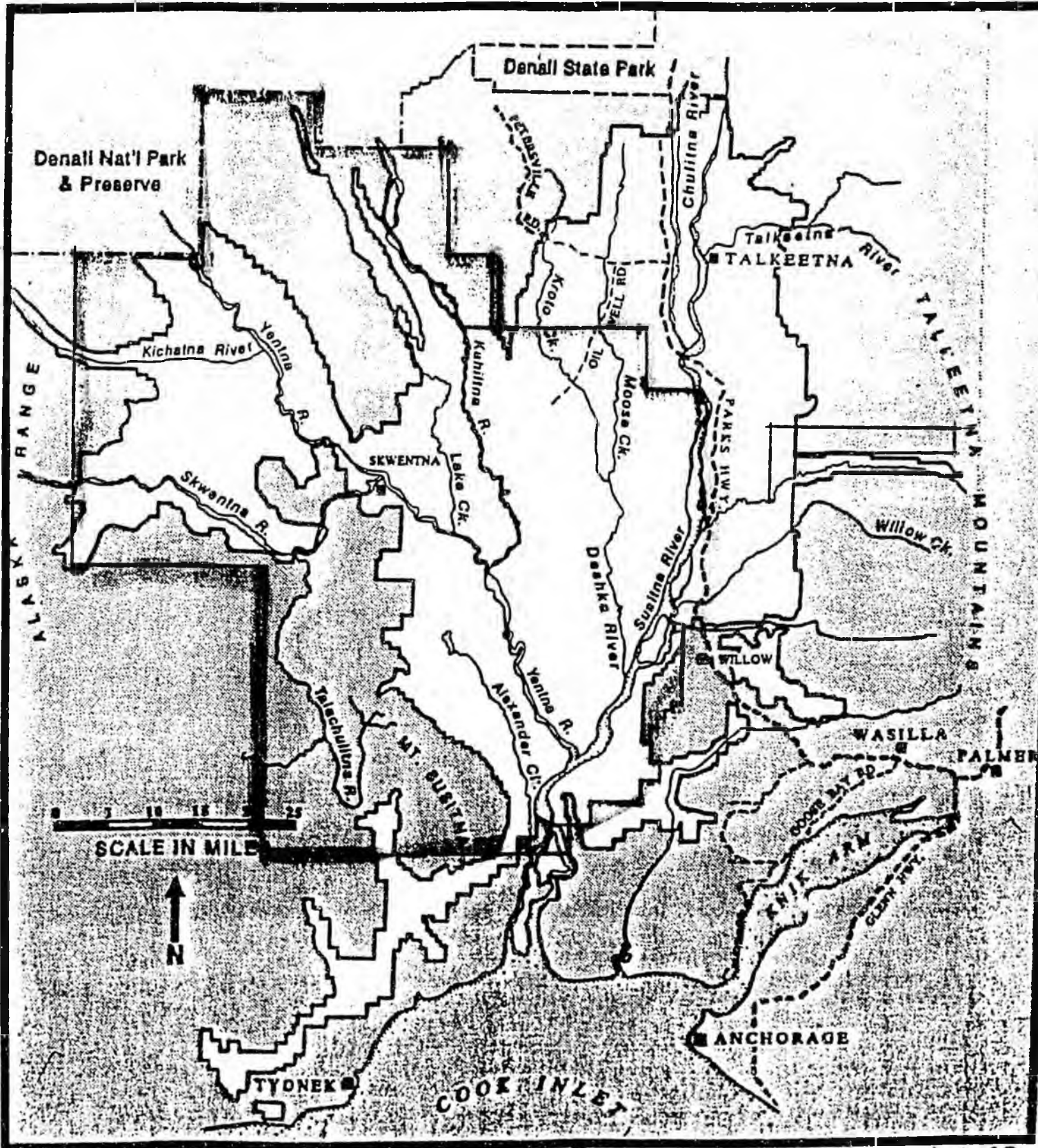
(i) The commissioner shall allow traditional access to the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area by motorized or nonmotorized means of transportation to private land, interests in private land, and for lawful sport and subsistence hunting, fishing, trapping, and recreational purposes in a manner that is compatible with the purposes specified in this act. The commissioner and the commissioner of fish and game may jointly develop guidelines for traditional access.

(j) Except as provided in this section, the commissioner may not restrict lawful sport and subsistence fishing, hunting, or trapping rights allowed under a regulation of the Board of Fisheries or the Board of Game within the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area.

(k) The commissioner may determine a use is incompatible with the purposes of this act only after public hearings. If the commissioner determines that a use is incompatible, the commissioner shall state,

- (1) each determination of incompatibility;
- (2) the specific area where the incompatibility is determined to exist;
- (3) the time within which the incompatibility is determined to exist; and
- (4) the reasons for each determination of incompatibility.

SECTION 3. SUSITNA VALLEY REMOTE RECREATION AREA. The vacant and unappropriated state-owned land and water and the state land and water acquired in the future, excluding the Recreation Rivers and Recreation River Corridors described under AS 41.23.500, that lie within the boundaries described in this section are designated as the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area, are reserved for all uses compatible with their primary function as public remote recreation land, and are assigned to the commissioner for control and management:



11-1-89

Legislative Designation Needed To Protect Susitna Valley

Stretching from Cook Inlet on the south to Mt. McKinley on the north, and from the Talkeetna Mountains on the east to the Alaska Range on the west, the Susitna Valley is a vast expanse of lakes, rivers, wetlands, muskeg, meadows and forests rich with wildlife and fish. The area has long been popular for hunting, fishing, boating, skiing, flightseeing, wildlife viewing, and a myriad of other outdoor recreation pursuits. Due to its proximity to the population centers of Southcentral Alaska, the Susitna Valley is used extensively by residents and visitors alike who are seeking, at relatively little expense, the wilderness experience for which Alaska is internationally known.

A significant segment of the economy of Southcentral Alaska relies on these remote recreational and tourism activities in the Susitna Valley. Daily, large numbers of planes leave Lake Hood in Anchorage to ferry recreationists, private property owners, and supplies to wilderness lodges, remote cabins, or favorite fishing holes. Tourists leave their hotels for a day of flightseeing. Boaters put in at Susitna Landing or at the boat ramp in Anchorage

to access the Big Susitna, Little Susitna, Deshka, Yentna, Skwenta, and Kahiltna Rivers, as well as Alexander and Lake Creeks.

This substantial and growing remote recreation industry pumps tens of millions of dollars into the Alaska economy every year. The 52 wilderness lodges alone contributed approximately \$10 million to the economy in 1987; about 93% of these dollars were brought to the economy in 1987; about 93% of these dollars were brought in from outside of Alaska. Approximately 38 air taxi and flightseeing businesses service the Susitna Valley, with an economic impact estimated at \$13 million annually. According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Susitna Valley anglers contributed over \$10.4 million to the Alaskan economy in 1986; in 1987 the area supported a total of 242,850 angler days, with 83.6% of those days spent at lakes and streams with no road access. In 1989, bear and moose hunting could result in as much as \$18.9 million worth of activity according to ADF&G. The value of hotel and motel rooms in

Anchorage occupied in relation to hunting and fishing in the Susitna Valley was \$6,764,580 in 1987. Tour operators also contribute substantially to the economy.

In spite of the economic and cultural importance of the Susitna Valley as a world renowned remote recreation area, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is continuing its pursuit of logging and road-building through the preparation of the Susitna Regional Forest Plan (SRFP). Although initiated in response to the overwhelming public opposition to a large timber sale proposal two years ago, the SRFP will provide a blueprint for logging and will sidestep the question of whether logging major portions of the Susitna Valley is consistent with the public interest.

Therefore, the Sierra Club Alaska Chapter has joined with other organizations and individuals of the Susitna Valley Association (SVA) in calling for the legislative designation of a portion of the Valley as the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area. As envisioned by the SVA, the Remote Recreation Area would provide protection for the Valley's established remote recreation, tourism and subsistence uses by placing certain restrictions on future land disposals by the state, commercial logging, future mining claims, and publicly financed roads connected to the existing highway system within the designated area. Although the exact wording of the bill is still being hammered out, the intent of the proposed legislation is to perpetuate the existing economic base and current use patterns of the Susitna Valley. Legislative designation is the only way in which long term protection of the spectacular remote recreation values of the Susitna Valley can be achieved.

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION SERIAL NUMBER 90-09

"A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDING THAT THE BOROUGH ASSEMBLY OPPOSE SENATE BILL 430 WHICH AUTHORIZES THE CREATION OF THE SUSITNA VALLEY REMOTE RECREATION AREA."

WHEREAS, legislation has been proposed to create a Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area; and

WHEREAS, the State and Borough through an open public planning process adopted the Susitna Area Plan as management guidelines for public lands within the Susitna Valley; and

WHEREAS, the Susitna Area Plan does not recommend the creation of a Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 430 subverts the Susitna Area Plan planning process; and

WHEREAS, approximately fifty-five percent of all State lands within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough are already classified as Public Recreation and Wildlife Habitat lands; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area will severely retard the State's and Borough's efforts to diversify their economies by halting all forms of development including tourism; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area will subvert the rationale for past decisions for selecting lands under the Municipal Lands Entitlement program by rendering the lands selected under this program useless for the uses they were selected for; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area will provide an economic windfall to existing property (lodge) owners by restricting competition.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough strongly urges the Borough Assembly to oppose the creation of the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Planning Commission of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough this 5th day of February, 1990.

ATTEST:

John Duffy
John Duffy
Planning Director
Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Twila Carney
Twila Carney
Planning Clerk

(SEAL)

Susitna Valley Association
9000 Staiom Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99516
346-1943

Is the Necessary Volume Available for a Wood Products Industry in the Valley?

Timber industry representatives, as well as DCED, have stated that a minimum of 50-million board feet a year would be needed for a successful wood products industry in the Susitna Valley.

According to the Division of Forestry, in the Susitna Valley it takes an average of 367 acres to produce 1-million board feet of timber. This calculation is based on an average volume of 940 cubic feet of wood per acre, and a conversion factor of 2.9 board feet per cubic foot. The volume is not comparable to Southeast timber.

In the Susitna Valley, 18,350 acres would have to be harvested per year to produce 50-million board feet. That's equal to 1 1/2 Point McKenzies being cut and accessed every year. Over an 80-year rotation, almost 1.5-million acres of commercial timber would be needed from the valley to meet this demand.

The Susitna Valley simply does not have that volume of timber. There's not even a third that volume; and what is there is spread out over a 2-million acre area. The SRFP has identified 450,000 acres with commercial potential that is in a land-use designation that would allow forestry as one of the uses. But not all that acreage is available for forestry. Much of it is in areas where "forestry" is only a secondary use, and must not conflict with the primary uses. In some cases "forestry" is allowed, but only for local personal use. Buffers for wetlands must be discounted from the timber base. Mitigation measures to minimize conflict with other values will further reduce the base. The final volume will be substantially less than the 450,000 acres being analyzed. The forest lands will not be contiguous and much of it will not be economically accessible.

In short, the Susitna Valley Association believes that, while existing small-scale timber harvest can and should continue in certain areas to accommodate commercial firewood sales and personal use wood lots, large-scale commercial harvesting is out of the question. The resource simply isn't there.

SUSITNA VALLEY ASSOCIATION

ECONOMIC SUMMARY OF EXISTING BUSINESSES

Which will be Impacted by Susitna Valley Logging

AIR CHARTER SERVICES which service the Valley	
Combined gross income for 1987 (10 of 38)	\$4,000,000
Combined value of businesses (10 of 38)	\$11,400,000
REMOTE LODGES in the Valley	
Combined gross income in 1987 (23 of 52)	\$3,340,000
AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE SHOPS	
Combined value of businesses (2 of 15 at Lake Hood)	\$1,500,000
COMMERCIAL FISHERIES (from Susitna Drainage harvest)	
Estimated ex-vessel value in '86: \$10,664,716	
Total sales generated in Alaska due to this harvest	\$17,703,428
(Does not include value of processing of fish.)	
SPORTFISHERIES	
Value to Southcentral Alaska of sportfishing on Susitna Valley streams in 1986	\$10,420,000
ANCHORAGE HOTEL/MOTEL ROOMS	
Value of Susitna related hunting and fishing to the Anchorage Hotel/Motel business	\$5,104,080
Value to Anchorage of impacted Hotel/Motel wages	\$1,660,500

EMPLOYMENT SUMMARY OF EXISTING BUSINESSES

AIR CHARTER SERVICES (10 of 38)	
39 Full time + 106 Part time = 145 total employees	
	Full time equivalent 75
REMOTE LODGES (23 of 52)	
Total employees: 125	
Estimated 46 Full time and 79 Part time	
	Full time equivalent 73
AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE SHOPS (2 of 15 at Lake Hood)	
18 Full time + 8 part time = 26 total employees	
	Full time equivalent 21
HOTEL/MOTELS	
Number of employees to service related rooms	
	Full time positions 90
Total employees:	386
Total full-time equivalent employees:	259

PRIVATE PROPERTIES

Number of privately owned parcels within the area being considered for timber harvesting	13,685
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WHAT IS THE SUSITNA VALLEY ASSOCIATION?

The Susitna Valley Association formed in January 1988, in opposition to large state timber sales that were being proposed in the core of the Susitna Valley. The association formed primarily for three purposes:

- first, to serve as a contact for the state and Mat-Su Borough on timber harvesting plans for the Susitna Valley,
- second, to serve as spokesperson on this issue when necessary and appropriate, and
- third, to serve as a clearinghouse for dispersal of timber-related information to interested individuals and groups.

The association has grown into a coalition of over 4300 individuals, numerous businesses, and 69 organizations. Some of those organizations are, in turn, coalitions. There are active chapters in Wasilla, Talkeetna, and Anchorage. Over 700 SVA people are valley residents, and 27 percent of the coalition organizations are Mat-Su groups.

The association is broad-based, representing a wide diversity of interests. In addition to people who own property in the Susitna Valley, there are people with business interests such as commercial fishermen, guides and outfitters, river charter services, lodge owners, air taxi operators, people in the tourism industry, and business people who support those businesses. There are people with recreation interests such as pilots, boaters, hunters, fishermen, skiers, sightseers, bikers, mushers, snowmachiners, and photographers. There are environmentalists and conservationists; people with health interests, and public land policy interests. And simply people who think large-scale logging in proximity to Southcentral Alaska's largest population centers will create unacceptable negative impacts. The interests and concerns are as varied as the individuals involved. Clearly, opposition to proposed timber harvesting in the Susitna Valley is a far-reaching issue of deep public concern that involves the entire community.

Dated: January 1990

Susitna Valley Association
9600 Sialom Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99516
346-1943

SUSITNA VALLEY REMOTE RECREATION, TOURISM AND FISHERY VALUES

Brief Background Information

The state Department of Natural Resources (DNR), met with disastrous results in an attempt to hold a large-scale timber sale in the Susitna Valley two years ago. As a result, DNR went into a planning mode, and is currently in the process of writing a "forest management plan" for the area. The plan is called the Susitna Regional Forest Plan (SRFP).

All lands in the valley below 1000' in altitude, a total of over 2 million acres, are being analyzed for commercial timber harvesting potential. The goals of the SRFP are to identify the location and volume of the commercial timber, determine how to access it, and establish guidelines for harvesting it. It is not a park plan; it is a forestry plan. The plan is required to take into consideration other forest values as they relate to forestry, but the focus is on the best economic return for the wood products industry, not for tourism, recreation, or fish and wildlife habitat.

The public will not be offered a range of land management options for the valley because other options, or alternatives to logging, have not been considered and analyzed. People will not even have the option to approve or disapprove of the plan to log the Valley, but will merely be asked to comment on the state's proposed guidelines for doing it.

Economic Values of Remote Recreation, Tourism, and Commercial Fisheries in the Susitna Valley

The Susitna Valley is an intensively used remote recreation and tourism area which also supports a valuable commercial fishery. A highly complex pattern of both developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities has evolved which is supported by thousands of people and which channels millions of dollars into the local economies. Following is a synopsis of various valley activities and resource uses which the Susitna Valley Association (SVA) has compiled:

what attracted people to the area. It also indicates the complex economic network which exists just to get people to and from their fishing sites. According to Fish and Game, salmon stocks in the Susitna Basin are already fully allocated.

Moose and bear hunting. The annual expenditures for moose and bear hunting in the Susitna Valley is estimated by ADF&G at up to \$18.9-million dollars. This includes activities of game guides and outfitters, as well as the independent hunters.

Recreational pilots. There are over 5000 registered pilots in the Anchorage area and 800 in the Mat-Su Borough. The Anchorage pilots own a total of over 2000 airplanes. SVA surveyed 208 of the pilots and found that the Susitna Valley was their destination 81 percent of the time. Based on data from our survey, the total value of the airplanes based just in Anchorage can be estimated at \$90-million. Total plane related expenditures for 1987 was estimated at \$7.4-million.

Hotel expenditures. According to a study by the Alaska Hotel/Motel Owners Association, approximately 3 percent of the occupied rooms in Anchorage are related to clients traveling to or from hunting and fishing destinations in the Susitna Valley. The economic value of these rooms is \$6.8-million.

Tour companies. Tour operators sell the Susitna Valley as an accessible "Alaska wilderness experience". The valley is marketed for independent and adventure tours such as flightseeing trips, riverboat fishing and camping, sportfishing and hunting, remote lodge vacations, and rafting trips.

The valley is also an important component of the large package tours. According to information SVA received in 1988, Westours and Princess Tours had purchased and were renovating 14 railroad dome cars at an investment of \$8-million. These dome cars travel through the east side of the Susitna Valley. The tour companies are anticipating related gross revenues during 1990 of over \$100-million dollars.

Other users. The Alaska Boaters Association estimates there are approximately 20,000 boats in the Anchorage area, a high percentage owned to access the Susitna Valley streams. There are 20 to 30 riverboat charter services doing business on the streams of the valley. Many activities such as river freight services, mushing, skiing, trapping, and snowmachining remain to be quantified.

Related services. Also to be taken into consideration are the local businesses in adjacent communities that are economically supported by these activities and industries; the multiplier factor. These factors would take into account such items as the purchase of construction materials; maintenance costs of buildings and equipment; advertising; insurance; purchase and maintenance of airplanes,

For the industries in the Susitna Valley previously discussed, the perception of wilderness or remoteness is a critical factor in the marketing of the valley activities. As world populations continue to increase, that commodity will become more and more valuable. However, wilderness as a marketable commodity quickly loses its value once roads go in and clearcutting takes place. It will not be possible to go backward and regain it once it is gone. Large scale commercial logging is not compatible with remote recreation and tourism. And, the incompatibility becomes even more pronounced in an area such as the Susitna Valley where the primary orientation is from the air.

The borough and state are at a crossroads in deciding the most appropriate use of the Susitna Valley lands. The type of tourism discussed focuses on a low volume/high dollar approach. It focuses on a "working" wilderness, not a "hands-off" wilderness. But, the success and continuation of the existing businesses is dependent on not crossing the threshold into high volume/low dollar. The latter may be appropriate along well-traveled roadways, but there are other areas where it is more economically astute to go the other direction, thereby providing the full recreational spectrum.

Limitations of DNR's Current SRFP Planning Process as it Relates to Remote Recreation and Tourism.

A basic flaw of the SRFP planning process is that it does not recognize or evaluate the economics of the existing remote recreation and tourism industries, or their potential. It does not evaluate whether or not these industries are compatible with large scale commercial logging and related roading such as being proposed. Nor does it evaluate whether the development potential of the remote industries could ever be realized if the proposed logging and roading activity goes forward. Finally, it does not balance any of these competing values against the expected return from logging, which itself has never been determined in this process.

The SRFP advances a management plan for only "forestry", independent of management plans for the other designated land uses, even though the necessity for concurrent planning for all uses was stressed in the Susitna Area Plan.

The Department of Commerce and Economic Development was asked to do an economic feasibility study of the wood products industry in the valley, and was to address the other resource values in the process. This was not done. Instead, the department conceded that the data necessary to address the economics of the other uses was incomplete, and there was not time, personnel, or money available to acquire the data.

CORRECTION

**THIS DOCUMENT
HAS BEEN REPHOTOGRAPHED
TO ASSURE LEGIBILITY**

Susitna Valley Association
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SUSITNA VALLEY REMOTE RECREATION, TOURISM AND FISHERY VALUES

Brief Background Information

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The public will not be offered a range of land management options for the valley because other options, or alternatives to logging, have not been considered and analyzed. People will not even have the option to approve or disapprove of the plan to log the Valley, but will merely be asked to comment on the state's proposed guidelines for doing it.

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The Susitna Valley is an intensively used remote recreation and tourism area which also supports a valuable commercial fishery. A highly complex pattern of both developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities has evolved which is supported by thousands of people and which channels millions of dollars into the local economies. Following is a synopsis of various valley activities and resource uses which the Susitna Valley Association (SVA) has compiled:

Real estate. Over the past twenty years the state has encouraged recreational use of the Susitna Valley by selling thousands of properties in state land disposals in the area, mostly for recreational purposes. Just within the SRFP planning area, there are 17,609 private properties, and many more still for sale. (Borough Tax Assessment Office, 12-19-89) These are widely scattered throughout the valley. Land sales were a high priority of the state and borough during the '70s in the form of various land disposal programs, and even earlier with the Open-to-Entry program, homesteading and remote parcel distributions. As one would expect, this resulted in the formation of a potent constituency for protecting those values that attracted people to the area. The property owners have a vested interest in their lands and cannot be expected to remain silent on what happens in the valley. The assessed value of the private property is \$14.8-million.

Lodges. According to the Department of Fish and Game, there are 52 lodges which operate in the Susitna Valley, most of them remote. SVA has surveyed 23 of the lodges. Based on that survey, the total gross income for the 52 lodges was estimated at \$7.5-million, with a total employment of approximately 283 people. All but two of the lodges surveyed were owned and operated by Alaskans. 93% of their clients were from out-of-state, bringing new dollars into the Alaskan economy.

Air taxi services. 38 air taxi charter services presently fly clients into the valley for recreational activities and flightseeing. They service lodges, year-around residents, recreational cabin owners, and their own remote camps. 24 of those companies are based in Anchorage, and 14 in the Borough. Based on an SVA survey of ten of the companies, a total combined gross income derived from servicing the Susitna Valley in 1987, for only those 10 companies, was \$4-million, with employment of 145 people. The companies estimated 74.5% of their clients were non-residents. (Note that 28 of the companies are not included in the above figures.)

Commercial fishery. The entire Susitna drainage serves as a vast spawning and fish rearing habitat for a highly productive commercial fishing industry. According to the ADF&G Division of Commercial Fisheries, the direct income to commercial fishermen dependent upon fish reared in this drainage is between \$8-million and \$11-million per year. In 1986, the total economic activity generated in Southcentral Alaska attributed to this harvest, excluding processing, was just under \$18-million.

Sportfishing. The ADF&G Division of Sport Fisheries established that 242,850 days were spent sportfishing in the Susitna Valley in 1986, with associated expenditures of \$10.4-million. 84 percent of those days was spent at streams with no road access. The lack of roads, rather than being a barrier, was very likely

what attracted people to the area. It also indicates the complex economic network which exists just to get people to and from their fishing sites. According to Fish and Game, salmon stocks in the Susitna Basin are already fully allocated.

Moose and bear hunting. The annual expenditures for moose and bear hunting in the Susitna Valley is estimated by ADF&G at up to \$18.9-million dollars. This includes activities of game guides and outfitters, as well as the independent hunters.

Recreational pilots. There are over 5000 registered pilots in the Anchorage area and 800 in the Mat-Su Borough. The Anchorage pilots own a total of over 2000 airplanes. SVA surveyed 208 of the pilots and found that the Susitna Valley was their destination 81 percent of the time. Based on data from our survey, the total value of the airplanes based just in Anchorage can be estimated at \$90-million. Total plane related expenditures for 1987 was estimated at \$7.4-million.

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Tour companies. Tour operators sell the Susitna Valley as an accessible "Alaska wilderness experience". The valley is marketed for independent and adventure tours such as flightseeing trips, riverboat fishing and camping, sportfishing and hunting, remote lodge vacations, and rafting trips.

The valley is also an important component of the large package tours. According to information SVA received in 1988, Westours and Princess Tours had purchased and were renovating 14 railroad dome cars at an investment of \$8-million. These dome cars travel through the east side of the Susitna Valley. The tour companies are anticipating related gross revenues during 1990 of over \$100-million dollars.

Other users. The Alaska Boaters Association estimates there are approximately 20,000 boats in the Anchorage area, a high percentage owned to access the Susitna Valley streams. There are 20 to 30 riverboat charter services doing business on the streams of the valley. Many activities such as river freight services, mushing, skiing, trapping, and snowmachining remain to be quantified.

Related services. Also to be taken into consideration are the local businesses in adjacent communities that are economically supported by these activities and industries; the multiplier factor. These factors would take into account such items as the purchase of construction materials; maintenance costs of buildings and equipment; advertising; insurance; purchase and maintenance of airplanes,

boats, motors, and snowmachines. It would include employee expenses; gas, oil, and propane; generators; radio equipment; food and supplies; purchase of camping equipment, guns, fishing gear, and clothing; fish and game packing and processing; taxidermy services; and money spent at eating and drinking establishments when going to and from the valley.

The Potential for the Remote Recreation and Tourism Industries in the Susitna Valley

The number of tourists coming to Alaska is expected to increase by 10 percent a year; to Denali by up to 18 percent. The Alaska Railroad has been growing almost 10 percent a year in passengers and has added six new cars. Both the large tour companies and the railroad are marketing new tour packages for flightseeing, boating, and fishing out of Talkeetna, which is expected to be a growth area.

Princess Tours is designing new land tours to extend the company's cruises. The state is planning to construct a new lodge in Denali State Park. Lodges, air taxi services, and river charter businesses say their businesses have grown by at least 200 percent during the past 2-3 years. One company which primarily markets in Europe, brought 450 to 500 Europeans over this past summer to stay at their lodge and to float Alexander Creek. These people also rented RVs and did independent touring. A tour company which caters to Japanese clients is looking for a small lodge in a "primitive" area to accommodate eight clients per week for next summer. An Australian tour agent stated that his company had sold \$1.6-million dollars of Alaska adventure tours.

According to Westours, Alaska is increasingly becoming the traveler's destination of choice, and the emphasis is shifting from Southeastern to the Interior. Much of this change is in response to the companies marketing strategies to encourage repeat visitors. One lodge owner reported 67 percent of his business at Lake Creek during the summer of '89 was repeat business, clients who have stayed at the lodge before. They like what they've found and will pay to come back.

Economists have stated that Alaska needs to discover what it has that is unique . . . and market it. What Alaska does have in abundance, and what people come to Alaska to experience, and will pay to come back for, is quality "wilderness". Very few other places have it, and it's becoming scarcer all the time. Scanning through Alaskan magazines and travel brochures, it becomes apparent that advertisers consider "wilderness" to be a highly marketable commodity. There is economic value in it, especially coupled with the growing interest in outdoor adventure and nature tours, as well as the renewed interest in the environment.

For the industries in the Susitna Valley previously discussed, the perception of wilderness or remoteness is a critical factor in the marketing of the valley activities. As world populations continue to increase, that commodity will become more and more valuable. However, wilderness as a marketable commodity quickly loses its value once roads go in and clearcutting takes place. It will not be possible to go backward and regain it once it is gone. Large scale commercial logging is not compatible with remote recreation and tourism. And, the incompatibility becomes even more pronounced in an area such as the Susitna Valley where the primary orientation is from the air.

The borough and state are at a crossroads in deciding the most appropriate use of the Susitna Valley lands. The type of tourism discussed focuses on a low volume/high dollar approach. It focuses on a "working" wilderness, not a "hands-off" wilderness. But, the success and continuation of the existing businesses is dependent on not crossing the threshold into high volume/low dollar. The latter may be appropriate along well-traveled roadways, but there are other areas where it is more economically astute to go the other direction, thereby providing the full recreational spectrum.

Limitations of DNR's Current SRFP Planning Process as it Relates to Remote Recreation and Tourism.

A basic flaw of the SRFP planning process is that it does not recognize or evaluate the economics of the existing remote recreation and tourism industries, or their potential. It does not evaluate whether or not these industries are compatible with large scale commercial logging and related roading such as being proposed. Nor does it evaluate whether the development potential of the remote industries could ever be realized if the proposed logging and roading activity goes forward. Finally, it does not balance any of these competing values against the expected return from logging, which itself has never been determined in this process.

The SRFP advances a management plan for only "forestry", independent of management plans for the other designated land uses, even though the necessity for concurrent planning for all uses was stressed in the Susitna Area Plan.

The Department of Commerce and Economic Development was asked to do an economic feasibility study of the wood products industry in the valley, and was to address the other resource values in the process. This was not done. Instead, the department conceded that the data necessary to address the economics of the other uses was incomplete, and there was not time, personnel, or money available to acquire the data.

In the spring of '88, the legislature passed a \$30,000 budget increment with the following stipulation, "It is the intent of the legislature that the Department work with all interested parties to conduct an economic and environmental analysis of the Mat-Su Timber sale which includes but is not limited to the economic effects on the guiding industry, commercial and sport fisheries, lodges, tourism and recreational uses." This was not done.

The SRFP, if adopted, will provide a blueprint for logging and roading the valley, complete with an annual allowable cut determination. By so doing, and by not identifying and analyzing other competing and conflicting values, the plan will predispose the valley to logging. Since a "forestry plan" will be the only management plan the state has developed, it will obviously be the plan that will be advanced.

Without the pertinent information regarding other values, SVA contends it will not be possible for the state to make an informed comparison to determine the highest and best use of the public resources in the Susitna Valley. With hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars in existing investments and income at stake, and with no research into the potential of those existing investments, this does not seem like a responsible approach to land use management. Rather than introducing a new and conflicting industry, perhaps the state would be wiser to promote, protect, and enhance industries that are already in place, successful, and growing.

(DATED: December 30, 1989)

SUSITNA VALLEY ASSOCIATION

FACT SHEET

Introduction: A number of proposals have surfaced recently which would involve large scale commercial timber harvesting in the Susitna Valley. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is currently in the process of formulating a "forest management plan" which would serve as a blueprint for logging and roading activities in the valley. DNR's plan is called the Susitna Regional Forest Plan.

A "forest management plan" is not a plan for managing all uses of the forest. It is a plan which focuses upon logging the forest, and regrowing it to be logged again. The focus is on the best economic return for the wood products industry, not for tourism, recreation, or fish and wildlife habitat.

What is the Susitna Valley: The valley is an intensively used remote recreation and tourism area that also supports a large and successful commercial fishery. It is located just a short distance across Cook Inlet from Anchorage, and has developed a very complex pattern of both developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities.

All areas of the valley below 1000' in altitude, over 2,000,000 acres, are being analyzed by DNR for commercial logging. In this area, there are 52 remote lodges, 38 air taxi businesses, 20 to 30 riverboat charter services, and 13,685 private properties.

Fundamental issue: Incompatibility of large scale commercial timber harvesting and related roading with existing land uses and resources in the valley.

Remote recreation and tourism values are economically and culturally important to Alaskans. Roading and logging are incompatible with the continuation of these wilderness-based values.

What degree of the economically successful existing uses would have to be sacrificed to develop a timber industry? Some of the state's own studies have determined that certain other industries would likely be displaced. Would we be trading existing jobs for speculative forestry jobs?

Crucial questions not being addressed: The public has not yet had the opportunity to address the crucial question of whether or not it approves of large-scale commercial logging as the highest and best use of the forest resources in the Susitna Valley. Or whether or not the scale of logging, or the type of timber management being proposed, is compatible with the other forest uses in the area. Rather than being asked if they approve of having the area logged, people will merely be asked to comment on the state's proposed method for doing it.

What DNR sees as the state's mandate for logging is not what the public perceived when the Susitna Area Plan was prepared, nor is it a mandate that the public wants now. Alaskans feel the scale of proposals being advanced by the state and borough, for both logging and roading, threaten the long established and successful land use patterns in the valley. They believe the trade-off that would be required is not justified either economically or socially.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

Existing economic values which must be considered.

- 242,850 days were spent sportfishing in the Susitna Valley in 1986, with associated expenditures of \$10,420,000. Eighty-four percent of those days was at streams with no road access indicating a complex economic network exists just to get people to and from their fishing sites. (ADF&G)
- The direct income to commercial fishermen dependent upon fish spawned and reared in the Susitna Valley is \$8-11,000,000 per year. (ADF&G) In 1986, the total economic activity generated in Southcentral Alaska due to this harvest, excluding processing, was more than \$17,700,000.

- The annual expenditures for moose and bear hunting in the Susitna Valley is estimated at up to \$18,900,000. (ADF&G)
- The Susitna Valley is the destination of choice by 81 percent of the recreational pilots flying float planes. (Susitna Valley Association survey)
- 13,685 private properties are located within the area being analyzed for timber harvests. (Mat-Su Borough tax records)
- Additionally, the basin is heavily used for hunting, trapping, boating, camping, rafting, cross-country skiing, snowmachining, and dog-mushing.

Costs.

- Massive state subsidies would be necessary to provide access for the timber industry. . .and further, to maintain that access.
- Studies are establishing that stumpage value of available timber is not high enough to cover associated costs of timber harvesting, processing, shipping, reforestation, and roading. Should the state heavily subsidize the creation of jobs for a wood products industry if the creation of those jobs would likely displace even more jobs in other industries?
- The state has acknowledged it has no standards for winter access in the Susitna Valley with its unique climatic conditions which often result in thawing conditions and extensive overflow problems. Yet DOF has stated much of the logging would be done in the winter under these conditions. Funding for research would be imperative to develop the standards necessary to protect the extensive valley wetlands?
- What level of timber harvesting, and related wood products industry, would be commercially viable? Is there really a sufficient timber base that would be accessible and available?

Small-scale logging.

- Even with the existing small-scale timber harvesting that is going on now, as it expands into the valley, will the state and Mat-Su borough develop and enforce meaningful controls that will allow it to remain compatible?
- At what point does small scale become large scale?
- Once a mill is built, would the industry continue to expand because we are locked into feeding the mill to the detriment of other pre-existing industries. (See separate paper on Suggested Alternatives.)

Planning process.

- The DNR planning process advances a management plan for only "forestry", independent of management plans for the other designated uses, resulting in a lop-sided planning process.
- The state has acknowledged a major lack of information regarding the value of remote recreation and tourism in the Susitna Valley, and that they do not have the time, personnel or money to acquire the data. New data is being acquired, however, on the wood products industry. As a result, the SRFP process is proceeding without adequate and balanced data.
- In order to do a responsible economic feasibility study of the logging industry, it is critical that DNR also address the negative impacts to the other uses, meaning they must be identified and evaluated.

In conclusion:

SVA believes the state and municipalities should concentrate on further promotion of the Susitna Valley as a prime forest-dependent, wilderness-based tourist and recreation area with a growing and healthy commercial and sportfishing industry.

Valley economy stands at fork in road

Anchorage Daily News Sunday, January 28, 1990

By CHARLES WOHLFORTH
Daily News reporter

PALMER — On the lonely Palmer Hay flats, where frigid wind from the Knik Glacier builds dunes of snow, a line of cars two hours long passes in the dark every morning and every night like an endless desert caravan.

But instead of bearing Persian rugs or Oriental spices, this caravan brings a far more valuable commodity to the Matanuska Valley: people who make money in Anchorage and spend it here.

Commuters provide half the wealth keeping the stagnant Matanuska-Susitna Borough economy alive, and it appears likely that most of the Valley's growth will come from commuter paychecks, too. They contribute more than 10 times the money produced by agriculture, mining, logging, tourism and all other Valley basic industries combined.

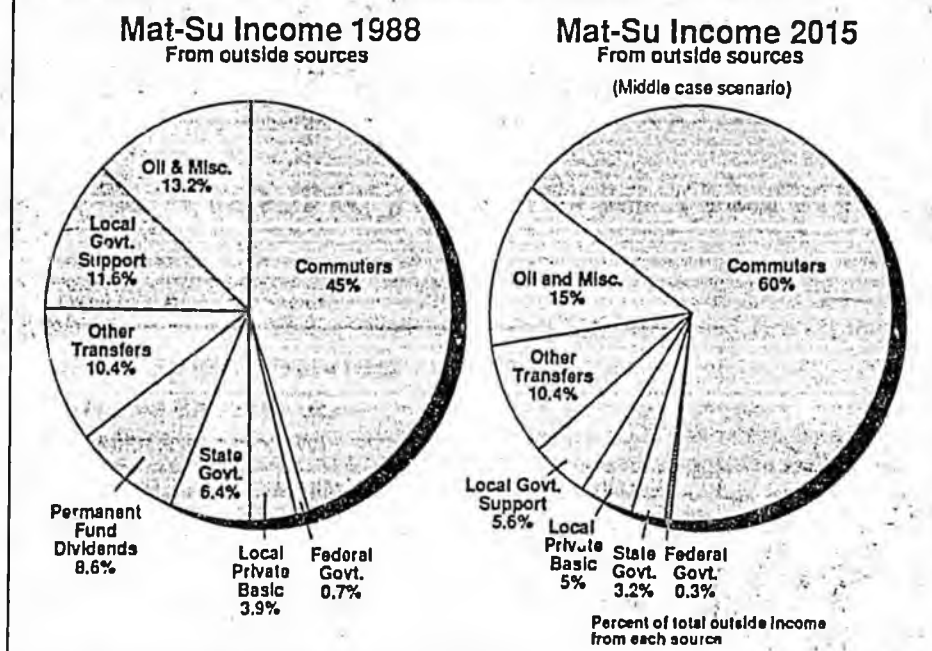
That analysis came last year from Scott Goldsmith and Eric Larson of the University of Alaska Institute of Social and Economic Research. Even the state's permanent fund dividend program brings in twice the wealth of the Valley's basic industries, and so do government social service programs, according to their report for the state Department of Transportation.

The Valley's main function is to provide bedrooms. According to a recent survey, people who work elsewhere want their bedrooms in the Valley because of the isolated, rural lifestyle.

But despite evidence that keeping those bedrooms full of commuters will determine the area's future economic health, a cadre of borough leaders would rather the people who sleep in them didn't commute. They want a return to the frontier Valley and its economy of rough-handed work like logging, mining and farming, its fast growth, and its wide-open development.

They don't think that approach puts the current commuter economy at risk.

What Will Power the Mat-Su Economy



Sources: I.S.E.R., Alaska Dept. of Transportation, Mat-Su Borough

Anchorage Daily News/Don Tulious

If they are wrong, the stakes of the gamble are high. Paychecks of Anchorage and the North Slope commuters produce 45 percent of the Valley's income. The local industries produce less than 4 percent of its income.

Goldsmith and Larson predicted that commuters will become even more important if the Valley is to grow. Even though they assumed a huge ski resort at Hatcher Pass and a coal mine at Sutton both will be built soon, by the year 2015 they expect commuters to bring in 60 percent of the income, compared to 5 percent for basic industry.

But the economists said commuter income is not a sure thing. It depends on commuters wanting to live in the Valley. And a growing number of residents say the way for the Valley economy to succeed is to plan its future so the quality of living there that attracts commuters is protected.

For instance, when debate turned to a major timber operation in the Valley, the borough commissioned a public opinion survey to find out how residents feel about

logging. The survey showed that 79 percent want logging to stay small, as it is now. Six percent supported the borough's goal of attracting large, outside timber developers.

Despite that kind of public sentiment, the borough government's economic program is devoted entirely to increasing resource and industrial development. The borough wants to rid itself of dependence on commuters and has pushed hard for large-scale timber development. Borough assembly members say they want commuters to stop commuting and work in the Valley in a self-sufficient economy.

Politicians say commuters import political apathy, lack community spirit, and spend too little time with their families. Their children need expensive schooling, but their places of work can't be taxed to pay for it because they are in Anchorage.

Still, commuters are a dominant economic force, and there is mounting evidence that most don't support wide open, frontier-style development.

Talkeetna, Chase, Chickaloon and the central core have begun efforts to manage their own development, saying the best way to boost the borough economy is to keep the Valley a pleasant place to live. They criticize the borough's attempts to launch big development projects at the expense of stable, basic government.

Environmentalists have organized and gained clout. One group plans to fill an empty Wasilla storefront with an office of the Alaska Center for the Environment, "in the belly of the beast," as one of them joked.

The group claims to represent a silent majority.

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Some day a million people will live in the heart of the borough, between Palmer and Wasilla, if the future unfolds the way Bob Vroman predicts. When that happens, today's strip development along the highways won't bother anyone, he said, because similar development will fill in the areas between.

Vroman was a development activist in the old days of borough politics, when bad roads prevented commuting. Today he is part of a group working to plan the future of the core area.

He remembers formation of the borough in 1964. The economic problems have not changed. The Sutton coal mine had closed. The Matanuska Maid creamery had moved to Anchorage. Lower shipping costs from Outside were making Valley agriculture less competitive. The area seemed to be losing its economic reason to exist.

Vroman was borough chairman. He set to work drafting a comprehensive plan to attract industry to the Valley. It took years to write and was finally published in 1970.

The borough sent copies of the plan all over the country, and received inquiries about timber and industrial development, Vroman said. A dairy project on Point MacKenzie was proposed and a Texas millionaire leased borough land to build an enclosed, futuristic city on the point.

But at the same time Vroman was working on another project that ultimately changed the Valley far more. He was a construction engineer, and he helped lay the deep gravel foundations of the highway across the swampy flats, which makes Anchorage less than an hour's drive from Palmer and Wasilla.

Oil was discovered at Prudhoe Bay, and as the state's population grew, commuting workers from Anchorage and the North Slope helped super-heat the Valley's economy. The population of the borough increased from 7,400 in 1970 to 44,280 in 1987.

Most of the new residents were commuters and people working for businesses that survived on commuter dollars.

In their study, Goldsmith and Larson asked why people with jobs in Anchorage were willing to drive 40 miles each way to work. The survey found the main attractions were low housing costs, large lots and clean air.

Anchorage and Mat-Su residents were asked how much cheaper a house has to be in the Valley to make the commute worthwhile. Answers settled around 40 percent — a comparable house would have to cost 40 percent less in the Valley for most people to choose to commute. The study said Valley housing is now about 50 percent cheaper.

But the government has to provide good roads and protect the lifestyle that attracts commuters if it wants to keep them, the economists said.

"I've talked to a bunch of people, and they all want that — they want to protect their lifestyle," said Bob Gilfilian, who owns an engineering firm and serves with Vroman on the Core Area Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. "Most of the people here want their rural-urban thing. They're on their one acre, but they don't want their neighbor to put in a cow barn."

Gilfilian said the borough could help the economy by

aiding residents who, like him, want planning to protect their piece of suburbia.

"People like myself — entrepreneurs — are looking at what can be done with what we've got here," Gilfilian said. "I don't see any help coming from the local government or the state. They're not creating work out there.

"I think the borough government has its place to make sure the community will be stable. I'm not talking about creating jobs, but just making it possible for business to exist."

Instead, he and others said, the borough pursues big development projects, which might be good, but leave the basic business of government undone. Even Vroman, who is as pro-development as they come, criticizes the borough assembly for chasing rainbows.

"Over the last 10 years, the borough has shotgunned everything," Vroman said. "They've tried to be all things to everybody. Everyone who comes in, they get on with them, and then someone else comes in, and bang, they're off with them. They go from one thing to the other, and leave all these things lying here like unpoped popcorn. And it's left everyone in the community divided."

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Vroman himself was part of the borough's biggest 180-degree shift. In 1984, the borough drafted a comprehensive plan that residents interpreted as a move to begin zoning. Vroman helped lead a successful fight against the idea. Zoning opponents voted in a pro-development assembly and threw Borough Manager Gary Thurlow out of office. The planning department became the development services department, then changed back to planning in 1988.

But the borough's new emphasis on industrial and resource development hasn't led to much actual development.

The assembly built a road — at a cost of nearly \$1 million — to the water at Point MacKenzie in hopes of

putting a port there to export timber and other resources. It formed a port commission and asked voters to approve \$25 million in bonds to build the port.

Voters narrowly turned down the measure, and a study later showed the port would be speculative and unlikely to break even. But the borough is still pushing it.

In 1987, the state proposed a massive timber sale in the Susitna Valley. Borough officials have supported large-scale logging on borough land.

But an alliance of cabin owners, guides and rural residents rose up and blocked the state's timber. Studies by the state and borough since then have shown that a large-scale timber industry in the Valley probably isn't possible because the land available doesn't produce enough wood.

Trees in the Valley take 50 to 100 years to grow large enough to cut. Some potential timber has been reserved for wilderness or is in private hands, and much of what is left is swamp.

Ted Smith, a contrarian assembly member from Willow and former state forester, said the Valley could support only a small timber industry.

Various studies on the Valley's trees have produced widely varying estimates of how much lumber they could produce. But using optimistic standards of how much wood grows on each acre, and assuming it takes 80 years for cut trees to grow back, the 450,000 acres of state and borough land that studies show might be available could produce no more than 18 million board feet a year. By comparison, a new sawmill being built in Seward will be able to handle 80 million board feet a year.

Other basic industries also show little chance of a boom.

Small vegetable farmers are making a living selling produce to Anchorage grocery stores, but the dairy industry, unable to produce milk for a competitive price,

is in shambles. Only two dairy farmers are still in business except on the state-subsidized Point MacKenzie Project. Almost all the farms on the project have collapsed or are being run by the state.

A huge ski resort planned by a Japanese company for state land in Hatcher Pass appears unlikely to happen soon. The company never did as much work on the idea as borough and state officials. The company asked for an additional year before it has to do anything more because a study showed Japanese skiers are not interested in coming to Alaska.

There is still hope that a coal mine will reopen in Sutton, but borough officials say it may not be economically practical unless the borough and state governments buy a train to move the coal to the port in Seward.

The borough's Overall Economic Development Program, which the assembly approved earlier this month, is aimed almost entirely at developing five "major economic sectors," which it defines as forestry, agriculture, coal and hardrock mining, marine port developments, and tourism.

The federally mandated plan was written by the borough staff. It represents the views of the assembly, which passed it with words of praise, rather than the broad-based citizen's committee that had been required by the federal government. Although the plan identifies the committee members as co-authors, one member said he had never seen it and another is listed only by her last name.

Borough economic development specialist Dan Slaby admitted that he ran short of time to prepare the plan and did most of the work himself.

Slaby said there is no conflict between resource development and lifestyle issues such as outdoor recreation and open space. He said opposition to logging is instead based on a mistaken concept of man's relation to nature.

"I think this goes back to fairy tale mythology," Slaby said. "I think it goes back to the Garden of Eden, and people thinking that nature is in some way pure and perfect and man's involvement will just destroy it. . . . Nature is a constant struggle against death, a struggle to live, and only man has been able to overcome that."



Most of the assembly was elected after the economy went bad, and economic development was the constant theme of election campaigns. Although most Valley residents have not lived here long enough to remember a time when the area had its own self-sustaining economy, those who voted installed a pro-development assembly that wants the local jobs of the past to come back.

"This is the first time anyone in our family has had to leave the state to make a living," Assemblywoman Eleanor Malapanes said. "And that's in generations."

Borough Mayor Dorothy Jones said resource development will help commuters, too, by providing jobs in the Valley so they don't have to commute. She and assembly members say development doesn't have to conflict with the rural pleasures of living in the Valley.

But groups like the new Center for the Environment and Susitna Valley Association don't agree.

"There is a growing number of conservationists in the Valley," said Mike Bronson, a commuter and one of the new center's board members. "It's the amenities that attract people to the Valley — besides the cheap housing — like the natural surroundings."

The people running the borough don't agree, he said, because they belong to a small group that stands to profit from resource development.

"I think that is a very important element of our local politics," Bronson said, "that the people who are the most likely to derive direct

benefit from real estate speculation are also the most likely to sit on the boards and commissions that will make decisions on that."

Three of the seven members of the borough assembly hold real estate licenses, and a fourth has large land holdings.

Malapanes owns Double Eagle Real Estate Investments. She said real estate dealers bring important skills to the assembly, planning commission and platting board. But she agreed that their interests differ from Bronson's.

"It really scares me to have this be a bedroom community," Malapanes said. "That was a reason why I ran for the assembly, because I was hearing people saying all we have to be is a bedroom community for Anchorage."

Commuters have children who need to be educated, but their places of work can't be taxed to pay for it, she said.

"It means that the local taxpayer — the property owner — is going to have to pick up more and more of the burden of educating children."

□

But what do the people of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough really want?

In the last election, which included the hot port issue, only 29 percent of registered voters voted. That amounted to 5,443 ballots, or one for every nine residents.

Community leaders on every side of the issues say it is difficult to get anyone involved. Neighborhoods are diffuse and populated by commuters too tired to go to meetings after coming home from Anchorage.

"You can almost isolate yourself here," said Richard DeBusman, a high school teacher and one of the organizers of the new Center for the Environment office.

"There's not a lot of cohesiveness in the community. There is the old guard who sticks together, but the rest of the newcomers are not cohesive. It's a real problem.

because a small group of people can get a lot of power easily."

He and other environmentalists say the apathy has hurt them rather than their foes. They say those who stand to make money from development have taken roles in the government, while those who want planning and protection of their lifestyle say nothing until they are directly threatened.

The state's timber sale proposal gave birth to the anti-logging Susitna Valley Association, which DeBusman said still has 600 members in the Valley.

"People come out and buy a house and find out it's next to a gravel pit, and then they cry out for planning," Smith said. "And when you get enough people who do that, you get planning. I think we're getting to that point."

Wasilla Mayor John Stein said Wasilla doesn't want smokestack industry and prefers tourism to logging. But the city council recently voted to offer tax incentives to new industries that come to town.

Stein, Vroman, Gilfilian and others said developers need planning, too, because they now are afraid to act for fear of unpredictable reactions from their potential neighbors.

"As it is now, development is afraid to come in because they don't know what the rules are," Stein said.

Even the borough's pro-development economic plan points to the need for a more cohesive community. One of its goals is to, "Encourage the formation of a Borough identity through clarification of community values, prioritize community development goals, and creation of a community image integrated with a Borough identity."

Slaby translated. "Everyone's kind of lived their own life and had the leeway to hold their own views without having to worry about the affect on anyone else," he said. "We need to pull the community together."

Susitna Valley Association
9600 Slalom Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99516
346-1943

LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS

The Susitna Valley Association communicates with its approximately 4300 individual members through a newsletter mailout and through periodic Updates to 68 organizations. These organizations have all expressed a desire to have information concerning the status of the Department of Natural Resources' Susitna Regional Forest Plan planning process. Many of these organizations, in turn, incorporate information from the SVA Updates into their respective newsletters. Following is a list of the current member organizations:

AKPIRG

Alaska Air Carriers Association
Alaska Airmens Association
Alaska Boating Association
Alaska Center for the Environment
Alaska Environmental Lobby
Alaska Flyfishers Association
Alaska Hotel and Motel Association
Alaska Outdoor Council
Alaska Professional Sportsmens Association
Alaska Professional Hunters Association
Alaska Professional Sport Fishing Association
Alaska Sportfishing Association
Alaska Survival
Alaska Visitors Association
Alaska Wildlife Alliance
Alexander Property Owners
American Lung Association
Anchorage Audubon
Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau
Anchorage Recycling Center
Anchorage Waterways Council
Arctic Bicycle Club - Mountain Bikers
Chase Community Council, #1
Chase Community Council, #2
Clean Air Coalition
Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association
Cook Inlet Fisheries Coalition
Cook Inlet Professional Sport Fishing Association
Denali Citizens Council
Flathorn Property Owners Association
Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, Alaska Chapter

Susitna Valley Association Organizations
Page 2

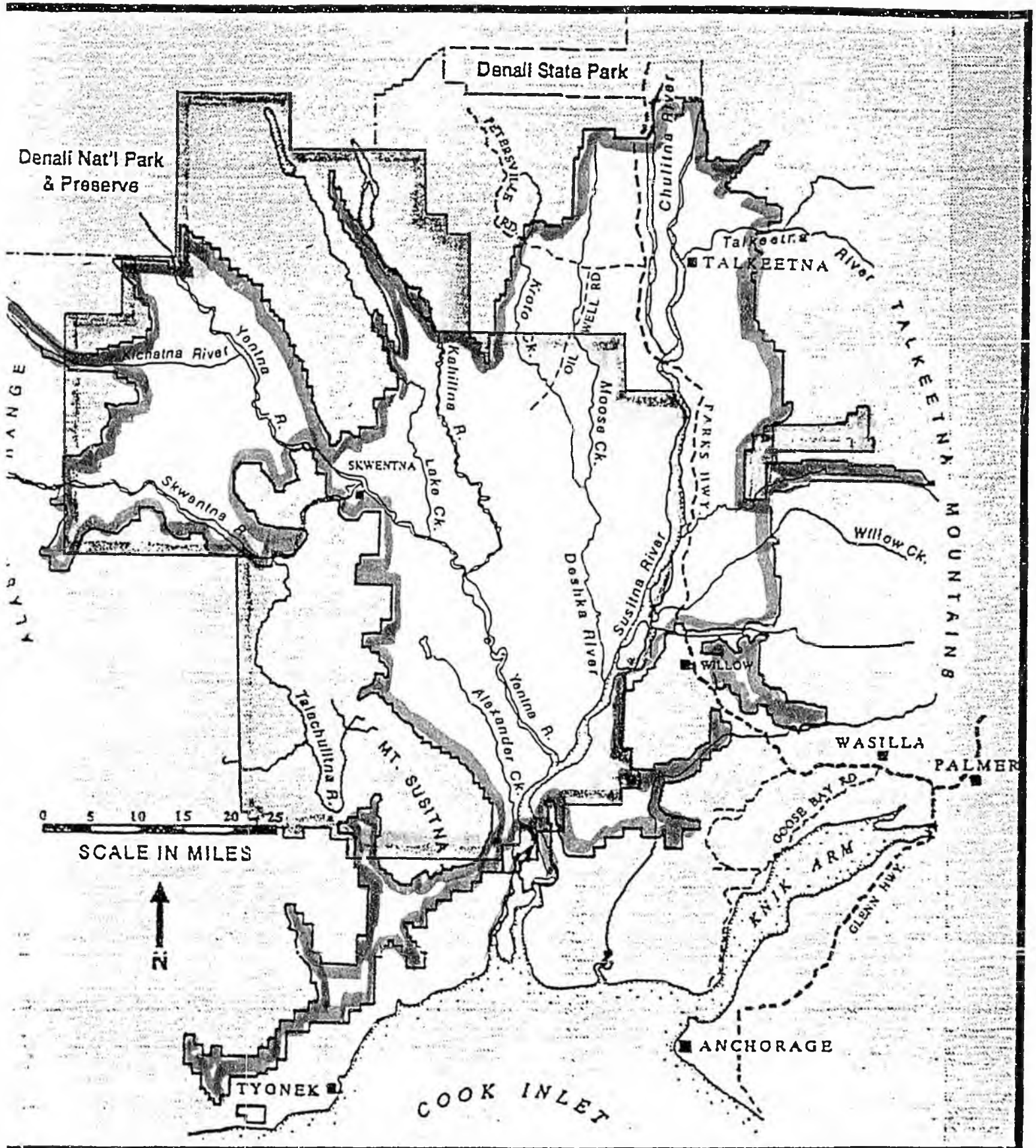
Friends of the Earth
Goodpaster River Property Holders Assn.
Iditarod Organizing Committee
Iditarod National Historic Trail Advisory Council
Iditarod Trail Blazers, Knik Chapter
Kachemak Bay Citizens Coalition
Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association
Kenai River Sportfishing Association
Knik Kanoers & Kayakers, Inc.
Mat-Su 99's
Mat Valley Sportsmen's Assn.
National Audubon Society
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Ass'n.
North Pacific Fisheries Association
Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Northern District Setnetters of Cook Inlet
Nunam Kitlutsisti
Prince William Sound Conservation Alliance
Rolejo Lake Association
Salcha River Property Owners Association
SE Alaska Conservation Council
SE Alaska Seiners Association
Shirley Lake Homeowners Association
Sierra Club, Alaska Chapter
Skwentna Community Council
Skyensu Property Owners Association
Susitna Basin Charter Operators Association
Susitna Valley Lodge Association
Talkeetna Chapter, Susitna Valley Association
Tokosha Citizen's Council
United Cook Inlet Drift Association
United Fishermen of Alaska
Upper Cook Inlet Drift Assn.
Wasilla Chapter, Susitna Valley Association
Wildlife Federation of Alaska

(Dated: January 1, 1990)

SUSITNA REGIONAL FOREST PLAN



Plan Boundary





ALASKA OUTDOOR COUNCIL, INC.

3786 W. CHINAIK DR. JUNEAU, AK 99801
(907) 789-3450

P.O. Box 34097
Juneau, Ak. 99803
(907) 463-3830

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Legislators

FROM: Ed Grasser, Director
Legislative Affairs

RE: Susitna Valley Association's proposed legislation

DATE: February 5, 1990

Recently you received a packet of information from the Susitna Valley Association supporting legislation for a remote recreational parcel in the Susitna River Drainage. Within the packet were listed several organizations which purportedly participated in the drafting of this proposal. The Alaska Outdoor Council, along with several member affiliates were so listed.

In order to clarify any misconceptions which may or may not have been inferred by the presence of our organization on SVA's list, we would like to inform you that we currently are not in support of their proposal, nor did we participate in any of their discussions leading to this proposal. Also, several of our member affiliates have indicated they are currently opposed to SVA's proposed legislation.

We regret any inconvenience or misconception SVA's inclusion of our name on this proposal may have caused. We appreciate your consideration of our concerns on this matter and look forward to a more constructive level of participation on this legislation after our members have had time to relate their concerns and comments to us.

cc: Member Clubs

Mat-Su assembly criticizes Susitna recreation-area bill

By CHARLES WOHLFORTH
Daily News reporter

PALMER — The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly on Tuesday denounced a bill in the legislature that would turn most of the Susitna Valley into a recreation

area rather than allowing the logging industry the assembly prefers.

The Susitna Valley Association, an anti-logging group, proposed the bill to create the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area,

which was introduced by Sen. Pat Rodey, D-Anchorage, and faces a long, uncertain course through three Senate committees.

The association was formed in 1987 by local residents, conservationists, tourism operators and outdoors groups to fight a massive state timber sale proposed for the Susitna Valley. The sale was blocked, and an elaborate land-use planning process was begun, but is still incomplete.

But Loisann Reeder, president of the association, said the state's planning process has focused too much on timber development.

The Mat-Su assembly was predictably unenthusiastic. The borough government badly wants the jobs it hopes would come from large-scale timber cutting, and even joined a logging

industry lobbying group in which all the other members are private sector companies that stand to gain from it.

The assembly's resolution says Rodey's bill would halt all forms of development, including tourism, although the bill says its purpose is to promote recreation, including lodges, guides and riverboat charters.

The resolution also says the bill would make the borough's own land in the area useless for its intended purpose of development and that it contradicts the state's own plans for the area. Borough Manager Don Moore wrote to the assembly that there is already enough recreation land in the borough. Assembly members said the bill was wrong to favor tourism over all other land uses. They criticized Rodey as an interloper.

"The majority of lodge owners and people flying tourists out to that area are coming out of Anchorage, so it's appropriate that it's an Anchorage legislator locking up our land," Assemblywoman Eleanor Malapanes said. "I think it would be good if we could come up with a bill that would lock up Anchorage so we could show Senator Rodey how it feels."

Mark Begich, an Anchorage assemblyman and the aide to Rodey who wrote the bill, said the bill would block commercial timber harvest on state lands, but leaves alone borough land and allowed access to it.

Martha Welbourn, who has for two years run the Department of Natural Resources efforts to draft a Susitna Regional Forest Plan, said the bill would

remove from consideration about two-thirds of the area the plan addresses.

Welbourn said the plan hasn't been drafted, so it is too early for Rodey or anyone else to react to it. But she said the plan is mandated by the Susitna Area Plan, which calls for multiple use of the land, including forestry. She said it would not be within the power of the plan writers to outlaw commercial logging in a large area, as Rodey's bill would.

Reeder's complaint is that by drafting a forestry plan, the state gives that use priority. She said a recreation plan should have been drafted at the same time to give it equal weight.

But Welbourn said the forest plan work has addressed recreation, fish and wildlife resources, and other competing uses.



CITY OF WASILLA

290 E. HERNING AVE.
WASILLA, ALASKA 99687
PHONE: (907) 373-9050
FAX: (907) 373-0786

February 13, 1990

RECEIVED

FEB 20 1990

The Honorable Mike Szymanski
Alaska State Senate
P. O. Box V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Mike:

Attached is Wasilla Council Resolution WR90-08 opposing SB430. We hope that you will consider the Council's position and act to drop this legislation.

Sincerely,

John C. Stein
Mayor, City of Wasilla

JCS/sbh



CITY OF WASILLA

290 E. HERNING AVE.
WASILLA, ALASKA 99687
PHONE: (907) 373-9050
FAX: (907) 373-0788

Requested By: Mayor Stein
Prepared By: Administration

RESOLUTION NO. WR90-08

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF WASILLA, ALASKA OPPOSING SENATE BILL 430, "ESTABLISHING THE SUSITNA VALLEY REMOTE RECREATION AREA".

WHEREAS, Senator Pat Rodey has introduced legislation, prepared by the Susitna Valley Association, to reserve use of the Susitna Valley solely for recreational purposes; and

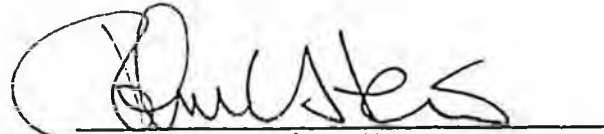
WHEREAS, the Council favors multiple use of the Susitna Valley for timber development, mining, recreation, public road access and a mix of compatible development; and

WHEREAS, the Council supports forest management, the existing Susitna Area Plan and Recreational Rivers District.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Wasilla City Council that it opposes, in total, SB 430 and the single use emphasis it proposes.

I certify that a resolution in substantially the above form was passed by a majority of those voting at a duly called and conducted meeting of the governing body of the City of Wasilla this 12th day of February, 1990.

APPROVED:


John C. Stein, Mayor

ATTEST:


Erling P. Nelson, CMC
City Clerk

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

PO. BOX 107005
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510-7005
PHONE: (907) 561-2020

February 19, 1990

The Honorable Mike Szymanski, Chair
Senate Community & Regional Affairs Committee
P. O. Box V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Senator Szymanski:

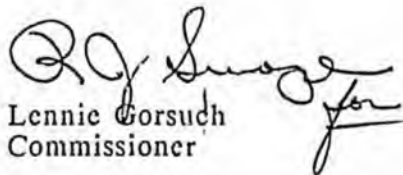
Subject: SB 430, Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area

Background: SB 430 proposes establishment of a remote recreation area covering 2.1 million acres in the Susitna Valley. The bill would prohibit commercial timber harvesting, construction of publicly-funded roads, coal leasing, and oil and gas leasing. It would require new mining claims to acquire a lease prior to production.

The proposed recreation area is within the Susitna and Willow Subbasin area plans adopted by the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Fish and Game, and Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The plans support legislative designation of portions of the Susitna Valley, but they do not support legislative designation of all state lands, and they allow a wider variety of land uses.

Position: The Department of Natural Resources opposes SB 430 because of conflicts with the land use designations and legislative recommendations in the area plans. The department continues to support legislative designation of the Susitna State Forest, the Susitna-Yentna Public Use Area, and the Chelatna Public Use Area, as recommended by the plans.

Sincerely,


Lennie Gorsuch
Commissioner

cc: Committee Members
Sen. Rodey
Denby Lloyd, GO
Gary Gustafson, DLWM
Frank Rue, DFG
Dorothy Jones, Mat-Su Borough

STATE OF ALASKA
1990 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL VERSION : SB 430
PUBLISH DATE : _____

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____ Agency Affected: Natural Resources
 Title: Susitna Valley Remote Recreation
 Area
 BRU: _____
 Sponsor: Sen. Rodey
 Requestor: _____ Components: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96
PERSONAL SERVICES	122.2	211.2	221.2	89.0	89.0	89.0
TRAVEL	2.0	3.0	3.5	2.0	2.0	2.0
CONTRACTUAL	9.0	15.0	52.2	33.0	33.0	18.0
SUPPLIES	0.5	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.5
EQUIPMENT			7.0	1.5	1.5	7.0
LAND&STRUCTURES						
GRANTS,CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	133.7	230.2	284.9	126.0	126.0	116.5

CAPITAL						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

REVENUE						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	2.0	4.0	4.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
PART-TIME	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

See Attached

Prepared by: Martha Welborn Phone: 762-2660
 Division: LWM Date: 15-Feb-90
 Approved by Commissioner: *Lennie Gorsuch* Date: _____
 Agency: Department of Natural Resources

Distribution (by preparer) :
 Legislative Finance
 Legislative Sponsor
 Requestor
 Office of Management and Budget
 Impacted Agency(ies)

ANALYSIS

FY 91

100	Planning staff:		
	18A	\$50.5	
	16A	44.5	
	12A (1/2)	17.6	
	8A (1/3)	9.6	
		<u>122.2</u>	
200	Travel	2.0	Public meetings, reconnaissance, and fieldwork
300	Contractual	2.0	Publish introductory brochure
		2.0	Xeroxing, newsletters, etc.
		5.0	Resource assessment research
		<u>9.0</u>	
400	Supplies	0.5	Graphic and misc. supplies
TOTAL		133.7	

FY 92

100	Planning staff:		
	18A	\$50.5	
	16A	44.5	
	12A (1/2)	17.6	
	8A (1/3)	9.6	
	Management staff:		
	16A	\$44.5	
	16A	44.5	
		<u>211.2</u>	
200	Travel	3.0	Public meetings, field work, enforcement
300	Contractual	3.0	Print resource assessment (150)
		7.0	Print agency review draft (300)
		2.0	Newsletters, xeroxing, etc.
		<u>3.0</u>	Public attitude survey, research
		15.0	
400	Supplies	1.5	Graphic and misc. supplies
TOTAL		230.2	

FY 93

100	Planning staff:		
	18A	\$50.5	
	16A	44.5	
	12A (1/2)	17.6	
	8A (1/3)	9.6	
	Management staff:		
	16A	\$44.5	
	16A	44.5	
		<u>211.2</u>	
200	Travel	3.5	Public meetings, field work, enforcement
300	Contractual	7.0	Print public review draft (300)
		0.7	Print draft plan brochure (1000)
		10.0	Print final plan (500 copies)
		1.5	Print plan summary (1500 copies)
		8.0	Air & boat charter & vehicle rental for field staff
		<u>25.0</u>	Trail construction, informational signs, etc.
		52.2	
400	Supplies	1.0	Graphics and misc. supplies
500	Equipment	7.0	Equipment for field staff, incl. radios and 4-wheelers
TOTAL		<u>284.9</u>	

FY 94

100	Management staff:		
	16A	\$44.5	
	16A	44.5	
		<u>89.0</u>	
200	Travel	2.0	Field work, enforcement, maintenance
300	Contractual	25.0	Trail construction, informational signs, etc.
		8.0	Air/boat charter and car rental
		<u>33.0</u>	
400	Supplies	0.5	Miscellaneous supplies
500	Equipment	1.5	Equipment maintenance

TOTAL 126.0

FY 95

100 Management staff:
16A \$44.5
16A 44.5
89.0

200 Travel 2.0 Field work, enforcement, maintenance

300 Contractual 25.0 Trail construction, informational signs, etc.
8.0 Air/boat charter and car rental
33.0

400 Supplies 0.5 Miscellaneous supplies

500 Equipment 1.5 Equipment maintenance

TOTAL 126.0

FY 96

100 Management staff:
16A \$44.5
16A 44.5
89.0

200 Travel 2.0 Field work, enforcement, maintenance

300 Contractual 10.0 Trail maintenance, informational signs, etc.
8.0 Air/boat charter and car rental
18.0

400 Supplies 0.5 Miscellaneous supplies

500 Equipment 7.0 Equipment replacement and maint.

TOTAL 116.5

NOTES:

1. Assumes all personnel are at step A. Includes benefits but not merit increases.
2. Travel costs assume public meetings will be held in Trapper

Palmer), and Anchorage, and that some planning team meetings will be held in Wasilla and Palmer. Includes per diem for overnights in Trapper Creek and Talkeetna, and standby flight time for trips to Skwentna. Assumes charter flight time = \$250/hr.

3. Assumes plan will take three years. Implementation staff will begin work in year 2 of the plan (i.e., reviewing permit applications, etc.) and will gear up to a full program of field work and enforcement by year 3.
4. Assumes a three-year program to construct trails, campsites, and other facilities identified through the plan; maintenance would continue in subsequent years.
5. Field staff transportation is by a combination of car to trailheads then 4-wheeler, air charter, and boat charter since roads are prohibited in the 2.1 million-acre area. Field equipment costs include 4-wheelers and radios.





TED SMITH

Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly
District 7

SB 430 AND SUSITNA VALLEY FOREST MANAGEMENT

SB 430, a bill by Senator Pat Rodey to establish the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area, would remove about 2.3 million acres of state land from multiple use management and prohibit any resource development, roads, or homesteads or other conveyances to private parties.

The bill was drafted by and introduced at the request of the Susitna Valley Association (SVA). The SVA was formed to oppose a large scale, long term timber sale in the Valley proposed almost 3 years ago by the State. Most thinking people also opposed the sale - including the Mat-Su Loggers Association. The resulting discussion led to the discharge of the then Director of the Division of Forestry, followed shortly by the departure of his boss, the Commissioner of Natural Resources, and the cancellation of the proposed sale.

Having won that battle, SVA was in search of a cause and found it in the planning process inaugurated by the State and a similar process undertaken by the Borough. They promptly warned that these efforts were actually part of a plan to loose hordes of loggers in the Valley. They thereby created the myth of THE GREAT SUSITNA VALLEY CLEARCUT. This is a time-honored propaganda technique: erect a straw man and then proceed to gain points by destroying it, but I don't believe such tactics have a place in the discussion of public policy.

And make no mistake - the likelihood of clearcuts covering thousands of acres of the Susitna Valley IS a myth. Provisions of law, the State planning process, and nature make it so. Cries of "Beware the loggers" have the same validity as the fabled boys cry of "Wolf! Wolf!"

Provisions of law include: 1. the Constitutional requirement for sustained yield management - i.e. that each year we can cut only what we can grow. The land on which the timber is grown must be available for the entire length of time necessary to grow the next crop (80-100 years) so that only 10-12% can be cut each year. 2. the Forest Practices act which requires that harvest practices be non-destructive and that reforestation be complete within 5 years, and 3. multiple-use management statutes which require that a balance be achieved between competing resource uses.

The planning process sets public interest standards for utilization and/or conveyance of public resources. The area covered by SB 430 is also covered by the Susitna Area Plan. The land use allocations for this plan plus legislative designations are shown on the attached chart. For this discussion the pertinent statistic is the allocation of less than 600,000 acres to forest management. On average, only about 6,000 acres (which is only 1/4 of the area in the Point MacKenzie ag project) could be harvested each year and still comply with the sustained yield management requirement of the Constitution. The planning process also designates buffers to be left along waterways and around lakes, screening along roads and trails, and high value special use areas - all of which are deducts from the acreage available for long term timber production.

Nature, combined with the planning process, makes the idea of large scale harvest areas preposterous. The combination of marginal timber and the prevalence of lakes, streams and swamps with their accompanying buffers makes it nearly impossible to find a single operating area of as much as two sections.

So, if the whole concept of large scale logging is impossible, is there any reason to have a forest management program? Absolutely! As noted, we can harvest 6,000 acres a year. This could be done in a number of sales of 500 acres or less to supply wood to 3 or 4 small specialty mills making paneling and other products. This might provide 200 year-round privately financed jobs, or about twice the number expected from the Job Corps center, which the State and Local governments must subsidize for about \$6 million.

I believe that a forest management program of that size can be conducted so as not to damage the recreational or wildlife resources. After all, it would occupy less than 6% of the total land in the Valley and its recreational and wildlife benefits would still be mostly available under the multiple use criteria mandated by State law. Any impact on scenic values would be noticeable only for the time necessary to green-up after reforestation, say 10 years. That means that the maximum impact on scenic and recreational values (if any) at any one time would be limited to 1/8th of the total land under forest management. I think that is a very favorable cost/benefit ratio, considering the other benefits available from a managed forest.

Primary among those benefits is a continued supply of wood for construction, heating, etc. and the jobs that go with that harvest. Most people seem to be in favor of a continued supply of firewood and house logs and are not adamantly opposed to logging, so long as it is small scale. I think by sizing timber sales under 500 acres we can continue that benefit without damaging the other resources. A young forest is also more insect and disease resistant. Failure to harvest mature timber leads to situations such as we currently have on the Kenai Peninsula with mortality from the spruce bark beetle creating a very serious fire hazard. State game biologists have also identified the overmature forest as a major cause of moose starvation this winter.

None of these benefits would be available under SB 430. It also unfairly limits private ownership to those fortunate few who were fiscally and physically able to stake their claim under prior state land disposal programs, and any public benefits it purports to offer are available without it.

I think that the State and Borough plans, conducted with input from all the people in Southcentral, provide a sound framework for management of the public resources in the Susitna Valley. I don't think those plans and the multiple-use management philosophy which underlies them should be abandoned in favor of the restrictive use provisions of SB 430.

TABLE 1
STATE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS
IN MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

(ACRES X 1000)

	PUBLIC RECREATION	WILDLIFE HABITAT	FOREST MANAGEMENT	SETTLEMENT	AGRICULTURE	TOTAL
WILLOW SUB-BASIN PLAN	16.6	371.0	66.5	5.5	44.5	504.1
SUSITNA AREA PLAN (1)	1,555.1	3,126.6	521.5	4,391.2	26.1	9,620.5
LEGISLATIVELY DESIGNATED:						
GOOSE BAY STATE GAME REFUGE		10.9				10.9
PALMER HAY FLATS		26.0				26.0
SUSITNA FLATS		300.8				300.8
MATANUSKA VALLEY MOOSE RANGE	16.6	101.7	85.1			203.4
WILLOW MOUNTAIN CRITICAL HABITAT		23.0				23.0
DENALI STATE PARK	421.1					421.1
NANCY LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA	22.7					22.7
WILLOW CREEK STATE RECREATION AREA	3.6					3.6
HATCHER PASS PUBLIC USE AREA	5.1					5.1
SIX RECREATION RIVERS	240.9					240.9
TOTAL	2,281.7	3,960.0	673.1	4,396.7	70.6	11,392.1
PERCENT	20.0%	34.8%	5.9%	38.6%	0.6%	100.0%

Note: (1) Includes 4,391,244 unverified acres in Settlement - this is based on conversation with DNR personnel regarding survivor classifications.
Includes 19,897 unverified acres in Agriculture - total Agriculture figure is based on narrative in plan.

Willow Sub-Basin Plan, Susitna Area Plan and Matanuska Valley Moose Range figures include many areas with more than one primary designation.

All figures for Willow Sub-Basin Plan taken from narrative of plan except Public Recreation. Public Recreation taken from information supplied by DNR personnel.



State of Alaska
Senate Community and Regional Affairs
Committee

Senator Mike Szymanski, Chairman
Senator Al Adams
Senator Steve Frank
Senator Drue Pearce
Senator Pat Pourchot

P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811
(907) 465-4978

March 2, 1990

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dick Bradley, LAA Legal
FROM: Senator Mike Szymanski
RE: Redrafting SB 430

Mike

I would like to redraft SB 430, the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Bill, with the following changes:

- 1) Draft a temporary statute that directs the Department of Natural Resources to complete the review of the Susitna Area Plan by a date two years from the beginning of the Plan's five-year evaluation. Direct the Department to submit the updated Susitna Area Plan
- 2) Direct DNR to consider remote recreation and areas with roadless designations in the Susitna Area Plan. This needs to be drafted in such a way that it also applies to all other area plans developed and/or reviewed by the Department.
- 3) Direct the Department to conduct an independent economic survey of recreation and tourism in the region covered by the Susitna Area Plan.
- 4) State that the two-year review period for the Susitna Area Plan precludes forestry development in the following sections:
 - * Susitna Lowlands
 - * Susitna River Corridor
 - * N.E. Side of Mt. Susitna
 - * Trail Ridge

While these areas will be temporarily excluded from any timber sales or harvests for two years, they may be incorporated into the overall Susitna Forest Plan currently under development.

- 5) Amend definition of "multiple use" to include roadless designations and remote recreation purposes.

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF LAND AND WATER MANAGEMENT

FYI
STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

3601 C STREET
P.O. BOX 107005
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510-7005
PHONE: (907) 561-2020

February 28, 1990

Barbara Hunt
Office of Rep. Larson
P.O. Box 53
Palmer, AK 99645

RECEIVED

MAR 5 1990

Dear Barbara,

I have been working on your request for information on our investment in Susitna valley planning. I understand that you wish to use this information to explain to explain Representative Larson's opposition to SB 430 to constituents.

A single dollar figure is hard to produce, because budgets from multiple state and federal agencies and the borough are affected back to 1980. However, you could use the following information to explain the same point.

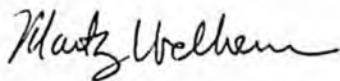
- Five planning staff worked from 1980-1982 to produce the Willow Subbasin Area Plan and from 1982-1985 to complete the Susitna Area Plan.
- The planning staff represents only part of the effort expended on planning. Other agencies in DNR, DFG, DEC, and DOT/PF committed staff to research resource potential and land use and to negotiate the designations and guidelines in the plans.
- Federal agencies also supported this effort through funding for research and inventory.
- The public also invested time in the development of these plans through their extensive comments, participation in workshops and public meetings, and meetings with interest groups.
- DNR is currently preparing the Susitna Regional Forest Plan. This has involved two years of work by agency staff and extensive time from citizens' groups. Over 80 groups have worked with the citizens' advisory committee for the plan.
- Considerable time and money have been spent publishing reports on issues, public comments, and resources and circulating draft plans for public review and final plans for use by the agencies and the public. Although we charge \$5.00/copy for the Susitna Area Plan, the actual cost just for printing is \$40.00/copy.
- DNR estimates that the cost of doing detailed management planning and active land management in the remote recreation area in SB 430 would total \$1,017,000 from FY 91 through FY 96.

In short, borough governments, state and federal agencies, interest groups, and the general public have invested a decade of staff time, research, travel, and publication costs to address land use issues in the Susitna valley. Opportunities to help shape land management policies continue -- in the next several months we will hold public meetings on the draft Kashwitna Management Plan and draft Susitna Regional Forest Plan. In addition, we will start our first update of the Susitna and Willow area plans later this year and there will be extensive opportunities for public involvement. If anyone would like to get better

acquainted with current management policies, copies of the Susitna Area Plan are available. We would be happy to add any interested citizens to our mailing lists for any of these plans.

Barbara, I hope this helps. Please call if you have additional questions. I'm sorry for the delay in getting this to you.

Sincerely,



Martha Welbourn, Unit Manager
Management and Resource Plans

cc: Rep. Curt Menard
~~Sen.~~ Mike Szymanski
Tom Hawkins
Gary Gustafson
Janet Burleson
Ron Swanson

STATE OF ALASKA

STEV COWPER, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF LAND AND WATER MANAGEMENT

3601 C STREET
P.O. BOX 107006
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510-7006
PHONE: (907) 561-2020

March 12, 1990

Mary McBurney
Office of Sen. Szymanski
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Mary,

Gary Gustafson asked me to respond to you on proposed legislation for planning and timber harvesting in the Susitna Valley. Our general comments follow.

Legislative direction of planning

We appreciate the support you have given the planning process throughout your work on SB 430. We are concerned that legislative direction to complete the Susitna update within two years won't be possible without adequate funding. The Susitna Update is a high priority for DNR. However, we must balance the update timing with needs for area plans in unplanned areas such as the Kenai Peninsula and Yakataga, and with other legislatively mandated projects such as the Susitna State Recreation Rivers plan. We will not have staff available to start the Susitna update until some ongoing projects are completed later this year. Depending on the effective date of the bill, two years may be inadequate as there is a long list of issues for the update to address. We would hate to give them inadequate consideration because of a combination of insufficient funding and a mandated deadline.

Intent for recreation and tourism

We support including a study of recreation and tourism in the Susitna Update, but must receive funding to do so. It is also appropriate to include consideration of roadless areas in the update. It must be clear, however, that recreation and tourism are only two of the many uses of the Susitna Valley that will be considered by the plan. The required consideration must not prejudice the outcome of the planning process. We recommend including consideration of remote recreation and roadless areas in legislative intent rather than the bill.

Coordination with other legislation

This bill overlaps with HB 356 (Susitna State Forest) and SB 454 (Multiple Use). We recommend including all changes to the multiple use definition in a SB 454, which we support. DNR also supports HB 356. That bill requires management planning for some of the same lands covered in this legislation. The boundaries and intent are consistent with the Susitna and Willow Subbasin area plans.

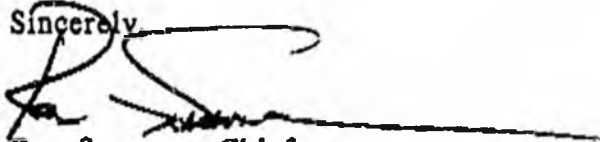
Moratorium on harvesting

DNR can support a moratorium on harvesting in areas (3) Northeast Side of Mt. Susitna and (4) Trail Ridge provided the boundaries are consistent with those in the Susitna Regional Forest Plan and with HB 356. Areas (1) Susitna River and (2) Susitna Lowlands are the heart of the area proposed for near-term expansion of timber harvesting and road access by both the state and the borough. DNR opposes a moratorium in these areas. The current DNR 5-year timber sale schedule includes sales in both these areas. Part of the area in unit

(1) is even east of the Susitna River and is already road accessible. [Note: the Susitna Regional Forest Plan will be reviewing block (2) in the next ten days. More information on proposals for this area will be available after that review.]

We look forward to continuing working with you on these issues and the Susitna update. Thank you again for your support for the planning process.

Sincerely,



Ron Swanson, Chief
Land and Resources Section

cc: Gary Gustafson, DLWM
Tom Hawkins, CO
Marty Welbourn, LRS

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

400 WILLOUGHBY AVE.
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-1796
PHONE: (907) 465-2400

March 16, 1990

The Honorable Mike Szymanski
Alaska State Senator
P. O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Senator Szyranski:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 430 yesterday. We are pleased with the changes in the bill.

During the hearing, you requested the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) comments on coordinating multiple use language in SB 430 and SB 454 (Multiple Use). We would like discussion of changes to AS 38.04.910 coordinated, so that the final statute is consistent. The thrust of SB 454 is legislative monitoring of administrative restrictions on multiple use or mining on state lands. The bill requires that DNR report annually to the legislature on new mineral closures (Sec. 2(d)) and closures of land to multiple use (Sec. 3 (b)). It also requires 5-year reports summarizing total closures to mining and multiple use.

DNR has testified in support of SB 454. However, I understand that a hearing on SB 454 is being held this morning in Senate Finance, so changes may have been made since our last testimony.

We recommend combining the changes to 38.04.910 from both bills in SB 454 so that Legislative discussion considers the joint effect of adding roadless area consideration to the multiple use definition and requiring new reports on restrictions to multiple use. It should also be clear that the resources and uses considered under multiple use management include, but are not limited to, the finite list in 38.04.910. There are many other uses and activities that could also be included.

Senator Mike Szymanski

-2-

March 16, 1990

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We welcome the opportunity to work with you on these bills.

Sincerely,


Lennie Gorsuch
Commissioner

cc: Senator Bettye Fahrenkamp
Senator John Binkley
Senator Rick Uehling
Commissioner Don Collinsworth
Department of Fish and Game

Judith Anderegg/David Pelto
P.O. Box 1472
Palmer, Alaska 99645

RECEIVED

FEB 27 1990

February 9, 1990

Senator Mike Szymanski
Chair
Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee
Pouch V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Senator Szymanski:

We are writing in support of SB430 (Bill to Create the Su Valley Remote Recreational Area) as it is and urge you to pass it out of committee.

We feel that it will allow for small scale logging and good silviculture practices while it will hopefully prevent the development of a large network of roads which would lead to the eventual destruction of the area for recreational purposes.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



cc: Senator Jay Kerttula
Rep. Curt Menard
Rep. Ron Larson

PUBLIC OPINION MESSAGE

DEAR: SENATOR SZYMANSKI

NAME: KEN WIDMER
TITLE:
ADDRESS: P O BOX 978142
CITY: WASILLA ZIP: 99687
PHONE: 373-2222
BILL NO: SD 430
SUBJECT: SUSITNA VALLEY REMOTE RECREATION AREA
MESSAGE: I URGE YOU TO SUPPORT THE PASSAGE OF THIS BILL. THANK YOU.

POMID: 14162038
DATE: 03/15/90
TIME: 16:20:38
LIONAME: MAT-SU LIO

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LARSON
MENARD

KERTTULA
FRANK
PEARCE
POURCHOT
ADAMS

PUBLIC OPINION MESSAGE

DEAR: SENATOR SZYMANSKI

NAME: RON YOUNG
 TITLE: YOUNG'S GEAR
 ADDRESS: 2240 STANDARD AVENUE
 CITY: FAIRBANKS ZIP: 99701
 PHONE: 456-6464
 BILL NO: SJR 5
 SUBJECT: PERMANENT FUND/BUDGET RES./APPROP LIMIT
 MESSAGE: PLEASE VOTE YES ON SJR 5.

POMID: 07154043
 DATE: 03/15/90
 TIME: 15:40:43
 LIONAME: FAIRBANKS LIO

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TAYLOR	ULMER	ZHAROFF
WALLIS	ZAWACKI	

PUBLIC OPINION MESSAGE

DEAR: SENATOR SZYMANSKI

NAME: VALERIE LUCZAK
 TITLE:
 ADDRESS: HC33 BOX 3050
 CITY: WASILLA ZIP: 99687
 PHONE: 376-3258
 BILL NO: SB 430
 SUBJECT: SUSITNA VALLEY REMOTE RECREATION AREA
 MESSAGE: I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT SB430. I HOPE YOU WILL DO THE SAME.

POMID: 14160741
 DATE: 03/15/90
 TIME: 16:07:41
 LIONAME: MAT-SU LIO

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LARSON	KERTTULA
MENARD	

March 9, 1990

Senator Szymanski
Alaska State Legislature
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

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Dear Senator Szymanski:

MAR 12 1990

The Mat-Su Valley is a recreational/tourism jewel for Alaska. The tourism industry here provides hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars to the economy of Alaska. It offers a roadless setting for recreational experiences, yet is in close proximity to the populated centers of South-central Alaska. This is a unique and irreplaceable area. Large scale logging and roading is incompatible with the established remote recreation and tourism industry here. The public should have the opportunity to respond to a range of alternatives regarding how the Susitna Valley will be managed and whether an increased level of logging is appropriate here. We strongly support legislative designation of a portion of the Valley as the Susitna Valley Remote Recreation Area.

In addition, we strongly support the 100 foot plus 200 foot buffer requirement along all anadromous and high value resident fish waters on state and federal lands. (HB 331 and SB 317)

Talkeetna is known as the place where the road ends and wild country begins. We are strongly against any commercial clearcutting proposals, new road constructions or new land disposals by the state or borough surrounding Talkeetna. It is a unique bush town setting accessible by road. Legislation should direct agencies to maintain public lands in their current state to support the burgeoning wilderness recreation economy and the community character which makes Talkeetna a special place to live or visit. We support establishing the Talkeetna Remote Recreation Area.

We can help DEC improve their enforcement with your support of HB 409 and HB 315.

Tourism is a replenishable resource, while the average tree in this area requires 50 years of growth. Let's think about the long-term future of our beautiful state.

Sincerely,

Susan + Burtch Davis
600 E. Glenwood Ave.
Wasilla, Alaska
99687

March 13, 1990

RECEIVED

MAR 16 1990

Senator Mike Symanski

P.O. Box V

Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Senator Symanski;

It has been brought to my attention that SB 430 is being held up in your committee. I feel that this is a very important piece of legislation. The intent of the legislation is not to "lock up" a large piece of land but to prevent the decimation of an area by logging on a large scale basis. This land isn't just sitting there idle. This is the recreation area for the largest center of population in Alaska. A handful of people may benefit from the logging financially but it certainly won't be the state of Alaska, especially when I'm sure that the state would make it another highly subsidized venture. There are many people and businesses (associated) generating money from the natural resources in this area at the present time and these livelihoods would be threatened by any proposed timber harvests.

At the present time the state is spending millions of dollars to stop logging on native land in the Kachemak Bay area of Homer. The Susitna Basin is surely equal in importance and I'm sure that the actual recreational use is much higher in the Susitna basin. I urge you to do what ever possible to move SB 430 through committee. Forget the politics and do something for future generation Alaskans, ie. my 5 year old son who has yet to experience his first King Salmon on the end of a fishing line.

I'm not sure who the Mat Su Borough Assembly is getting their

information and backing from, but the more I read and hear it sounds like their motive is personal gain. I will certainly remember their opposition to SB 430 next election day.

Sincerely

RONALD V. GRIMM

P.O. Box 1435

Palmer, Alaska 99645

RECEIVED

MAR 8 1990

March 2, 1990

Sen. Mike Szymanski,

I have lived and worked in Talkeetna for the past 10 years. I own land not only in Talkeetna but also north-east of Talkeetna near a creek named Chumilna Creek (Clear Creek). I live in this area because of its remote characteristics and share this value with other people whom have moved here for the very same reason. Harvesting timber here would destroy the livelihood of the area. For this reason I am strongly opposed to the idea of harvesting timber in this area and urge you to introduce and support the proposed Talkeetna Remote Recreation Area.

Sincerely,

Rodney E. Hardy

Rodney Hardy
PO Box 366
Talkeetna, AK.
99676



Sen. Mike Szymanski
PO Box V
Juneau, AK.
99811