



Existing User Groups

Beach Lake Park has functionally been shaped, and its existing facilities developed through cooperative, and volunteer based efforts of the park's user groups over the past four decades:

Major Park User Groups

- Chugiak Dog Musher's Association
- Chugiak Junior Dog Musher's
- Eagle River Nordic Ski Club
- Junior Nordic Ski
- Chugiak High School
- Barrier Free Recreation (ADA Accessible lodge and cabins for public rental)
- Cross Country Running

Regular Park Users

- Recreational Boaters (small craft only)
- Angling/Ice Fishing
- Equestrians
- Mountain Bikers
- Runners
- Hikers
- Dog Walkers
- Nature Walks
- Wildlife Viewing
- Scenery
- Picnics
- Family Outings, Informal Play
- Skijoring (on Beach Lake)
- Ice Skating (on Beach Lake)
- Retriever Training (Dee Lake/wetlands)

Off-site activities connecting with and/or influencing park uses

- Chugiak High School
- Birchwood Camp
- Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBEAR)
- Near Neighbors
- Eklutna Inc.
- Tidal flats waterfowl hunting





Park improvements like “Ma’s Bridge” above (built last year by the Nordic ski community) have historically been done using a combination of a little community funding, and a lot of volunteer effort, expertise, and coordination.

Key Concerns and Opportunities

Early in the planning process, the consulting team held private interviews with a number of stakeholders and user groups. These conversations with more than two dozen participants helped the team gain a broader picture of the park as it exists today. This was followed by months of gathering input from the public, CAG members, and Community Councils. Key concerns and opportunities emerged out of this process, which are listed below that helped shape the final recommendations.

1) 40 + Years of Volunteer Sweat Equity

Over several decades, thousands of volunteer hours have been invested in making improvements, developing recreational programming and events, and building infrastructure with the backing of government/private partnership support. This investment needs to be honored as a basis for future planning, and is a mode that should be appreciated for its ability to stretch community tax dollars.

“The value of the existing uses depends upon the natural beauty, peace and quiet that characterize the park. Additional development must not jeopardize the wilderness flavor of the park.”

~ Citizens Advisory Group Member

2) No Radical Changes

People like the less developed qualities and natural environment at Beach Lake Park. Protecting the wildlife, scenery, and rural qualities of the park are important goals, and save the community money. Moreover, as the park is functional for its existing uses, improvements should generally focus on getting more out of what is already there.

The only park “changes” needing consideration at this time are how to incorporate the new parkland, and how Beach Lake Park can accommodate future regional population growth, and serve new residents recreational needs in the future, including along its eastern and southern borders.

3) The Railroad is a “Perfect Divide”

The Alaska Railroad track separating the park is a valued and long respected dividing line. Mushing takes place north of the line, skiing to the south. This makes for very few trail user conflicts; exceptions include during transitional seasons, or illegal motorized access.

4) Seasonality

Beach Lake Park has its seasonal rhythm. In the depths of the winter, frozen lakes and the parks major wetlands freeze to allow fuller use of the park, and trail facilities are often used 24/7. Some evenings and weekends find the park at overcapacity for parking because of events and co-occurring practice sessions.



Many ski related activities at the south end of the park spill over into Chugiak High School on busy evenings and weekends (parking, event starts, ski waxing)



During thaw and wet periods (which are becoming more extensive) there are more challenges with trail conditions and damage, and user conflicts.

In the summer, wetlands preclude access to large areas of the park, and the chalet is closed, but lakes are open for small boats and fishing, and the Barrier Free Facilities, and Birchwood Camp (private inholding) are busy.

5) Mileage

Mushers and skiers require maximum mileage for serious training and racing. Although the park appears large and natural - it is highly crisscrossed with as many mushing and ski trails as can fit without compromising these sports or the setting. For mushing the issue is minimizing distractions for dogs; for skiing it is about maintaining the scenic wooded quality. Maintaining or even extending this mileage is critical, including formalizing links to trails beyond the park. An indication of how developed the park is with trails, is the orienteers' assessment that they won't use Beach Lake because you "can't get off a trail."

6) A Uniquely Alaskan Attraction

Beach Lake Park makes uniquely Alaskan sports like mushing surprisingly accessible to Alaska's urban population and the park is a multi-faceted attraction. Mushing and ski facilities serve all ages and abilities and the park has safe, well-maintained trails, along with the ability to host regional events. Regular park users travel from a broad region (Kenai to Mat-Su)



Maintaining trail mileage by doubling back on the existing trail system, and access to JBEAR's military lands is critical to long distance mushers' ability to train for the Iditarod.

"People on designated trails completely disregard the nature of a dog trail. For the safety of the dogs, the people on a sled, and the safety of the other people, there needs to be no overlapping. No crossings, no roads, just a few dog trails. You cannot understand the power of a team."

~ Public Comment

although some out-of-state and international visitors end up in the park because of the mushing and Barrier Free facilities. Also, over decades many self-selected individuals have chosen to live proximate to the park (dog and horse owners especially).

7) No Year Round Multi-Use Trails

Although there are miles of trails in the park, none are truly multi-use. They are ski trails, or mushing trails. Walkers, bikers, equestrians, and dogs off leash are "out there" in the park to some degree, but at the wrong time of year, these users damage maintained trails, and cause major safety conflicts. Mushers are reluctant to let multi-use trails into the park or near their trails for fear of injury—to unsuspecting users, to mushers, and to dogs. Moreover, there is a fear that multi-use could displace mushers, which is what has historically happened at Far North Bicentennial Park.

Members of the general public, on the other hand, want new trail opportunities that allow them to use Beach Lake Park year-round, especially along the road and near the lake and coast. Some feel that the park is a large regional asset, and "should not just cater to mushers." The balanced compromise is some new limited multi use, with protection of existing uses.

8) Adjacent Lands are Not Park

JBEAR and Eklutna Inc. own thousands of acres bordering Beach Lake Park. Historically, much of this acreage has been "borrowed" for recreation, and to extend mileage based from the park. Master planning needs to consider a future with these non-park lands being unavailable for recreation.

"Ft. Rich [JBEAR] will be closed off to us very soon. That cuts out 40 miles of trails. It is extremely hard to try to train any kind of mid-to-distance runs on our trails. Dogs get bored seeing the same old thing . . . just like people do."

~ Public Comment

The 2006 *Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan Update* includes a number of goals helpful to guiding Beach Lake Park's future:

Natural Environment

Goal A: Ensure that natural systems are protected, maintained and enhanced.

Objective A: Preserve and protect high-value wetlands, stream corridors, aquifer recharge areas and other important natural features.

Growth

Goal F: Encourage the development of a continuous trail network throughout the area that serves both transportation and recreation needs.

Objective A: Preserve and enhance the identity of established community areas.

Parks, Open Space, Greenways and Recreation Facilities

Objective A: Protect environmentally important or sensitive areas including stream and river corridors, water bodies, ridge crests, steep slopes, wetlands, scenic vistas, tidelands and coastal habitats.

Objective G: Maximize the retention and inclusion of natural native vegetation into the design and landscaping of recreational facilities to the extent possible.

Facilities

Objective H: Maximize the use of existing underdeveloped and new park lands.

Objective J: Identify separate use areas for motorized and non-motorized recreational pursuits as appropriate.

Objective K: Support unique thematic recreational facilities and programming that relate to the community's history, culture and natural resources.

Objective L: Encourage the private sector to provide recreational facilities and activities.

Vision for Beach Lake Park



Maintain the park's natural, rural, and scenic attributes.



Support historical mushing and skiing activities as major park uses.



Uphold a high standard of respect & courtesy between users, even as the population grows.



Meet a growing community's needs for family-oriented outdoor recreation.





Chapter 3. General Management Plan

“Keep as much of the area as natural and minimally developed as possible. We already have “urban” parks.”

~ Public Input

Guiding Vision

As future decision-makers consider specific proposals for Beach Lake Park, the vision statement reflects community consensus on what is envisioned for the future of Beach Lake Park. Additionally, the region’s comprehensive plan and its goals and objectives also can help guide community investment and choices.

Management Intent

Over the course of this planning effort, many hours of discussion have focused on the desired future conditions of Beach Lake Park. Since no major improvements are currently funded or are expected in the near future, a key concern has been how to “allow” future improvements, but ensure that development fits appropriately within its setting, and is compatible with a vision for the overall park.

In response, to go along with the Development Concept Plan, this chapter provides conditions that modify and clarify the management intent for specific zones within the park. Specifically, the “Recreation

Intensity Designations and Park Access Map” (Figure 6, page 31) details levels of use, and management needs specific to each designated zone.

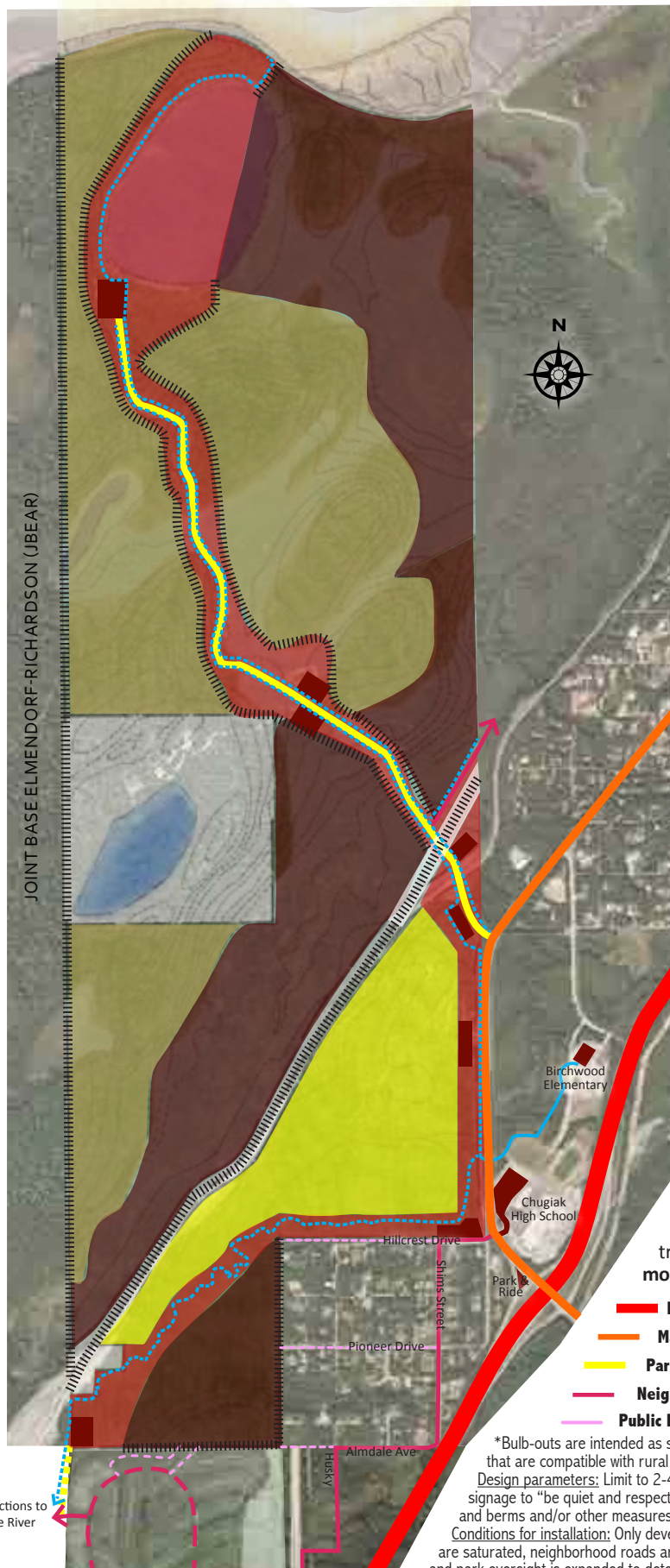
Next, it addresses the location points for future access, and provides a hierarchy of scale for the proposed access that is compatible with the existing settlement pattern, and future intensity designations. It also identifies potential sites where parking could be located, if and when new facilities are needed.

Finally, the plan highlights locations where access deterrents will or may be needed to protect the safety and compatibility of future uses.

Resource Protection Standards

Given the large scale of the park and generalized data available to this planning process, this document cannot identify what development will work exactly where. More site specific surveys, problem solving, and environmental analysis will be required in order to ensure that specific elements of the Development

Figure 6. Recreation Intensity Designations & Park Access



High Intensity During Peak Events

Over the coming decades, population increases will strengthen demand for recreational access, particularly along main road corridors, and associated with scenic and water attractions (Beach Lake, Inlet). Designated areas should provide access points, parking, and facilities to focus and direct public use while protecting the park's natural and scenic character. Active management will be required to address waste issues, habitat protection, and conflicts between user groups, particularly during peak use events (weekends, summer, events, etc.).

Moderate Intensity

These areas sustain year-round use of moderate intensity. Designated areas should anticipate and integrate opportunities for people to participate in both organized and independent activities such as athletic training/events, physical fitness, and outdoor appreciation. Functional improvements (lighting, trails) and regular management (grooming, waste removal) will be needed to support and sustain recreational use, ensure safety, manage user conflicts, and protect scenic and natural qualities.

Low Intensity

These areas provide a predominantly natural setting with minimal development and dispersed uses. Designated areas should support physical fitness, outdoor learning, relaxation, and escape from noise, lighting and crowds. Minimal improvements are needed to sustain regular use, with efforts focused on conflict management and resource protection that supports scenic and natural qualities.

Very Low Intensity

These areas contain quality habitat and scenic areas which allow outdoor activities focused around solitude, dark skies, nature appreciation, environmental education, and low-impact recreation opportunities. Designated areas will remain unimproved beyond habitat restoration and small scale access that allows dispersed users to experience the areas without compromising underlying scenic and environmental qualities. All development is conditional on environmental consideration of impacts to wildlife, vegetation, and viewsheds.

Park Access, Circulation, and Regional Connectivity

In support of the recreational intensity designations, vehicular access sites and potential parking areas are identified. Over the life of the plan, vehicular access improvements should be constructed only as existing sites become saturated, roads are upgraded to handle park traffic, and demonstrated financial and management capacity are present to ensure that park and adjacent neighborhood qualities are protected. Additionally, a multi-use, non-motorized trail system provides a linear system of travel connecting key destinations and parking areas. **Non-permitted motorized access on any trails within Beach Lake Park is prohibited.**

- Freeway/Arterial
- Major Collector
- Park Access Road
- Neighborhood Collector
- Public Right-of-Way Bulb Out*

- **Multi-Use, Non-Motorized Trail:**
Gravel, unpaved except as Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas require, particularly in the vicinity of Beach Lake and the Barrier Free facilities.
- **Parking:**
Phased development when and where demand is demonstrated, maximize use at schools.
- ||||||| **Access Deterrents:**
Signage, fencing, berms, ditches, fines, education, etc. to discourage unsafe/disruptive access.

*Bulb-outs are intended as small-scale public access nodes that are compatible with rural residential neighborhoods.
 Design parameters: Limit to 2-4 car spaces, pedestrian access, signage to "be quiet and respect neighbors," snow storage ditches, and berms and/or other measures to deter illegal motorized access.
 Conditions for installation: Only develop if/when existing access points are saturated, neighborhood roads are upgraded to handle park traffic, and park oversight is expanded to deter illegal activities.

Key Note: Dashed/dotted lines represent future access.





Improvements and projects with fill located in “Very Low Intensity” zones in the park, such as Beach Lake’s eastern shore, will be required to do sufficient study to show that impacts will not seriously detract from the natural resource.

Concept Map constitute a responsible, and feasible option. Given that concern, the following steps should be involved in the pre-planning for any specific project:

- Preliminary feasibility “go /no-go” analysis to include a site visit, public involvement, more detailed site data acquisition, discussion with relevant experts, and a clear accounting of project needs and goals.
- As needed land survey, utility locate, soils borings, and/or other pre-design site research.
- Only in “very low intensity” zones, an environmental impact review process should be completed for new development or proposed fill. Development is conditional on a general understanding of potential impacts to wildlife, vegetation, and viewsheds; and on reasonable findings that impacts will not seriously detract from the natural resource, or can be easily mitigated.
- If a major project appears feasible within the park, public feedback should be sought throughout the design process.
- No project within the development concept plan that relocates, displaces, or impacts an existing use (e.g., multi use trail crossing a mushing trail) shall be constructed until measures are funded, designed, and installed that will ensure compatibility of the new development (e.g. grade separated crossings, signage, fencing).

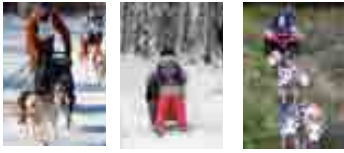
- Mushing and Nordic trail systems will be formally dedicated to those uses and projects and improvements will be designed in collaboration between the governing organization (CDMA/ERNSA) and parks staff to ensure they meet the general public and groups’ needs, and address key design considerations.
- As needed, utilize the US Forest Service Trail Management Process (TMP) to better define specific users, needs, and design parameters:
 - 1) Trail Type - A fundamental trail category that indicates the predominant trail surface or trail foundation, and the general mode of travel the trail accommodates.
 - 2) Trail Class - The prescribed scale of trail development, representing the intended design and management standards of the trail.
 - 3) Managed Use - Modes of travel that are actively managed and appropriate, considering the design and management of the trail.
 - 4) Designed Use - The intended use that controls the desired geometric design of the trail, and determines the subsequent maintenance parameters for the trail.



Mushing and Nordic trail systems are to be dedicated and any park improvements that would relocate or impact these uses cannot be constructed until compatibility measures are funded and built (e.g., grade separated crossings, signage).

Beach Lake Park Uses

DOG MUSHING



Mushing trails are formally dedicated and protected as the major trail use north of the railroad tracks. Exclusive mushing trail use is August 1st - April 15th to be adjusted at the discretion of the department. Mushing trails are open for multi-use May - July, with improvements and/or blockages to limit trail damage in sensitive wet areas. Measures are needed to keep other users and loose dogs off of trails during the mushing season. Water/extreme wet conditions/poor soils limit some trails to winter use.

- Existing Trail
- - - Proposed Future Trail
- Trail Relocation
- Winter Trail Only
- Grade-Separated Trail
Safety and spectator viewing separation

Mushing Facilities

Seasonal use, with public rental options

- Existing Facility
- Existing Parking
- Expansion Reserve Area
(as needed facility and/or parking expansion)
- * Unauthorized, unsecured trails crossing private land
(relocate or gain easements)

NORDIC SKI



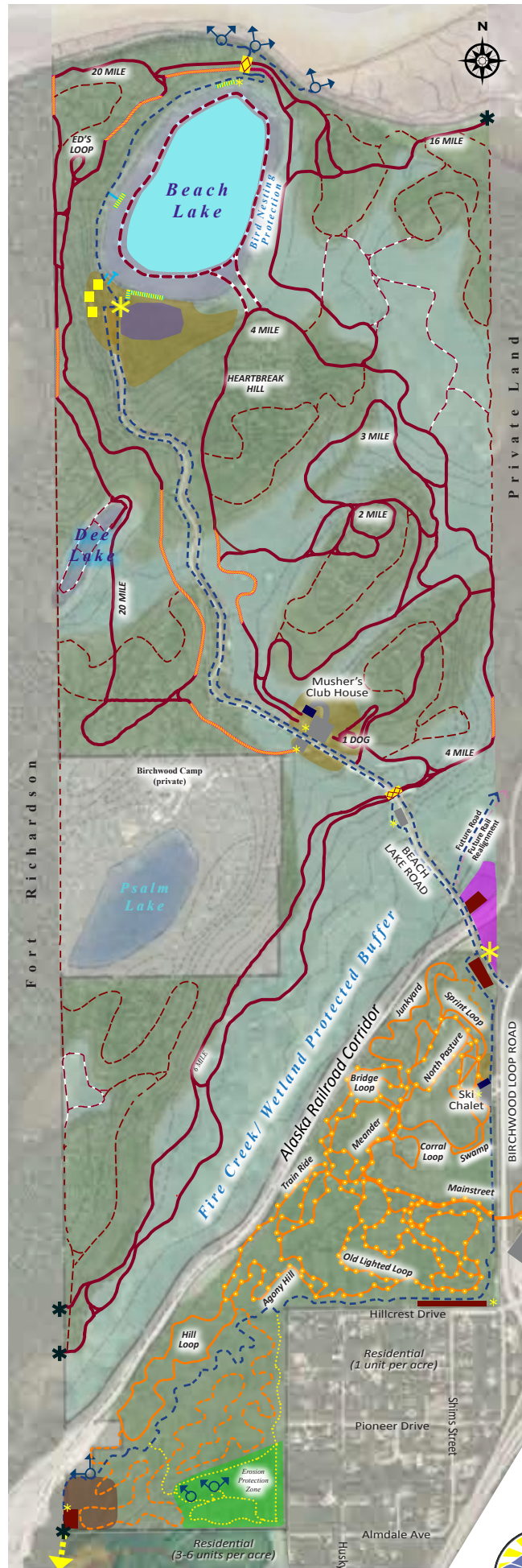
Nordic Ski trails are formally dedicated and protected as the major trail use south of the railroad tracks, up to the designated multi-use trail crossing. Skiers have exclusive use of these trails during the winter maintenance season. Ski trail expansions south of the multi use trail are unlit and unmaintained, and are not exclusive use for Nordic ski. The rest of the year, trails are open for multi-use with improvements and/or blockages to limit trail damage in sensitive wet areas.

- Existing Ski Trails
- Existing Ski Trail Lightpoles
- - - Unlit/Unmaintained Ski Trail Expansion

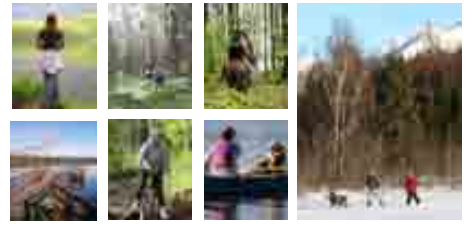
Nordic Ski Facilities

Seasonal use, with public rental options

- Existing Facility
- Existing Parking
- Expansion Reserve Area
(as needed facility and/or parking expansion)



MULTI USE



Non-motorized multi-use corridors and public areas are phased into the park as the population grows to focus and direct public use, with the intent of maintaining the natural character. No multi-use facility is to be installed until: 1) there is demonstrated demand; 2) maintenance resources and responsibilities are clearly set out; and 3) measures are in place to separate incompatible uses, including signage.

Multi-Use Trails:

Beach Lake Road: Non-paved, one side of the road. Construct second side only if/when conflicts demonstrate clear need for additional capacity.

Beach Lake Vicinity: Emphasize ADA accessibility, and protection of lake edge habitat.

NW1/4 Section: Initially along powerline until re-designed as a winding forest setting trail with width capacity for 2-way horses & bikes to safely pass.

NW1/4 Section Footpath:

Minimal clearing, except in select scenic view areas. Revegetate disturbed areas, protect slope from erosion.

Public Use Area

Winter - Multi-use ice fish, cross-country ski, skijor, ice skate, etc. Closure or trail priority for mushing events.

Summer - Small craft boating, fishing, swimming, etc

- Beach Lake Day Use Area w/ Restrooms
- + Existing Dock (fishing, canoe launch)
- Future Dock (exact siting/size may vary)
- ▲ Interpretive Station/Gateway elements with maps & user education/safety rules
- Day Use Area Expansion Reserve
- ADA Public Use Lodge/Cabins, or other "Gateway Lakeside Facility"
- ↻ Scenic View Areas

"Gem" Forest Preserve
Maintain natural forest condition with retention of vegetation.

Future Park Reserve
Potential community play-park area, to be installed during build-out of Powder Reserve Development.

Fenced Off-Leash Dog Park
Phased implementation into existing cleared area north of the railroad, with expansion/shift after ARRC realignment.

Potential Parking Site
Potential area for phased development of parking, if and when existing lots become saturated. Construct only as needed where needed. Impacted roads must be upgraded to handle park traffic, and park oversight be expanded to deter illegal activities.

Legend

- Uplands
- Class A Wetlands
- 10 foot Elevation Contours
- Park Boundary

Figure 7. Beach Lake Park Conceptual Development Plan





Chapter 4. Conceptual Development Plan

Park Concept Plan

The conceptual development plan on page 33 identifies future park uses, general trail patterns and infrastructure locations. The plan integrates findings from previous chapters such as existing conditions, population growth and demand needs, and balances diverse public input. Implementation of the plan is governed by the conditional management parameters outlined in Chapter 3.

Project Priorities & Development Phasing

The following section outlines special projects identified in the conceptual development plan, which may require funding to implement over the life of this plan. Priority project funding is intended to supplement, not replace ongoing improvement and maintenance efforts historically been carried out in a partnership approach between the parks division

“I frequently hike or ski Beach Lake’s perimeter and venture out onto the tidal flats. The views are outstanding, and walking trails in these areas would be quite an attraction.”

~ Public Input

and major users including the Chugiak Dog Musers Association and Eagle River Nordic Ski Association. Their efforts, and the existing area model which aligns public funding with local volunteer capacity in carrying out projects, are critical to the park’s future.

Phase I: 2010 - 2015

Near term improvements to Beach Lake Park are anticipated to be minor given current population levels, existing user needs, and the levels of infrastructure already in place. Much of it is expected to focused around improving security, defining boundaries and basic safety and legal use parameters. Investment into specific areas is critical to protect existing trails and uses, and to blocking activities that cause ongoing damage and/or repair costs.



Initial improvements focus on addressing current park needs including improving trail safety through signage, blocking motorized access, and repairing damage to soils and vegetation.

Phase 1 Priority Projects:

- **Security** - Block 4WD/ATV access to the park, particularly from roadways, and along utility easements. Use ditching and earth shaping methods that illegal users with winches cannot penetrate. Moreover, provide signage that helps define the park boundaries, and clarify illegal uses and penalties.
- **Interpretation** - At key park locations, develop gateway kiosks with information describing park uses, dedicated use seasons, and educational and informational displays that help add value to the park, and help guide incompatible uses to other park locations within the community.
- **Improvements @ Mushing Parking Lots** - Make minor improvements that increase the usability of existing facilities. Additionally, the west parking lot requires minor improvements in terms of stabilizing the soil to reduce mud, and enlarging the area to the extent that trailers can turn around.
- **Soil Stabilization / Revegetation** - Park wide, repair existing damage to fragile soils and vegetation once motorized access is adequately blocked and discouraged.

Phase 2: 2015 - 2025

In this timeframe, it is likely that there will be more pressure on the park for improved infrastructure to serve the general public, particularly in the Beach Lake vicinity once ADF&G successfully stocks the lake. At

the same time, JBEAR’s military use lands are expected to be blocked, increasing the need for new mushing trail mileage within the park.

Demographics are a wild-card, but strong housing markets could increase populations in the vicinity of the park, and could also scale up demand beyond its capacity for existing parking around the ski chalet and at nearby schools.

Project priorities in this second phase are clearly oriented at addressing these issues. The deferred timeline (5+ years out) gives the community some time to seek the grants, matching funding, and partnership approaches necessary for implementing some bigger ticket items.

Phase 2 Priority Projects

- **Fenced Dog Park** – Create a gravel parking lot and fenced area to allow dog owners a “leash free zone” for dog exercise and socializing. Use the roadway, existing railroad location, and existing disturbances to vegetation to help define a clear area. Anticipate future railroad expansion which may require relocation of fencing. Work with the Alaska Railroad to ensure that they are satisfied with safety provisions associated with the dog park, and if needed to gain an ARRC use permit.
- **Ski Parking Expansion** – In 2010 the existing Chalet and school parking are often stretched. If demand exceeds capacity, develop space for an additional 85 vehicles either near the chalet, or in another preferred location as designated on map, page 31.



Many residents enjoy dog walking throughout Beach Lake Park for solitude and exercise. Other dog owners are seeking off-leash play and socialization opportunities in a dog park setting.



- **Multi-Purpose Trail Birchwood Loop/Beach Lake Road** - Initially on one side of the road create a 3 mile long multi use pathway. To accommodate a mix of users, including equestrians, it is envisioned as wide gravel path off-set from the road with protection for adjacent mushing trails. In key locations adjacent to the lake, as required for ADA, recycled asphalt may be used.
- **Multi-Purpose Trail NW 1/4 Section 25** - Although initially the NW1/4 section powerline may support multi-use access, it should be a priority to work with neighbors, equestrians, bikers, hikers, and runners to locate and develop planning in support of the desired more natural and winding trail experience. The width will need to accommodate year round multi-directional traffic, and should be unpaved in support of equestrian use. Protect mature trees and aesthetic characteristics.
- **Ski Trail Expansion** - Work with ERNSA to plan for, locate, and develop a new set of unlit ski trails which are intended to be narrower, and ungroomed to provide a different user experience. Anticipate year round shared informal use. Limit access and provide signage to keep these other users off of the lighted and maintained ski trails.
- **Mushing Trail Expansion** - Work with CDMA to plan for, locate, and develop new trails which help relocate “off-park” trails to section lines, and replace lost mileage on JBEAR by expanding the trail system. Use



New ski trail expansions in the NW 1/4 Section will be unlit and ungroomed for a different experience, and will anticipate sharing the trails with other informal uses.



As the regional population grows it will become increasingly important to provide lake access that allows users to enjoy the water and fishing without disturbing lake edge vegetation, fish habitat, nesting birds and scenic/natural park values.

sensitivity where there are easily erodible soils by allowing “winter use only” and/or by improving the tread to handle usage for dryland mushing and multi-use in the summer.

- **Informal Trails-NW 1/4 Section 25** - Work with park neighbors and walking enthusiasts to assess existing routes, and develop a narrow footpath loop system with attractive, natural overlooks.
- **West Lake Trail & Fishing Improvements, with Grade Separated Crossing** - Design and install an aesthetic bridge structure that maintains 2-way mushing traffic at the north end of Beach Lake, while allowing a walking trail on a separated grade. Work with CDMA needs, and also work with ADA specialists to determine the feasibility of making the crossing fully accessible. Then, relocate the existing footpath along the west side of Beach Lake back from the lake’s edge, and revegetate disturbed area to protect fish habitat. The trail should provide for a range of users, and if possible provide an ADA experience without paving to retain the rural feel and support equestrian use. Install hardened dock light-penetrating facilities that allow a number of individuals (including ADA users) to access the water and enjoy fishing without disturbing the lake edge.
- **Beach Lake Day Use Area** - In anticipation of growing demand for the lake by families, groups, and larger numbers of individuals, develop a day use area to include a picnic shelter with restrooms that protect water quality, tables, dock and connecting



As demand for the park grows and the population of the area substantially expands, existing facilities (such as the ski chalet above), parking, and potentially even multi-use trails may reach capacity and require expansion.

boardwalk, and creation of an open grass play area. Additionally, enhance a small area to include a gravel beach to allow some lake edge access particularly for wading and play.

Phase 3: 2025+

In the long term, including 2025 or beyond, major demographic changes are expected to occur bringing strong demands for park access and infrastructure to the south-west corner of the park. At this point, the park priority should be interfacing with new subdivisions, and seeking legal access via new vehicular connections that provide the park with a direct link into downtown Eagle River. Additionally, as the population grows (potentially doubling), new recreational needs will emerge in the community council area and the region which may be addressed in a “future park reserve.” Additionally, multi-access trails and/or parking may reach capacity, and expansion of these facilities may be needed.

Phase 3 Priority Projects

- **NW 1/4 Section 25 Park** - Within a reserve area, planning and development of a new neighborhood park should be completed to include:
 - parking suitable for meeting projected community demand
 - a picnic area including picnic tables in open settings, and a picnic structure suitable for rental, typical of other such structures in the Municipality of Anchorage

- a trailhead with mapped connections and trail interface with Beach Lake Park trails
- an open area of approximately 5 acres, suitable for play. The play area is not to be dedicated to organized field or game use but should be suitable for informal play.
- a sledding hill

- **Additional Multi-Purpose Trail Birchwood Loop/ Beach Lake Road** - If demand for the existing multi-use trail along Beach Lake Road is strong enough to create safety hazards, or displace certain users (equestrians, bikes) plan to add in a new segment of trail, working with CDMA on safe separation from the existing mushing trails.

“As Possible” Opportunities

In addition to the park improvements outlined above, there are other opportunities that would be highly desirable for the park, but are expected to primarily be funded and/or completed by entities other than the parks department. These should be advocated for implementation, and partnerships fostered, with the expectation that over time other interests may find the resources to help implement these opportunities.

- **Utility Undergrounding** - Over time, a number of utilities both serving the park and the region have crossed the park. Currently these lines impact scenic viewsheds and also attract incompatible uses onto



Utilities serve the park but also have scenic impacts and encourage problematic access. As possible, the various lines should be undergrounded.



mushing and ski trails. As possible, these should be undergrounded, and potentially even consolidated, especially in the region south of the railroad tracks where several utilities bi-sect park uses and impact natural and scenic qualities.

- **Conservation Easement/Acquisitions** - Beach Lake Park and neighboring public lands combine to provide a natural drainage with significant wetland and habitat values. Funds for conservation easements or land acquisition could be sought for the Fire Creek drainage to the inlet, and the “beaver pond” area south of the NW1/4 Section. Potential sources include Land Water Conservation Grants, and wetland credits (Great Land Trust). Support should be given to community advocacy efforts that seek funds to expand the park in pursuit of environmental/habitat values and very low intensity uses (e.g. winter mushing). Additionally, residents in the area would like to see HLB’s ten acres of upland forest land preserved in support of recreational, scenic, and habitat values. Negotiations or acquisition efforts to make these lands part of the park will go a long way toward implementing the greater vision for the park outlined in this master plan.

Capital Improvement Plan

Given unknowns about timing on population growth, recreational demand, and resources to be available for implementation, the following capital improvement plan is provided to serve as a loose framework for future development costs.



Conservation funds could potentially acquire or place easements on drainages connected to Beach Lake Park. Key areas include the beaver pond above, and the Fire Creek drainage to the inlet.

Realistically, much of the decision making about development timing, and priority needs will be left up to future generations of community members and Parks Boards of Supervisors, particularly in terms of deciding when investment is warranted for larger park improvement projects. Reflecting these realities, project priorities presented on page 39 include development phasing and rough cost estimates in 2010 dollars. Periodic re-assessments of community needs and resource considerations should help dictate the timeline and location of development consistent with this overall plan.



**Beach Lake Park Master Plan
Capital Improvement Plan, 2010-2030**

| | <u>Improvement</u> | <u>Work Item</u> | <u>Units</u> | <u>Quantity</u> | <u>Cost/Unit</u> | <u>Subtotal</u> | <u>Cost</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>By Whom</u> | |
|--|---|------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|--|--|------------------|--|
| | | | | <u>y</u> | | <u>Cost</u> | | | | |
| PHASE 1: 2010 - 2015 | Security | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Ditching | LF | 500 | \$ 20 | \$ 10,000 | | Prevent ATV/4WD Motorized Access | Parks/Volunteers | |
| | | Signage | Each | 50 | \$ 300 | \$ 15,000 | | Define park boundary and illegal and incompatible uses | Parks | |
| | | | | | | | \$ 25,000 | | | |
| | Interpretation | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Kiosks | Each | 6 | \$ 5,000 | \$ 30,000 | | Three sided metal, trailheads | Parks | |
| | | Graphics | Each | 15 | \$ 2,000 | \$ 30,000 | | 3 per kiosk, interp, informational, locational | Parks | |
| | | | | | | | \$ 60,000 | | | |
| | Improvements @ Mushing Parking Lots | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Parking | Sq. Yd. | 100 | \$ 150 | \$ 15,000 | | West lot soil stabilization, expansion for turn-around | | |
| | | | | | | \$ 15,000 | | | | |
| Soil Stabilization / Revegetation | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Misc. Imps. | Lump Sum | 1 | \$ 25,000 | \$ 25,000 | \$ 25,000 | Revegetation, address erosion/drainage, extent undefined | Volunteers | | |
| PHASE 2: 2015 - 2020 | Fenced Dog Park | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Misc. Imps. | Lump Sum | 1 | \$ 65,000 | \$ 65,000 | | Gravel parking, signage, fencing | Parks | |
| | Ski Parking Expansion (At Chalet, or preferred location proximate to ski area as designated on map, page 31) | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Parking | Sq. Yd. | 3230 | \$ 150 | \$ 484,500 | \$ 484,500 | 85 vehicles | Parks | |
| | Phase I - Multi-Purpose Trail Birchwood Loop/Beach Lake Road | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Trail | Linear Foot | 15840 | \$ 70 | \$ 1,108,800 | \$ 1,108,800 | 3 Miles, One side of road, ≈12' Gravel, 2-Way traffic | Parks | |
| | Multi-Purpose Trail SW 1/4 Section 25 | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Trail | Linear Foot | 6400 | \$ 50 | \$ 320,000 | \$ 320,000 | 1.2 Miles, 8 foot wide gravel/RAP | Parks | |
| | Ski Trail Expansion | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Trails | Linear Foot | 16500 | \$ 5 | \$ 82,500 | \$ 82,500 | 5 kilometers-requires plan by club | Ski Club | |
| | Mushing Trail Expansion | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Trails | Linear Foot | 31680 | \$ 1 | \$ 31,680 | \$ 31,680 | 6 miles new trail by mushers | Mushing Club | |
| | Informal Trails-SW 1/4 Section 25 | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Trails | Linear Foot | 8000 | \$ 1 | \$ 8,000 | \$ 8,000 | 1.5 miles of narrow dirt trail | Volunteers | |
| | West Lake Trail & Grade Separated Crossing | | | | | | | | | |
| | Bridge | Lump Sum | 1 | \$ 400,000 | \$ 400,000 | | North End Beach Lake | Parks | | |
| | Inlet overlook | Each | 1 | \$ 50,000 | \$ 50,000 | | Design to reduce bluff soil erosion/damage | Parks | | |
| | Boardwalk | Square Feet | 400 | \$ 400 | \$ 160,000 | | 2 boardwalks/docks, west side Beach Lk. | Parks | | |
| | Trails | Linear Foot | 4500 | \$ 2 | \$ 9,000 | | Move existing trail at lake edge | Volunteers | | |
| | Reclaim lake edge | Linear Foot | 1000 | \$ 15 | \$ 15,000 | | Revegetate, plant willows, soil stabilization | Volunteers | | |
| | | | | | | \$ 634,000 | | | | |
| Beach Lake Day Use Area | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Open Play Area | LS | 1 | \$ 50,000 | \$ 50,000 | | | | | |
| | Picnic Shelter | Each | 1 | \$ 400,000 | \$ 400,000 | | | | | |
| | DEC Tank Toilets | Each | 1 | \$ 150,000 | \$ 150,000 | | | | | |
| | Picnic Tables | Each | 6 | \$ 1,500 | \$ 9,000 | | | | | |
| | Boardwalk/Dock | Square Feet | 400 | \$ 400 | \$ 160,000 | | | | | |
| | Gravel Beach | LS | 1 | \$ 10,000 | \$ 10,000 | | | | | |
| | Total | | | | | \$ 879,000 | | | | |
| PHASE 3: 2025+ | SW 1/4 Section 25 Park | | | | | | | | | |
| | | Open Play Area | LS | 1 | \$ 50,000 | \$ 50,000 | | | | |
| | | Picnic Shelter | Each | 1 | \$ 400,000 | \$ 400,000 | | | | |
| | | Picnic Tables | Each | 6 | \$ 1,500 | \$ 9,000 | | | | |
| | | Parking Lot | Sq. Yd. | 3230 | \$ 150 | \$ 484,500 | | 85 vehicles | | |
| | Playground | Each | 1 | \$ 100,000 | \$ 100,000 | | | | | |
| | Total | | | | | \$ 1,043,500 | | | | |
| Phase II (if needed) Multi-Purpose Trail Birchwood Loop/Beach Lake Road | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Trail | Linear Foot | 15840 | \$ 50 | \$ 792,000 | \$ 792,000 | 3 Miles, One side of road, 8 feet wide gravel/RAP | Parks | | |
| Total CIP | | | | | | \$ 4,781,980 | | | | |





Environmental Solutions for Northern Places

Appendix A - Memorandum

March 3, 2010

Subject: Beach Lake Regional Park Master Plan Update
Gravel Extraction for NW1/4 Section 25, Beach Lake Park

From: Wm. Dwayne Adams, Jr., FASLA
Beach Lake Master Plan Update Project Manager

The contract between the Municipality of Anchorage and Land Design North states the following:

The annexation of the NW ¼ Section 25 is subject to certain material extraction rights held by the State of Alaska (SOA). An agreement between the MOA and SOA as to potential conditions of extraction are memorialized in the Section 25 Materials Extraction Agreement (MEA) as executed by the MOA and SOA on November 8, 2006 and subsequently amended. Land use and recreational recommendations will be reconciled with the SOA rights and the MEA. (emphasis added)

This memorandum provides background and recommendations regarding the “reconciliation” required in the above statement.

As background, it is appropriate to recognize the limitations of this master plan update. The update provided investigation of planning issues for determining the most appropriate use of public lands under consideration for the study, given public input. That level of effort does not provide a determination of technical issues beyond that level of need. Thus, issues such as hydrology and geotechnical issues are not developed to a degree that allow definition of technical requirements related to the gravel extraction. Issues specific to this would include those such as separation of the gravel extraction site from ground water, traffic, noise, or other possible neighborhood impacts. This recommendation relates only to requirements governing proposed park improvements or the desired condition for the park in the long term.

The master plan update proposes that the NW1/4 of Section 25 would be left in a generally natural condition, with the exception of a reserve area in support of a future community park and access point in the southwest portion of that parcel. The community park would be provided road access from the south, at the southwest corner. The park could include amenities such as a parking lot, a trail head and trail connections, a picnic area and picnic shelter, playground, and an informal open play space.

If subjected to gravel extraction, the remainder of the NW1/4 beyond this park reserve area would be maintained or revegetated to achieve as natural a condition as possible. Within the

natural area would be a system of limited cross country ski trails that would also serve for hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian use.

With respect to reconciling the gravel extraction, the following conditions are recommended as a condition of gravel extraction:

1. Prior to beginning clearing, the SOA and MOA will create a schematic plan for the community reserve park to be located at the southwestern corner of the NW1/4 of Section 25, as shown on the Beach Lake Master Plan Update. The community park will include the following:
 - a. A parking area suitable for meeting projected community demand, based on similar parks within the Municipality of Anchorage.
 - b. A picnic area including picnic tables in open settings.
 - c. A picnic structure suitable for rental, typical of other such structures in the Municipality of Anchorage.
 - d. A trailhead with mapped connections to Beach Lake Park trails.
 - e. An open area of approximately 5 acres, suitable for play. The play area is not to be dedicated to organized field or game use but should be suitable for informal play.
 - f. A sledding hill
2. For all other areas of the park that are cleared, they shall be revegetated within the following general parameters:
 - a. The revegetation goal is to achieve a natural forested appearance within approximately 20 years, however, revegetation shall be done on an incremental basis as gravel is removed to protect water quality, provide dust control, and to speed up overall reforestation timelines and forest re-growth.
 - b. Reseeding shall include a mix of non-invasive and native species based on recommendations of the State of Alaska Plant Materials Center, working with the MOA Department of Parks and Recreation. Plantings are to include young birch trees between 3 and 10 feet in height and spruce seedlings.
 - c. Appropriate soil amendment shall be provided to enhance growth of vegetation by means of tilling limited organics into the soil, based on recommendations of the State of Alaska Plant Materials Center, working with the MOA Department of Parks and Recreation.
3. Clearing and gravel extraction shall take place beginning from the southwestern corner of the parcel, proceeding to the northeast. This will ensure that clearing and grubbing takes place in a methodical manner, based on the incremental need for the gravel, not the end buildout of the agreement between SOA and MOA.