



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM
PRC # 2012-37



DATE: October 30, 2012
TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Holly J Spoth-Torres, Park Superintendent
SUBJECT: Chugach State Park Citizens' Advisory Board Request for support for 2013 Capital Project Requests

Proposal

The Chugach State Park Citizens' Advisory Board has submitted the attached description of their proposed 2013 legislative capital project requests. The Board is asking that the Parks & Recreation Commission pass a resolution supporting these access improvements and trail rehabilitation needs.

Staff Recommendation

The Advisory Board is tasked with making recommendations to the Director of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation concerning management issues within Chugach State Park. Department staff recommends passing the attached resolution supporting the 2013 legislative capital project requests for trail access improvements and rehabilitation.



The Chugach State Park Citizens' Advisory Board advises the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation on management of Chugach State Park. This 15 person volunteer board represents the multitude of Park users, including neighborhood groups, fishermen, bikers, skiers, equestrians, hikers, hunters, and motorized users.

The Board requests your support for the Chugach State Park (CSP) Access and Trail Rehabilitation Project being prepared for the 2013 capital budget process. The project is a compilation of CSP access improvements and trail rehabilitation needs. The following list was created using public input received during the development of the CSP Management Plan, the CSP Park Trail Plan, and the CSP Access Plan. These improvements will promote public health, reduce trail erosion and maintenance costs, will provide for enhanced public safety and enjoyment, and will help stem conflicts with private property owners near park access points.

Last year, **an estimated 1.3 million people used the Park**, the vast majority of which are Anchorage residents. **Visitors using Chugach State Park provide substantial economic benefit to the State** through their use of local tour operator or guide and outfitter services; outdoor and recreational equipment and clothing sales; as well as associated travel and accommodation revenue. A goal of the Park Access and Trail Rehabilitation Project is to improve existing trails by identifying alignments and grades that will support a low maintenance, gradually ascending/descending paths that do not negatively impact private property. Other goals are to improve access to motorized trails in Bird Valley and locate a hiking trail alignment to Ram Valley in Eagle River.

The Board urges your support for this project because we believe it is important to the health and quality of life for so many people and it will enhance the use and protection of CSP.

Chugach State Park Citizens' Advisory Board members:

Judy Caminer, Chair
Pete Panarese, Vice Chair
Ron Lurk
Pat Kuckertz
Rebecca King

Robin Dublin
Mark Miraglia
Mark Smith
Neil O'Donnell
Pat Athey

Gary Otts
Rick Sinnott
Brian W. Goodman
Jake Schlapfer
Deborah Ajango

The 2013 Chugach State Park Access and Trail Rehabilitation Project

The funding request below is a compilation of CSP access improvements and trail rehabilitation needs.

1. Trail rehabilitation funding is needed for existing trails in the Eagle River and Anchorage Hillside areas. These trails need rerouting work, clearing, and/or foot bridges to promote safe and enjoyable use. These trails include Mt. Baldy from Skyline Drive; Mile High into Meadow Creek; the South Fork of Eagle River; the Crow Pass Trail from Eagle River to the park boundary near Girdwood; and the trails near Flattop and Canyon Road.

Cost 300K (of which 40K is tools and materials)

Includes 8 member temporary trail crew, 3.5 months, two summers

2. Preliminary trail designs are needed for hiking trails currently accessed by social trails* that are adjacent to or on private property. These include trails to Ram Valley from Mile 11 Eagle River Road; to the summit of Mt. Baldy from Skyline Drive; to Meadow Creek from Mile High Road; and on the backside of Flattop from Canyon Road. Additionally, a design is needed to bring the boat launching potential of the North Fork of Eagle River back into use.

Cost 40K Contract preliminary design

3. A preliminary design is needed to establish the location of a new bridge or bridges and a loop trail in Bird Valley. Bird Valley is one of two ATV use areas of CSP. It is also used by hikers, hunters, mountain bikers, and skiers. The bridges that previously provided access to this popular multi-use area were removed for safety reasons. This change has led to park users fording Penguin Creek, an anadromous fish stream. The restoration of the loop trail will promote safety and public enjoyment of the area, will reduce erosion, and will protect the fish in the Bird Creek watershed.

Cost 50K

4. Natural and Cultural Resource Interpretation needs. CSP is an excellent place for interpretation and outreach with outdoor activities and the cultural heritage of the park. Additional funding for signage involving the Anchorage's youth community and diverse organizations is needed.

Cost 25K

Total 415K Estimated at this time

Costs. Research is underway to develop more definitive cost estimates for each project through coordination with the state park staff and the private sector. The costs listed at this point are derived from similar projects accomplished in the recent past.

Definitions. *Preliminary designs* identify trail alignments and grades that will support a low maintenance, gradually ascending/descending, and dry path that do not negatively impact private property.

Social trails are trails that have developed through local use over unimproved access points. They often ascend/descend directly steep slopes, contain significant fall hazards, and are prone to severe erosion. The hiking trail to Mt. Baldy above Eagle River is an example of a social trail.



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RESOLUTION NO. 2012-09

Anchorage Parks & Recreation Commission Support for Park Access and Trail Rehabilitation Projects for the 2013 Capital Budget Process

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to both the Mayor and the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission has the responsibility and duty to provide for the long-term vision of our park system by ensuring that a balance of parks, natural resources, and recreation facilities provides for the health, welfare, and safety of all residents of the Anchorage Bowl; and

WHEREAS, The Chugach State Park Citizens' Advisory Board advises the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation on management of Chugach State Park; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 1.3 million people used Chugach State Park in 2011, the vast majority of which are Anchorage residents; and

WHEREAS, numerous Municipal Comprehensive Plan elements, including *Anchorage 2020*, *Anchorage Bowl Park*, *Natural Resources*, and *Recreation Facility Plan*, *Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan*, *Hillside District Plan*, reference the importance of maintaining existing and resolving future access needs at the Municipal-Chugach State Park interface, and some of these refer to the *Chugach Access Plan*; and

WHEREAS, the *Anchorage Bowl Park*, *Natural Resources*, and *Recreation Facility Plan* park strategy number 7 guides the department to be stewards of Anchorage's natural resources including trails that are designed and located in a sustainable manner and that that minimize erosion; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission supports the 2013 state legislative requests by the Chugach State Park Citizens' Advisory Committee for Park Access and Trail Rehabilitation Projects.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 8th day of November, 2012.

Chair
Parks and Recreation Commission

ATTEST:

John Rodda, Director
Parks & Recreation Department