



Girdwood Cemetery

Girdwood, Alaska

Uniform and gently sloping topography in the north portion of the site makes this land usable for cemetery development without grading for burial areas. The heavy, native tree cover, however, should be protected and preserved by using the site predominantly for in-ground cremation burial and limiting full body burial to selected and dispersed locations within the woodlands.

The existing, historic miners' pond should be preserved and used as a feature within the cemetery, and as part of a cemetery trail system.

This deep, California Creek valley divides the north and south portions of the site making pedestrian crossing impractical or impossible without a structural crossing.

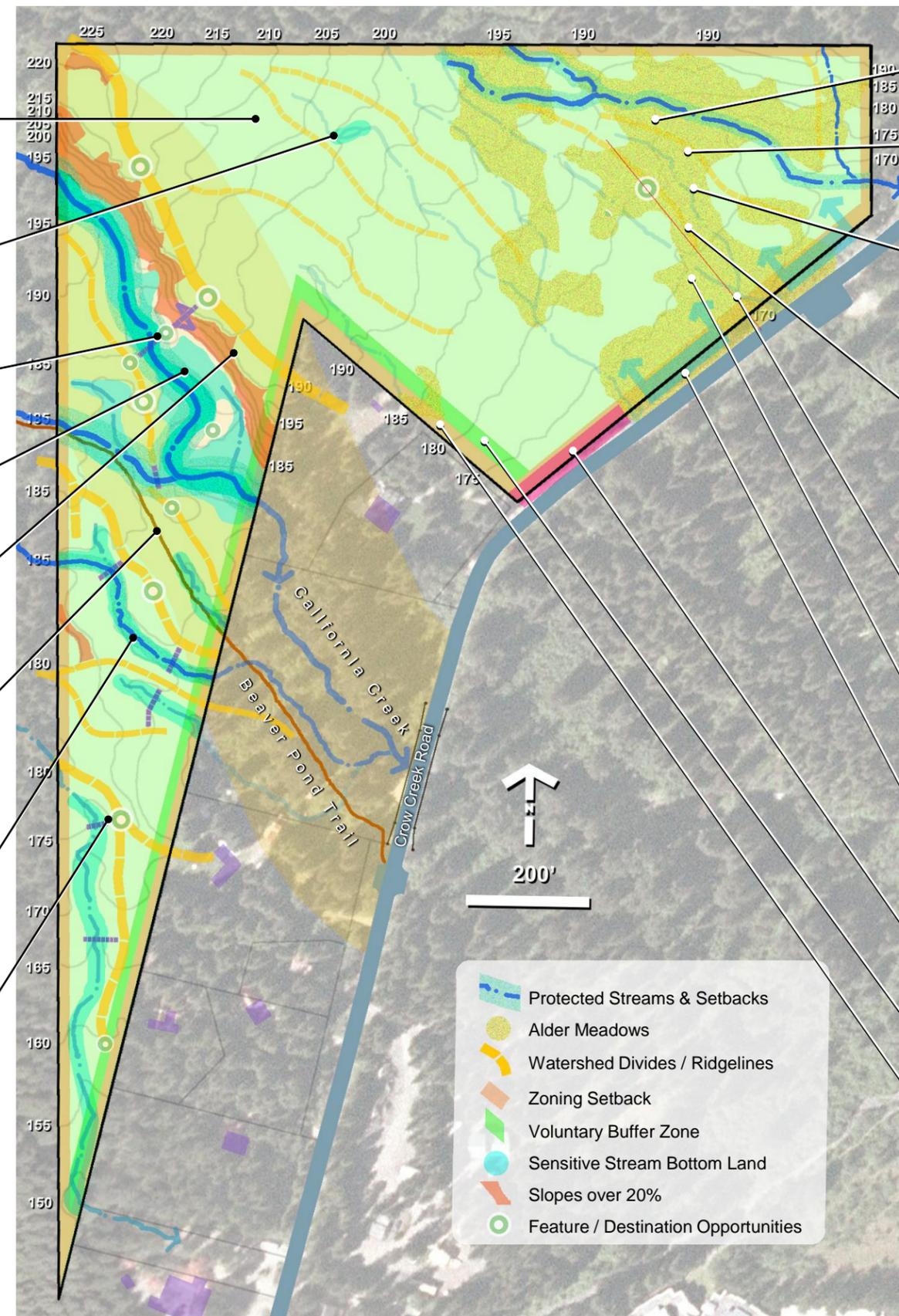
The high banks of this creek corridor offer dramatic views into the valley with opportunities for meditation overlooks from within the cemetery.

These sensitive slopes and regulated stream corridors need to be protected with setbacks for burial and trails at the top of slopes.

Beaver Pond Trail is an important part of the regional trail system. A connection to the proposed cemetery would have mutual benefit to the users of both the Beaver Pond Trail and the cemetery. Cemetery development could add unique historic, natural and cultural features, and meditative open space to the overall trail system.

Complex drainage patterns with seasonal stream flows in the point of land south of California Creek create difficult and wet topography that makes the use of this heavily wooded land impractical for full body burial development.

Well placed trails on ridgelines with drainage crossings would allow for in-ground cremation burial in this difficult topography. Key points located along these ridges offer opportunities for rest and meditation areas, interpretive displays, and special memorial features.



The gently sloping topography of the existing alder meadows is suitable for full body burial without significant grading or tree removal.

This regulated stream requires protective setbacks for burial development.

The existing alder meadows make access on foot impractical or impossible. Removal of the alder growth and restoration of these areas with native meadow grasses offers the opportunity to create naturalistically designed burial areas suitable for full body burial. Their organic, natural configuration should be maintained as much as is practical to create interesting and intimate spaces within the woodlands.

The gently sloping, east-facing land would in this area would be visible from Crow Creek Road with the removal of the alder growth. This is the best opportunity for creating a public face and identity for the cemetery. These alder meadow areas also have good view orientation to the mountain vistas to the east. These site characteristics should be used to advantage in the placement, orientation, and design of the cemetery's structural facilities.

This existing drainage way and low area provides natural location for drainage collection and storm water management.

The east facing slopes and treeless areas of the alder growth create small scaled spaces that can be used to advantage for creating intimacy and privacy in the cemetery design.

These areas of higher ground are good locations for vehicular access to the site.

The bend in Crow Creek Road creates inadequate site distance to the south from the site and prohibits site entrance in this area.

A voluntary 25' buffer zone, in addition to the required setback, would provide additional privacy for neighbors.

A 25' setback is required for structural development.



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Long Range Master Plan
Recommendations for Cemetery Development



Cremation burials and selected full body burial sites are available throughout the dense woodlands. Memorialization can be personalized, but should be limited to natural and locally available stone and wood materials. Stone memorials should be in the form of natural boulders.

The historic miners' pond is the central feature for a meditation area that can also accommodate committal services or gatherings. This includes a "council ring" for small scale activities and performances. The facilities can include interpretive displays of natural features and cultural history.

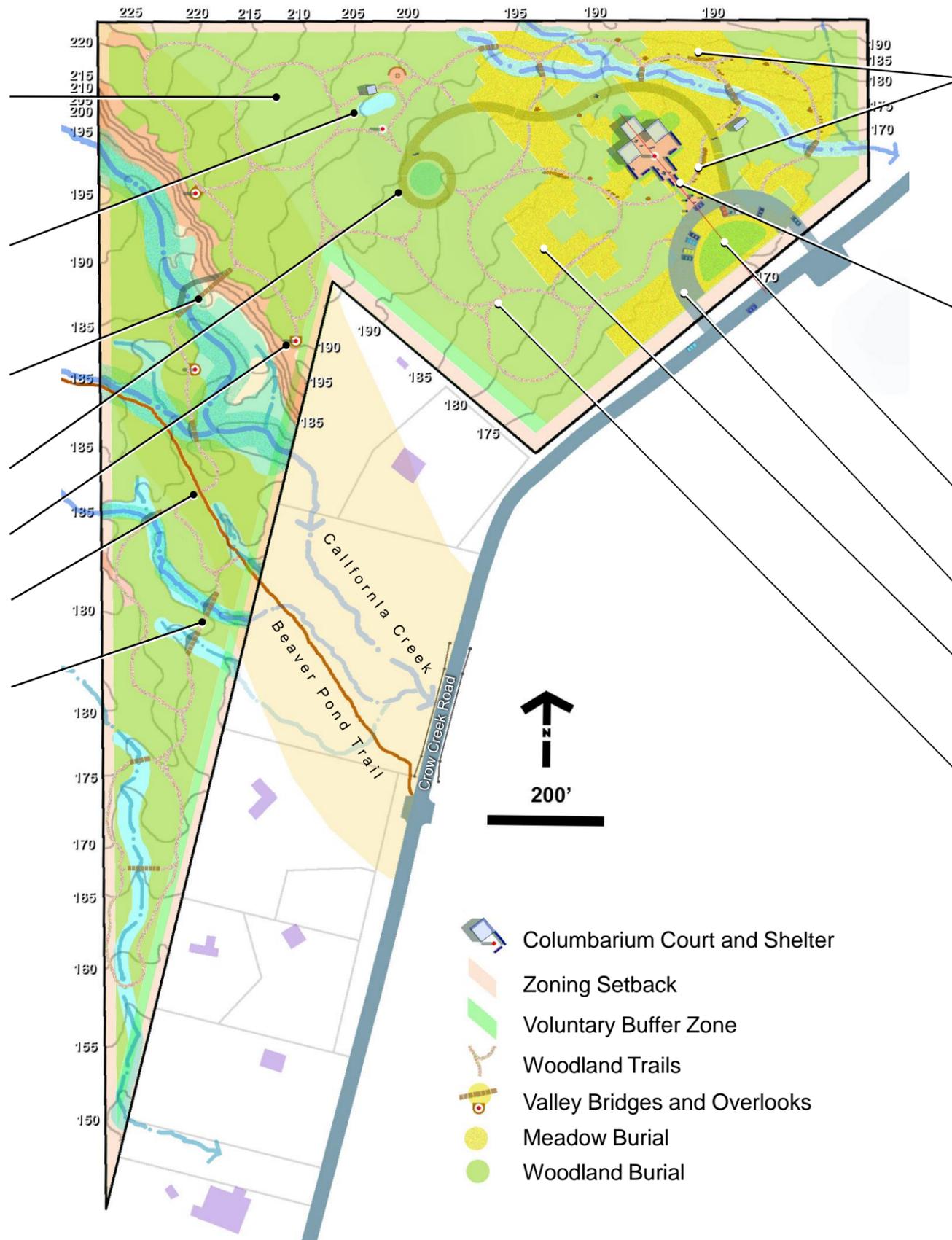
The California Creek bridge creates the important link between the Beaver Pond Trail and Girdwood Cemetery and connects the north and south halves of the cemetery.

A stabilized but unpaved road provides access to the western parts of the cemetery.

Valley overlooks with seating for meditation are placed at key vista points along the trails.

The cemetery trails link the Beaver Pond Trail with the cemetery

Foot bridges provide year-round access across the seasonal streams on the trails through the cremation woodlands in the south "Point" of the cemetery.



Open meadows of native grasses and wildflowers accommodate full body burials. Mowed pathways provide access through the meadows. Burial options include "visitation" graves along the paths and "non-visitation" graves within the meadows. Native boulders are used for personal memorials along the pathways and boulder monoliths are used for cenotaph memorialization of burials in the non-visitation meadows.

The central activity area provides shelters and an events plaza for committal services and community activities. These facilities include columbarium niche walls and seating for meditation and gatherings. The central plaza includes the opportunity for historic and cultural art displays and memorials. This includes the opportunity to create a Veterans' memorial.

Storm water detention and snow storage is captured in the natural basin at Crow Creek Road.

Paved access road and parking.

Naturally configured, existing alder stands are converted to meadows within the open areas of the dense woodlands.

Woodland trails provide access to the woodland cremation burials and selected full body burial sites as well as recreational hiking trails which connect to the Beaver Pond Trail.



Jack Goodnoe
Cemetery Planning and Design

Preliminary
January 14, 2019

