

## Far North Bicentennial Park: Trail Improvement Plan

W.O. D59813

### Agency Meeting

Sept. 10, 2008

2:30pm - 4:00pm

attendees: *Kimberley Klein (ADF&G - Habitat Div.); Jessy Coltrane (ADF&G); Rick Sinnott (ADF&G); Mary Lee Plumb-Mentjes (COE); Karen Keesecker (MOA -Wetlands); Holly Spoth-Torres (Parks & Recreation Department); Troy Duffin (Alpine Trails, Inc.); Kevin Doniere (DOWL)*

- The design team of DOWL Engineers and Alpine Trails, Inc. with close consultation from the MOA Parks & Recreation Department noted the removal of the Single Track Advocates (STA) trail network on the north side of Campbell Creek and on the north side of Campbell Airstrip Road adjacent to the Stuckagain Heights subdivision. The design team noted that these trails were removed because of wildlife concerns as well as concerns by park users who enjoy exploring areas of Far North Bicentennial Park (FNBP) that are without trails. This area will act as an undeveloped wildlife corridor and be designated as an area with no new trail development. This creek corridor connects Chugach State Park (CSP) and FNBP and, geographically, this area has become a pinch point for wildlife moving between the Stuckagain Heights subdivision and the new STA trail development/existing Spencer Loop area.
- Jessy noted that the brown bears come off the hillside through this tunneled corridor along Campbell Creek in this location. She thought it would be best to keep those trails off the plan.
- The design team stated that we were going to show this area (north side of Campbell Creek and north side of Campbell Airstrip Road) and a larger area to the north as an area designated as “no new trail development”.
- Jessy and Rick noted the brown bear attacks on trail users in the Rover’s Run/Spencer Loop areas this year and were supportive of this idea of the “no new trail development.”
- Rick mentioned that he didn’t think that the road (Campbell Airstrip) was a barrier for bears or any other wildlife – they move freely from one side to the other.
- Rick and Jessy noted that moving a more major trail on the north side of Campbell Airstrip Road would be good; gets the trail users away from the creek where the brown bears are moving up and down; the vegetation type is better on the North Side of Campbell Airstrip Road for a class 4 multi-use trail - more open and visible. They also noted that where the trail is proposed to be located on the South side of the road, closer to the Campbell Airstrip Trailhead, that we should keep it closer to the road edge and as far away from the creek as possible.

- Permitting all of the projects that will be outlined in the plan: Mary Lee stated that they would first determine whether or not it is a water of the US that was being impacted and that they would look to see if it fits under their jurisdictional purview.
- Mary Lee suggested doing an Individual Permit for all the projects that we are proposing in FNBP. She suggested we phase the projects in our Individual Permit request. The expiration date on the permit could be set at 5 yrs and be renewed when that date was up. This provides flexibility in the permit with potential to modify it in the future if projects change or projects want to be added.
- These phased projects would have to include cost estimates. A letter to the COE (Corps of Engineers) would be submitted by Parks or the Contractor once the project was going to begin - outlining any changes that have occurred from the original plan.
- The design team will need wetland delineations for each of the park projects related to or impacting wetlands. Mary Lee suggested that we could delineate those projects that are of higher priority (TOA bridges) and come back with a permit modification on newer projects with the delineation at the time of the project.
- These projects will have to go through a Coastal Zone review (Coastal Zone questionnaire).
- Mary Lee thought that the Parks would not have to get a permit for revegetation in wetlands, and would hope that they would reveg with native plants/seeds that are actually growing in the surrounding area of any reveg project.
- Jessy noted another brown bear corridor coming from Ft. Richardson down to the North Fork of the Campbell Creek where the Beaver Dam dog mushing trail is located in the northeast portion of the park (near AWWU and Enstar buildings).
- Jessy and Rick also noted more pronounced bear activity along the west side of the Beaver Dam Trail tunnel and the Shields Trail area near the creek. The vegetation is full of devils club, cow parsnip, and tall grasses, making it difficult to see any bears in the area.
- Jessy and Rick agreed with designating seasonal trails, such as Rover's Run. They thought it would be best to keep it closed during the summer when the salmon are running up the creeks and the bears are feeding along the creeks at that time (end of May to mid-October). They said not to create any more seasonal trails (don't construct any new trails that we would designate as seasonal), but to designate existing trails as seasonal.
- Jessy and Rick didn't think it was necessary to designate the Salmon Run trail as a seasonal trail – because only a small portion of that trail is on MOA park land (the majority of the trail is on BLM land).

- Holly mentioned a short section of Spencer Loop that she was thinking about rerouting because it was too close to the eroding creek bank, but Rick seemed to think that some selective clearing would help with making wildlife more visible.
- Mary Lee noted that we should keep track of the trail alternatives and reroutes that we have been thinking of and put them into the wetland permit application. This lets them know how and why decisions were reached on locations for reroutes or new trails.
- Show the area for no new trail development. The agencies were supportive of this idea and of the area we talked about designating as such.
- Should we consider ASDRA trails as seasonal only? Only those in wetland areas?
- Show all wetlands areas in and around park. Don't clip wetland areas outside of FNBP boundary.
- Marylee suggested that we consider or look at areas of streambank restoration to offset some of the fill that is planned for wetland areas as a part of these trail improvement projects.
- Kimberly noted that the Habitat Division of ADF&G would be interested in barriers or buffers from the creeks; and prefers bridges over culverts; stream setbacks for any future developments; gravel access at bridges for horses and dogs so there is a controlled access point to deter streambank erosion.
- This TIP is a work plan for Parks on trail related projects for the next 15 years.
- DOWL will send meeting notes out to the agencies for their review as well as a link to the website to review the mapping and list of proposed projects.

### **Conversation about Permitting Process for DOWL**

(with Pat Whitesell, DOWL - 9/10/08)

#### Individual Permit

- We have approximately 6-8 proposed projects on our plans that would require wetland delineations.
- Person Hours to complete delineations:
  - 2-person crew / 3 days in the field
  - 7 to 10 days of environmental report of wetland delineation
- DOWL has qualified environmental staff available to begin this work today.

- Timing: usually Individual Permits take from 6 to 12 months to complete; our TIP could continue and be completed before this Individual Permit is received.