

# DRAFT TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

OCTOBER 2009



**FINAL DRAFT**  
**FAR NORTH BICENTENNIAL PARK**  
**TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN**

**Prepared for:**

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABG	Alaska Botanical Gardens
ADF&G	State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game
ASDRA	Alaska Sled Dog and Racing Association
ATGC	Anchorage Trails and Greenways Coalition
ATVs	all-terrain vehicles
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
DOT&PF	State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
FNBP	Far North Bicentennial Park
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
HLB	Heritage Land Bank
km	kilometer
MOA	Municipality of Anchorage
NPS	National Park Service
NSAA	Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage
P&R	Parks and Recreation
RTCA	Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program
STA	Single-Track Advocates
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
TOA	Tour of Anchorage
TRACS	Trail Assessment and Condition Survey
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USFS	United State Forest Service
UV	ultraviolet

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose and Scope of Project**

Far North Bicentennial Park (FNBP) is the largest park in the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA). This 4,011-acre park, set in the foothills of the Chugach Mountains, gives Anchorage residents and other park visitors an opportunity to recreate in a variety of ways. FNBP is home to the Hilltop Ski Area, the Alaska Botanical Garden (ABG), over 80 miles of multi-use trails, and important connections to Chugach State Park. The park has over one million visitors each year, contributing to the social, economic, and ecological well-being of Anchorage. FNBP accommodates a wide variety of trail users, from dog mushing to skiing to mountain biking to horseback riding. With this wide variety of trail uses, conflicts between the different trail users have arisen.

As trail use increases, trail maintenance needs increase. Trail user conflicts, both in winter and in summer, also continue to increase. During the FNBP Trail Improvements Plan project, trails throughout FNBP have been evaluated to determine their condition and current use. Critical missing trail links and trail amenities have been identified. Trail standards, classifications, and trail crew specifications have been developed. This plan has evaluated the need for trailhead and parking upgrades and increased wayfinding and interpretive signage and other public amenities that will enhance the park as a four-season recreation facility. This plan develops a comprehensive and strategic trail project list endorsed by the trail community. The scope of this project is to develop a Trail Improvements Plan, which includes the following:

- Current data on the existing trails and facilities within FNBP.
- Trail Classifications, Trail Design Parameters, and Maintenance Guidelines for the managed trails of FNBP. These guidelines will become templates for other trails throughout the MOA park system.
- A Geographic Information System (GIS) database to facilitate the management of these trails by MOA Parks and Recreation (P&R). This information will be incorporated into the city-wide GIS database, available to the public.

- Produce a Trail Improvements Plan with a list of future trail projects that will be a priority for the next 10 to 15 years and to assist MOA P&R in the management of FNBP.
- Use the Trail Improvements Plan to assist in attaining an Individual Permit (required in order to work in wetland areas) from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to allow project development once funding is available.
- Facilitate the funding process for trail improvements and maintenance.
- Expedite MOA permitting of trail development and maintenance.

With this wide variety of trail uses, conflicts between the different trail users have arisen. In the past, these conflicts between users had reached a threshold where work had to be done to bring these varied trail users together to resolve their issues. During this time, many uses such as mountain biking, skijoring, orienteering, and geocaching, were becoming more and more popular with existing trails and areas throughout FNBP meeting the trail characteristics and needs of these trail users. In 1989, MOA P&R created a FNBP Trail Users Group as an open forum for discussion of issues, conflicts, and to identify issues related to the different trail users. Meetings were held monthly at the Campbell Creek Science Center to facilitate the discussion of the needs and desires of each trail user. However, during this same time period, the MOA's approval of maintenance activities on the Tour of Anchorage Trail had improved the trail for one user group and diminished the character of the trail for another user group without an appropriate review. This work initiated the development of the Single-Track Advocates (STA) and the creation of the FNBP Trails Committee. This trails committee was established in 2004 to collaborate on trail improvements in FNBP and to eventually work on the FNBP Trails Committee: Strategic Action Planning document. The trails committee included members from nine different trail user groups and the Friends of FNBP, with two representatives from each group. The FNBP Trails Committee's vision included promoting and encouraging the diversity of park users, and to work towards solutions to issues to enhance park user experiences.

In 1995, a plan for trail improvements, called the FNBP: Planning and Development Project, was created to identify and prioritize improvements to the park. This plan identified a list of 27 trail-specific projects within the FNBP boundary and on Bureau of Land Management (BLM)



Campbell Tract land. With the support of the FNBP Trail Users Group and partnerships with organized trail users, 15 of the 27 projects listed in that plan were completed. With over half of the projects completed and others underway, the FNBP Trail Users Group has accomplished a lot by completing that many projects from a master plan document within a 10-year period (1995 through 2005).

A park bond passed in 2007 funded this current project. The future trail improvement projects identified in this plan relate to the needs and desires of the community, while preserving the balance between development and the natural character of the park. This Trail Improvements Plan is intended to be a 10- to 15-year plan with the goal to accomplish the majority of the proposed projects in that time period. This project was not intended to be an update to the currently adopted FNBP Master Plan of 1985; all of the proposed projects outlined in this Trail Improvements Plan are consistent with that plan. Trail users can use this approved Trail Improvements Plan as a basis for new trail development and maintenance of existing trails. This document can be used when meeting with the MOA P&R Commission for approval of new trail projects and trail improvements as those individual projects become funded.

## **1.2 Overview of the Park**

### **1.2.1 Regional Setting and Geographic Location**

FNBP is situated on the east edge of Anchorage, south of Tudor Road, north of Abbott Road, east of Elmore Road, and west of Chugach State Park (Figure 1). FNBP is a unique park. The majority of the park is undeveloped, except for a variety of trails. It is located within the city of Anchorage, with urban neighborhoods adjacent to three sides. On the east, it is bordered by the one-half-million-acre Chugach State Park and the Stuckagain Heights subdivision. It is a popular place for recreation, with more than 80 trails totaling over 80 miles. Areas of the park are flat, wooded, and include wetland areas, while other areas are steeply sloped and offer superb views.



**Figure 1: Vicinity Map**

### 1.2.2 Resources

Views. The majority of the FNBP study area is relatively flat, but this changes dramatically toward the southeastern portion of the park that becomes part of the foothills of the Chugach Mountains. FNBP elevations range from 60 to 360 feet above sea level with the steepest slopes found in the canyon or gorge of the South Fork of Campbell Creek, adjacent to the Spencer Loop Trail. Panoramic views of Anchorage and the Cook Inlet are found along the Hillside Park ski trails and the Hilltop Ski Area (Figure 2). Views within FNBP provide glimpses of the surrounding Chugach Mountain range, as well as views to open meadow areas, creeks meandering through the park, and bog areas with distant views of the mountains.

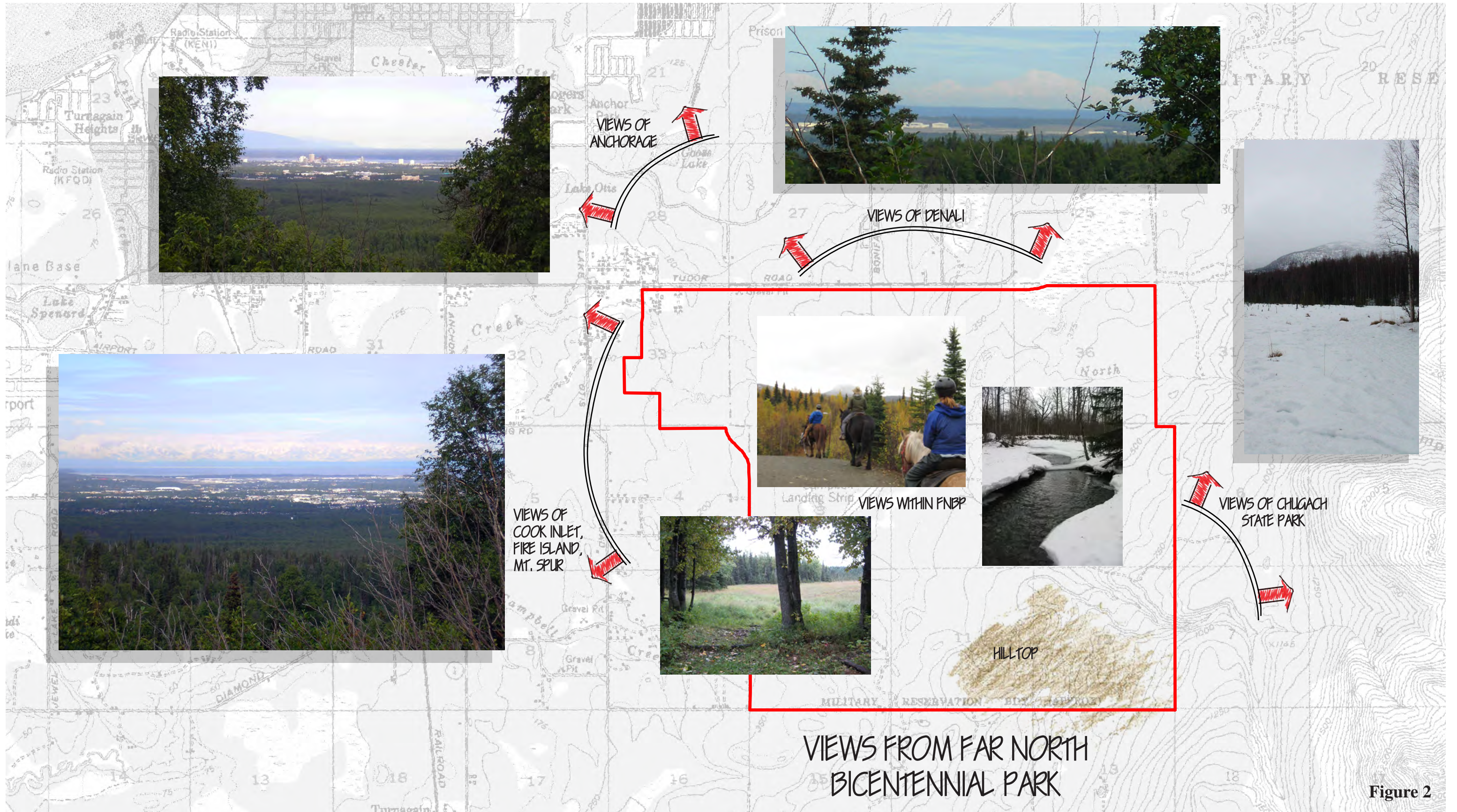


Figure 2



Wildlife. One of the great qualities of FNBP is the wide variety of wildlife species it supports, including moose, black and grizzly bears, lynx, coyote, hawks, and owls. The creeks of FNBP are teeming with fish, including salmon (king, red, silver), rainbow trout, and Dolly Varden. A variety of bird species are also found in FNBP. The State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) noted that all of FNBP is a movement corridor for wildlife in the larger context of the Anchorage bowl. A more detailed report is being developed by ADF&G and will be available in 6 - 12 months. This future report intends to delineate movement corridors of bears by combining location data from Global Positioning System (GPS)-collared bears with computer modeling. However, based on current information from ADF&G, it appears that bears primarily follow the North and South Forks of Campbell Creek that originates in Fort Richardson and Chugach State Park.

Vegetation. FNBP contains a variety of plant communities. The different plant communities are determined by the varying site conditions, including soil characteristics, topography and associated elevations, slope, orientation to sun and wind, drainage characteristics, and dynamics of the creeks and riparian areas. The vegetation varies from shrub bogs to diverse woodlands, including bogs and grasslands, deciduous and evergreen forests, mixed forests, dwarf black spruce, and riparian vegetation. The mixed forest is the most dominant vegetation type throughout the study area and includes birch, aspen, spruce, cottonwood, and a variety of other native shrubs. Willows, high and low bush cranberries, currants, and native roses can also be found, providing abundant food for local wildlife. Developed and disturbed areas also exist throughout the FNBP study area.

Soils. Soils information for FNBP was extracted from the MOA's GIS database. This database acquired information that is based on the *Anchorage Area Soil Survey* published by the Soil Conservation Service, 2001. Soils can be classified in many different ways depending on use or needs. This study organizes these soils into similar categories based on the drainage types and the development suitability.

Soil characteristics vary considerably throughout FNBP. The sub-soil ranges from very gravelly sandy loams that are somewhat excessively drained to soils that have a high content of organic material, are very poorly drained, and are frequently ponding.

The different soil types play a role in determining locations for facilities, trails, and other uses. A structurally sound soil that is well drained with gravels throughout is generally less expensive to build on than soils that require special subgrade preparation, or special structures like bridges or boardwalks. Building on unsuitable soils will not only require additional expenses for construction and maintenance of the facility, but may also create serious environmental consequences such as erosion.

The soils have been grouped into four categories: urban and disturbed (somewhat excessively drained), well drained, somewhat poorly drained, and very poorly drained/peat soils. These soil types are highlighted in the soils map (Figure 3) and have been listed below.

#### Urban and Disturbed Land

##### 406 - Cryorthents and Urban Land

Slopes: 0 to 5 percent

Drainage Class: Somewhat excessively drained

Representative Profile: Very gravelly sandy loam, moderate permeability

##### 407 - Cryorthents and Urban Land

Slopes: 5 to 20 percent

Drainage Class: Somewhat excessively drained

Representative Profile: Very gravelly sandy loam, moderate permeability

##### 408 - Deception-Cryorthents complex

Slopes: 45 to 90 percent

Drainage Class: Well drained to somewhat excessively drained

Representative Profile: Very gravelly sandy loam, moderate permeability

#### Well Drained

##### 410 - Deception-Estelle-Kichatna complex

Slopes: 0 to 7 percent

Drainage Class: Well drained

Representative Profile: Silt loam to very gravelly sandy loam, moderate permeability

##### 411 - Deception-Estelle-Kichatna complex

Slopes: 12 to 20 percent

Drainage Class: Well drained

Representative Profile: Silt loam to very gravelly sandy loam, moderate permeability

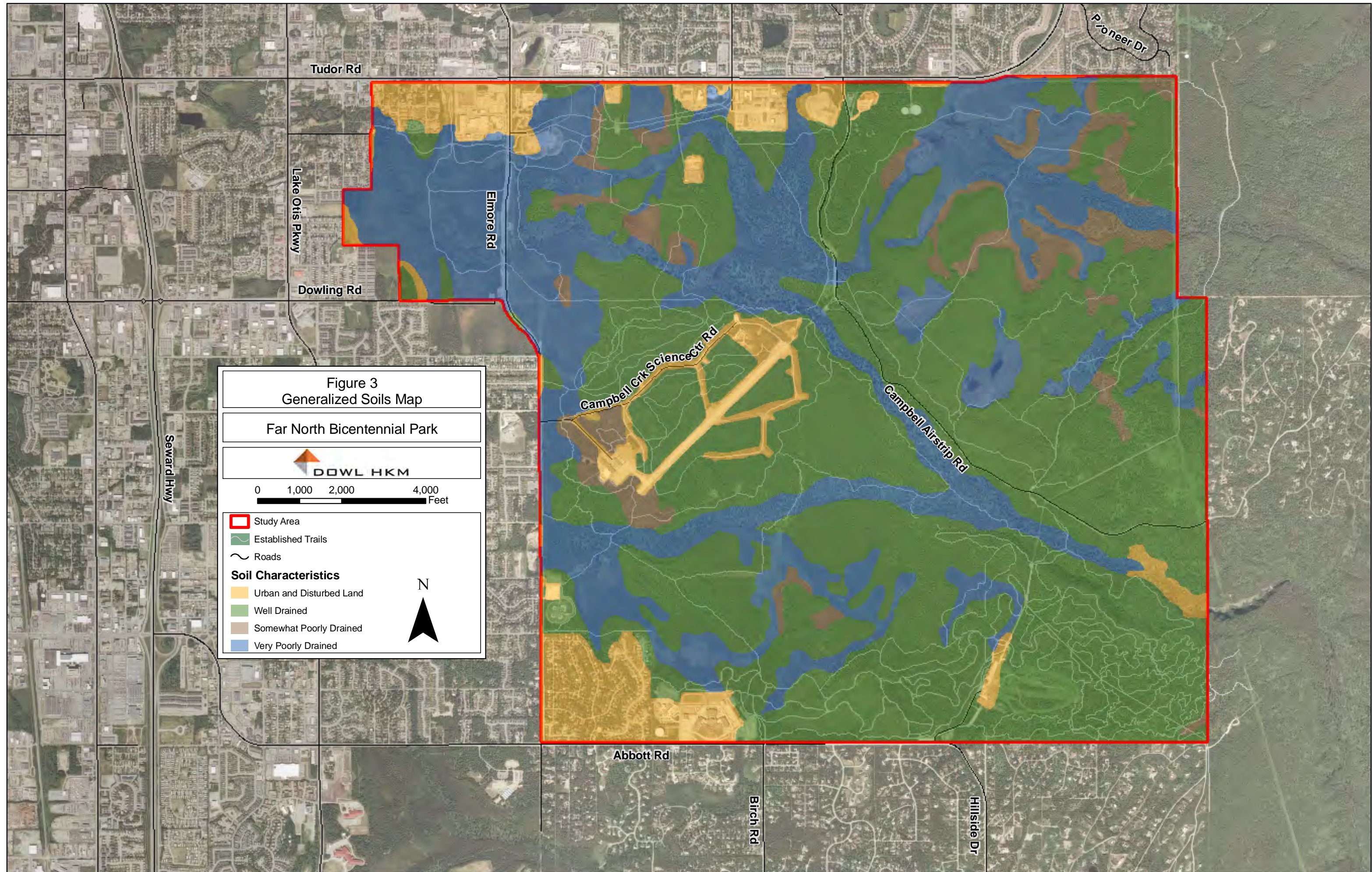


Figure 3  
Generalized Soils Map

Far North Bicentennial Park



0 1,000 2,000 4,000  
Feet

Study Area

Established Trails

Roads

**Soil Characteristics**

Urban and Disturbed Land

Well Drained

Somewhat Poorly Drained

Very Poorly Drained



- 412 - Deception-Estelle-Kichatna complex  
Slopes: 20 to 45 percent  
Drainage Class: Well drained  
Representative Profile: Silt loam to very gravelly sandy loam, moderate permeability
- 413 - Deception-Estelle-Kichatna complex  
Slopes: 45 to 85 percent  
Drainage Class: Well drained  
Representative Profile: Silt loam to very gravelly sandy loam, moderate permeability
- 414 - Deception-Estelle-Kichatna complex  
Slopes: Undulating and hilly  
Drainage Class: Well drained  
Representative Profile: Silt loam to gravelly sandy loam, moderate permeability
- 415 - Deception-Estelle-Kichatna complex  
Slopes: Undulating and steep  
Drainage Class: Well drained  
Representative Profile: Silt loam to gravelly sandy loam, moderate permeability
- 428 - Kashwitna-Kichatna complex  
Slopes: 0 to 3 percent  
Drainage Class: Well drained  
Representative Profile: Silt loam to gravelly sandy loam, moderate to moderately rapid permeability
- 429 - Kashwitna-Kichatna complex  
Slopes: 12 to 20 percent  
Drainage Class: Well drained  
Representative Profile: Silt loam to gravelly sandy loam, moderate to moderately rapid permeability
- 430 - Kashwitna-Kichatna complex  
Slopes: 30 to 85 percent  
Drainage Class: Well drained  
Representative Profile: Silt loam to gravelly sandy loam, moderate to moderately rapid permeability

431 - Kashwitna-Kichatna complex

Slopes: Undulating

Drainage Class: Well drained

Representative Profile: Silt loam to gravelly sandy loam, moderate to moderately rapid permeability

432 - Kashwitna-Kichatna complex

Slopes: Undulating and hilly

Drainage Class: Well drained

Representative Profile: Silt loam to gravelly sandy loam, moderate to moderately rapid permeability

433 - Kashwitna-Kichatna complex

Slopes: Undulating and steep

Drainage Class: Well drained

Representative Profile: Silt loam to gravelly sandy loam, moderate to moderately rapid permeability

Somewhat Poorly Drained

440 - Pioneer Peak silt loam

Slopes: 0 to 3 percent

Drainage Class: Somewhat poorly drained

Representative Profile: Highly decomposed plant material to silt loam, moderately rapid to moderate permeability

Soil-related factors: High water table

441 - Pioneer Peak silt loam

Slopes: 3 to 7 percent

Drainage Class: Somewhat poorly drained

Representative Profile: Highly decomposed plant material to silt loam, moderately rapid to moderate permeability

Soil-related factors: High water table

442 - Pioneer Peak-Jacobsen-Doroshin complex

Slopes: 12 to 20 percent

Drainage Class: Somewhat poorly drained to very poorly drained

Depth to high water table: 0 to 24 inches

Representative Profile: Highly decomposed plant material to silt loam, moderately rapid to moderate permeability

Soil-related factors: High water table, excess organic matter



Very Poorly Drained

417 - Doroshin Peat

Slopes: 0 to 7 percent

Drainage Class: Very poorly drained

Depth to high water table: 0 inches

Representative Profile: Mucky peat, moderately rapid permeability

Soil-related factors: High water table; excess organic matter; ponding

424 - Icknuun Peat

Slopes: 0 to 3 percent

Drainage Class: Very poorly drained

Depth to high water table: 0 inches

Representative Profile: Mucky peat to silt loam, moderately rapid permeability

Soil-related factors: High water table; excess organic matter; ponding

425 - Jacobsen-Disappear-Doroshin complex

Slopes: 0 to 3 percent

Drainage Class: Very poorly drained

Depth to high water table: 6 to 12 inches

Representative Profile: Mucky peat to gravelly silt loam to very gravelly loamy sand, moderate permeability

Soil-related factors: High water table; excess organic matter; ponding

426 - Jacobsen-Disappear-Doroshin complex

Slopes: 3 to 7 percent

Drainage Class: Very poorly drained

Depth to high water table: 0 to 12 inches

Representative Profile: Mucky peat to very gravelly loamy sand, moderate to moderately rapid permeability

Soil-related factors: High water table; excess organic matter; ponding

427 - Jacobsen-Disappear-Doroshin complex

Slopes: 7 to 12 percent

Drainage Class: Very poorly drained

Depth to high water table: 0 to 12 inches

Representative Profile: Mucky peat to very gravelly loamy sand, moderate to moderately rapid permeability

Soil-related factors: High water table; excess organic matter; ponding

437 - Moose River-Niklason complex, frequently flooded

Slopes: 0 to 3 percent

Drainage Class: Very poorly drained

Depth to high water table: 6 to 24 inches

Representative Profile: Slightly decomposed plant material to silt loam to stratified fine sand to silt loam, moderately rapid to moderate permeability

Soil-related factors: Flooding, high water table

438 - Moose River-Niklason complex, occasionally flooded

Slopes: 0 to 3 percent

Drainage Class: Very poorly drained

Depth to high water table: 6 to 24 inches

Representative Profile: Slightly decomposed plant material to silt loam to stratified fine sand to silt loam, moderately rapid to moderate permeability

Soil-related factors: Flooding, high water table

446 - Salamatof Peat

Slopes: 0 to 3 percent

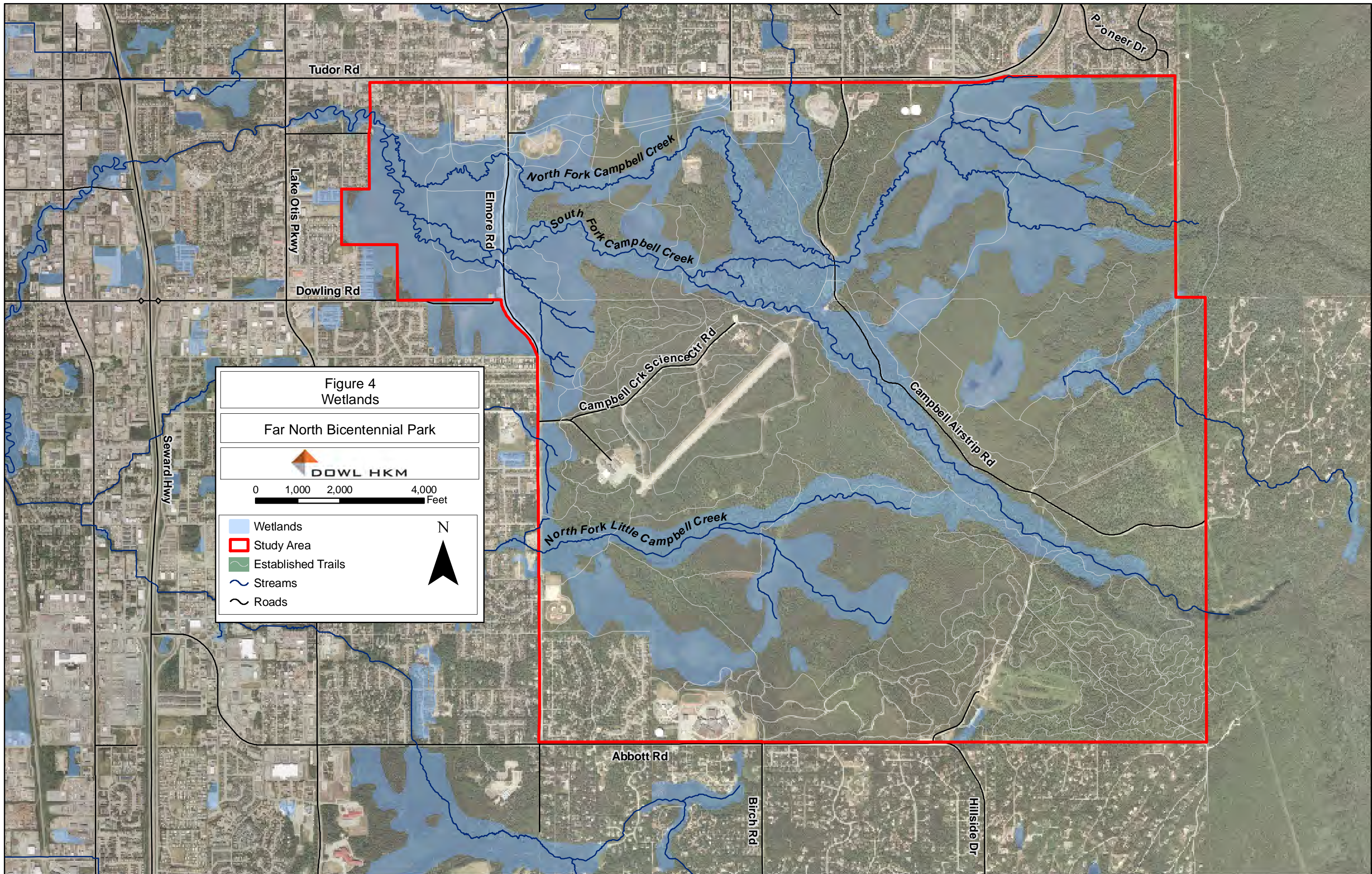
Drainage Class: Very poorly drained

Depth to high water table: 0 inches

Representative Profile: Peat, rapid permeability


Soil-related factors: High water table, excess organic matter, ponding

Hydrology. Over 1,400 acres of Class A, B, and C wetlands exist in FNBPN based on the Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan (1994). These wetland areas are concentrated in the northern portion of the park (Figure 4). They are focused along creek corridors and become more widespread where the creeks merge in the flatter bog areas. Three creeks with headwaters in the Chugach Mountains flow into the western portion of FNBPN: the North Fork of Campbell Creek, the South Fork of Campbell Creek, and northernmost branch of Little Campbell Creek. The North Fork of Campbell Creek flows from the northeastern portion of the park west over flat, wet, spruce bogs to join with the South Fork of Campbell Creek. The South Fork of Campbell Creek enters the park in the gorge area in the southeastern portion of the park, to the north of the Hilltop Ski Area, and continues to the northwest paralleling Campbell Airstrip Road. Little Campbell Creek originates near the Hilltop Ski Area trails and winds through the park exiting near the 76th Avenue/Elmore Road intersection.








**Figure 4**  
Wetlands

Far North Bicentennial Park

 DOWL H&M

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet

 Wetlands  
 Study Area  
 Established Trails  
 Streams  
 Roads

N

These streams are remnants of a braided creek system with broad and irregular floodplain boundaries. The creek areas correspond with low elevations and wetland areas that provide valuable habitat for wildlife. The winter glaciating of ice causes overflow of the creeks that become problematic for some of the winter trails in the area, such as the dog mushing trails.

Creek overflow onto groomed snow trails can damage the integrity of the packed or groomed trails and cause safety issues with trail racing.

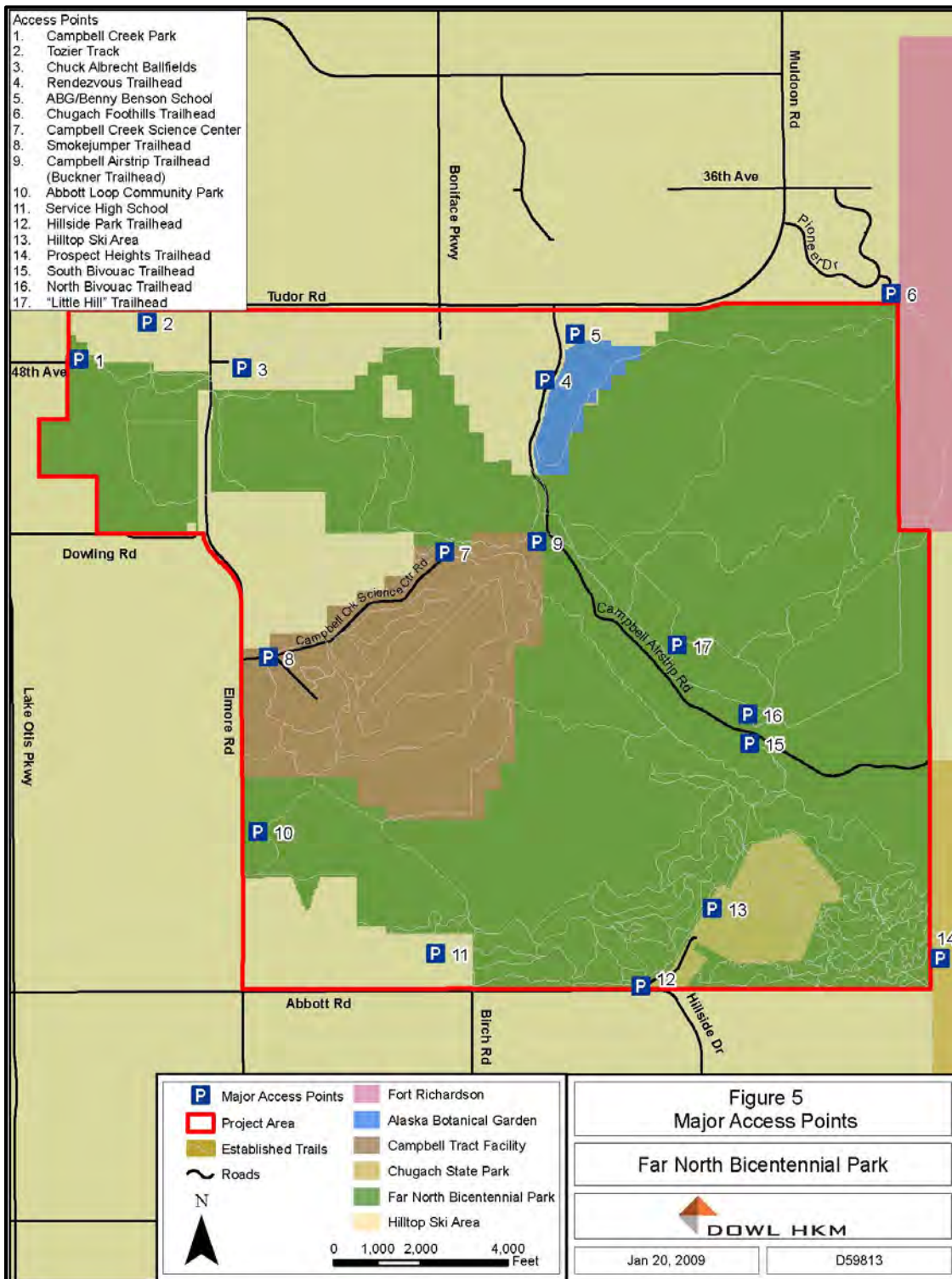
### 1.2.3 Use and Users

FNBP is a heavily used recreation area for people active in a large variety of sports, at every level, and at all times of the year. Most of the use is considered passive recreation that is defined by such activities as hiking, biking, running, horseback riding, and skiing. This differs from active recreation that includes more organized sports that require fields, such as soccer, football, baseball, and basketball. Trails interwoven throughout the park, range from wide, hardened, and lighted multi-use trails to narrow single-track trails. Active recreation exists to a lesser degree with Hilltop Ski Area, a beginner downhill ski area in the southeast portion of the park, and ball fields in the southwest part of the park. Summer uses include walking, hiking, bicycling, running, orienteering, horseback riding, birding, and nature walks. Winter sports include Nordic skiing, dog mushing, winter biking, skijoring, snowshoeing, downhill skiing, ski jumping, and horseback riding. These uses coexist and may seasonally overlap. Although there are occasionally some conflicts, FNBP has become a popular and enjoyable place for the Anchorage community to recreate.

### 1.2.4 Major Access Points

FNBP has many different access points for both vehicles and pedestrians that allow for a variety of trail users to access to the park. Seventeen major access points along the perimeter of the park provide access into FNBP (Figure 5). These access points offer a variety of facilities from off-street parking only to more formalized parking lots with trailhead informational kiosks. Along with these major access points, neighborhood access points exist throughout FNBP. Neighborhood access points are essential for surrounding neighborhoods, providing quick, non-motorized access into FNBP. There are six major access points on the north side of the park off Tudor Road: Campbell Creek Park along East 48th Avenue just off Lake Otis Parkway, the

Tozier Track, the Chuck Albrecht Ball Fields, the ABG and Benny Benson School, the Rendezvous Trailhead along Campbell Airstrip Road, and the Chugach Foothills Trailhead.



**Figure 5: Major Access Points**

The southwestern portion of the park also has a variety of access points located in the park and on adjacent BLM lands. The Smoke Jumper Trailhead and the Campbell Creek Science Center provide access from the west from BLM lands off Elmore Road. The Campbell Airstrip Trailhead (Buckner Trailhead) on BLM property provides access from Campbell Airstrip Road and east Anchorage. The Abbott Loop Community Park along Elmore Road also provides access into the western portion of the park. On the south side of the park, Service High School, the Hillside Park Trailhead, the Hilltop Ski Area, and the Chugach State Park's Prospect Heights Trailhead provide access into the park. Finally, the North and South Bivouac Trailheads and the "Little Hill" parking area along Campbell Airstrip Road provide access to the eastern and central portions of the park, across Campbell Creek, and into the Hillside area.

#### 1.2.5 History of Land Ownership and Management

FNBP is a part of the original Campbell Tract, set aside for military use during World War II. This tract of land was later used and managed by the BLM in conjunction with several state agencies, such as the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF). Approximately 4,260 acres of the Campbell Tract were conveyed from the United States to the MOA through the State of Alaska pursuant to the terms of the Cook Inlet Land Exchange legislation, Section 12(d)(2) of Public Law 94-204 (January 2, 1976). FNBP also includes Section 33 Campbell Creek Lands in the northwest corner of the park that includes approximately 300 acres of land transferred from Heritage Land Bank (HLB) management to MOA P&R and included in FNBP under Assembly Resolution No. 88-268(s) on November 11, 1988.

This legislation allowed the transfer of federal land to State and local governments for recreational and public service uses, through the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP).

After the land transfer language was developed, the 1974 FNBP Master Development Plan set goals for FNBP, which stated specific objectives of the master plan as follows:

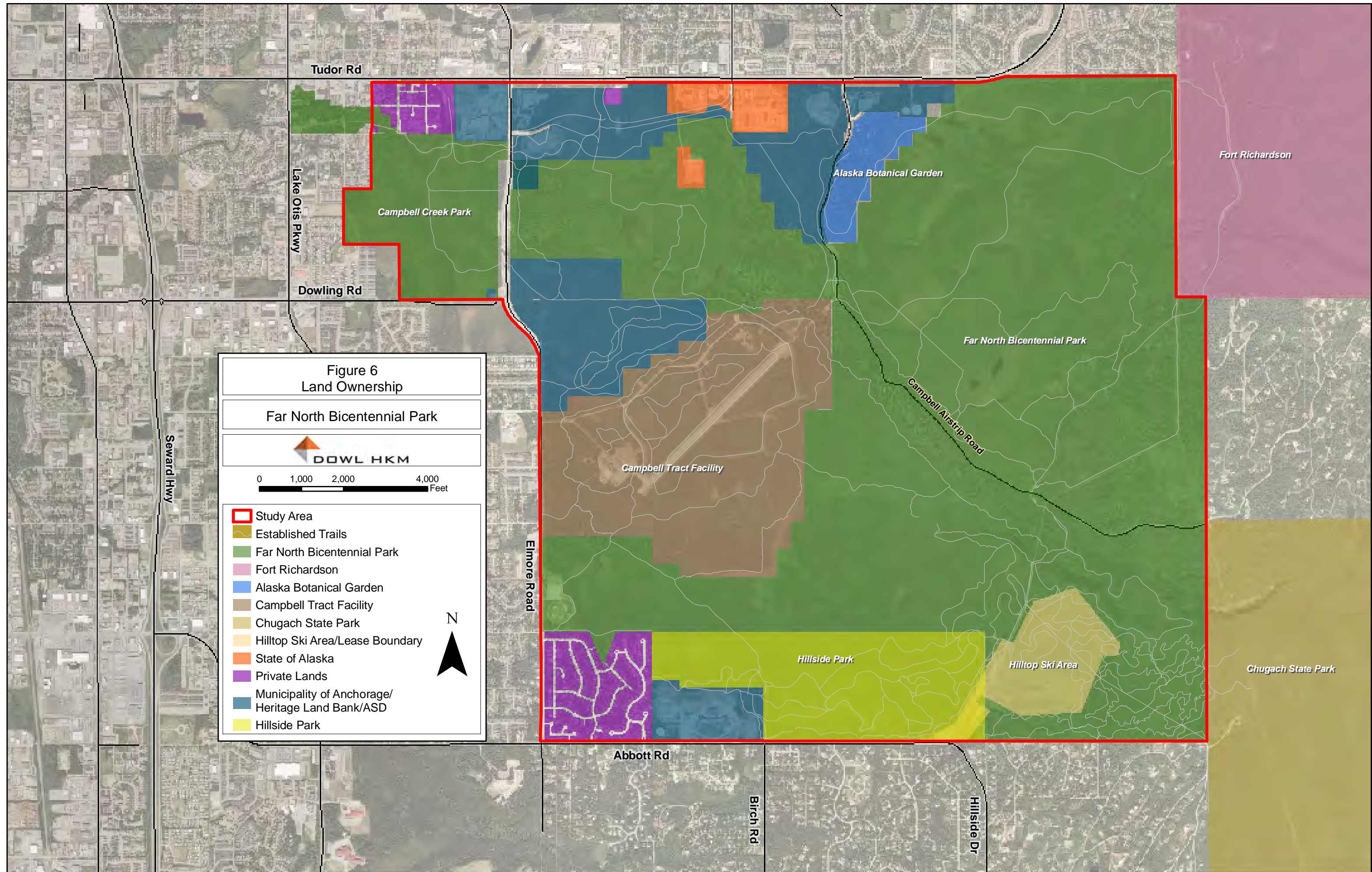
1. Maintain the FNBP in perpetuity as a public park for the benefit of the citizens of Alaska.

2. Preserve the streambeds, watershed areas, and wildlife habitat of the area in as pristine a condition as possible allowing for compatible use of the area for nature appreciation by the public.
3. Provide recreational use by the citizens in areas where such use will be consistent with the primary objectives of nature conservation.
4. Provide areas where more intensive public uses can be developed in a manner consistent with nature and harmonious with neighboring uses.

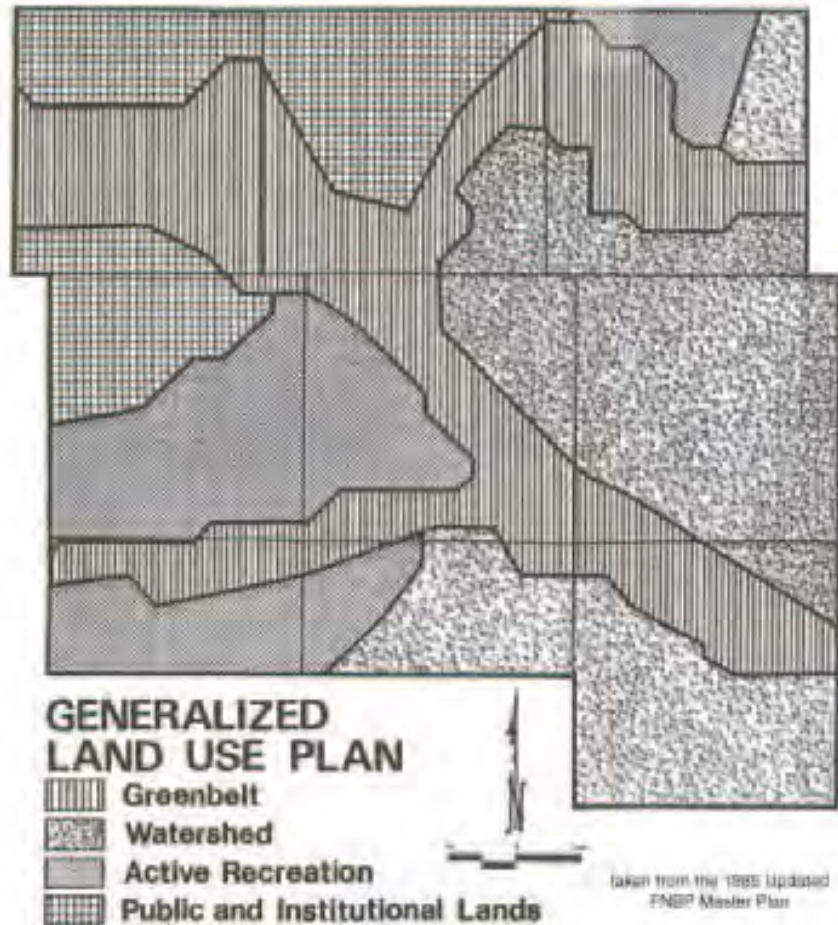
This Trail Improvements Plan contains recommendations in concert with the intent of the 1974 FNBP Master Development Plan and the land transfer documents.

#### 1.2.6 Current Land Use/Management

MOA P&R manages a 4,011-acre portion of the Campbell Tract area for non-motorized outdoor recreational use and activities. The MOA P&R staff coordinates with trail users on park management issues through the FNBP Trail Users Group that meets monthly. Paved trails are inconsistent with FNBP being maintained as a natural area. The only locations where proposed trails have been recommended in the study area are in cases where links between two existing paved trails are missing. Also, paved trails are proposed along the future Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue (formerly known as 48th Avenue), which is outside the park boundary but within the study area. Figure 6 outlines the existing land ownership throughout the FNBP study area boundary. The generalized land use map from the 1974 FNBP Master Plan and the 1985 Updated FNBP Master Plan as seen in Figure 7 is still being used as the framework for land management within FNBP. The updated master plan noted four land use zones in FNBP, and they are as follows: Greenbelt, Watershed, Active Recreation, and Public and Institutional Lands.







**Figure 7: Generalized Land Use Plan**  
(taken from the 1985 Updated Far North Bicentennial Park Master Plan)

Greenbelts relate specifically to the North and South Forks of Campbell Creek and the northern branch of the Little Campbell Creek. As defined in the 1985 Updated FNBP Master Plan, greenbelts were identified to protect water quality and stream flow within the park. These areas should be protected from extensive facility development and the vegetation should be left as natural as possible. The uses that were recommended for this area were picnicking and trails for hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, dog mushing, and nature study.

The three areas designated as watershed/recharge areas in the 1985 Updated FNBP Master Plan were defined as extending from the lowlands near the creeks to the mountains. These areas were characterized by their extensive vegetation, which is significant in maintaining the stream quality of the North and South Forks of the Campbell Creek and Little Campbell Creek. The uses

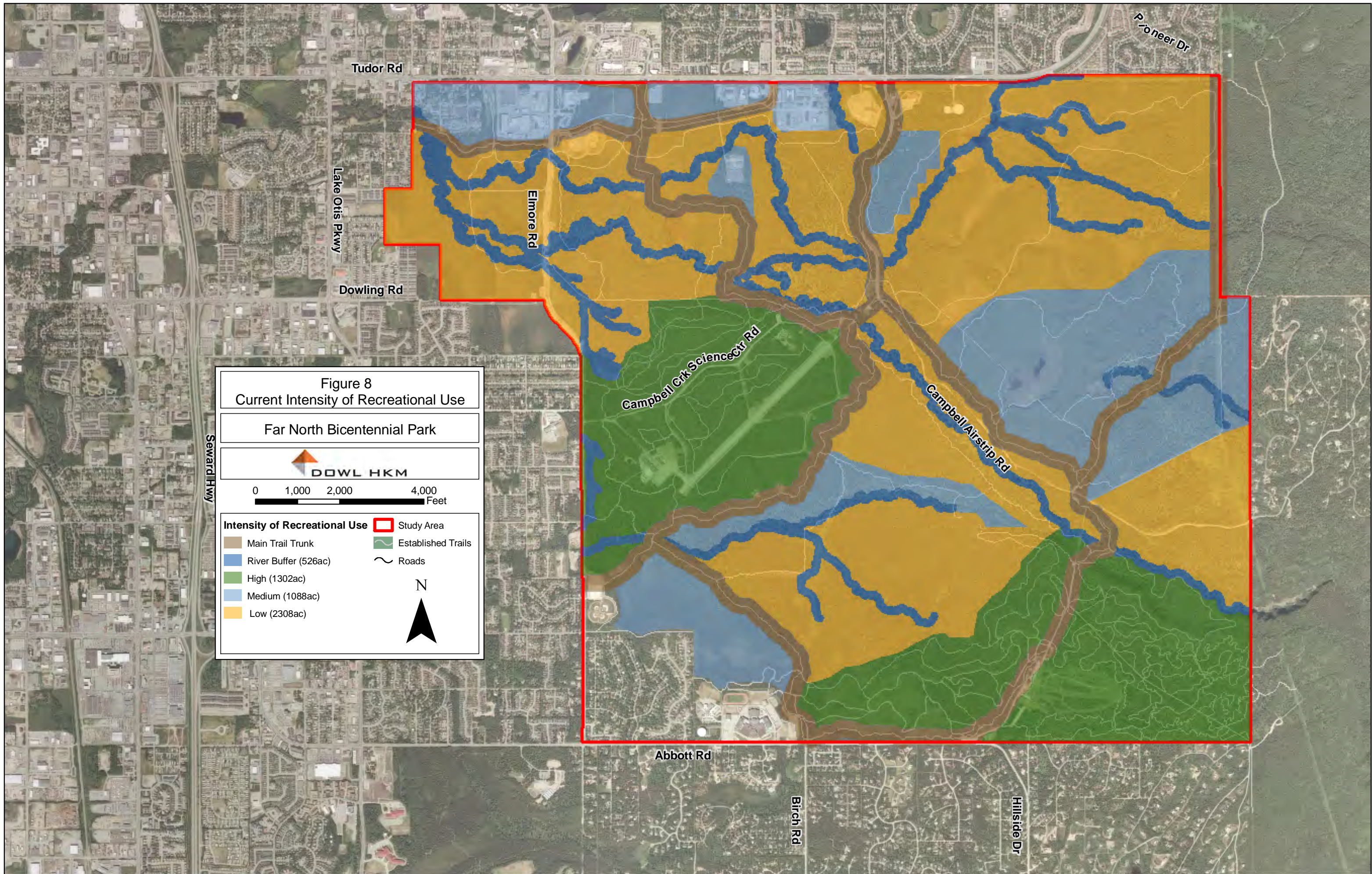
consistent with the watershed designation include hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, dog sledding, and equestrian trails.

Active recreation was outlined in three areas throughout FNBP in the updated master plan: the northeastern corner of the park, the land currently being retained by the BLM, and an area in the southwestern corner of the park. The northeastern portion identified was associated with the development of a neighborhood park not to exceed 20 acres. Within this park, limited athletic fields, minimum parking, picnicking facilities, and trail connections into FNBP were to be provided. The central area that was shown as active recreation was related to the BLM land. North of the road into the BLM land, it was recommended that a series of athletic fields, court facilities, and picnic sites be developed. The southwestern portion identified in FNBP was to be developed as a community park with low-key activities such as a play meadow, picnic sites, and trail access.

The use of the areas defined as public lands and institutional areas are for public buildings and other facilities that are limited to terms of the federal transfer legislation. This legislation requires that these lands be used for public parks and recreational purposes and other compatible public purposes in accordance with the Generalized Land Use Plan. Any public facilities developed in these areas should be compatible with FNBP and meet the compatibility test outlined in the updated master plan. In the master plan, these areas are subdivided into three categories because some areas are more appropriate for specific types of institutional development than others. Additional master plans are expected for each of these areas if they are to be developed.


#### 1.2.7 Current Intensity of Recreational Use









Figure 8 was developed to illustrate FNBP's current intensity of recreational use throughout the park and study area. This map shows areas of low, medium and high intensity of recreational use both existing in FNBP today and the proposed projects in this plan, as it relates to the natural resources of FNBP. For example, areas where wetlands, creeks, and known wildlife corridors exist are where the low intensity of recreational use is outlined. The intent of this figure is to demonstrate a balanced approach of the different intensities of recreational use within the park.




**Figure 8**  
**Current Intensity of Recreational Use**

**Far North Bicentennial Park**

  
 0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet

 Main Trail Trunk	 Study Area
 River Buffer (526ac)	 Established Trails
 High (1302ac)	 Roads
 Medium (1088ac)	
 Low (2308ac)	



This plan maintains the ideas and concepts of the 1985 Updated FNBP Master Plan and the Generalized Land Use Plan map, which balance the development of recreational facilities with the preservation of FNBP as a natural area. Areas designated as having a high intensity of recreational use are defined as areas with approximately 33 miles of trails per square mile. Medium and low areas of recreational use have approximately 18 miles and approximately 7 miles of trail per square mile, respectively. The following graphic, diagram of Existing Recreational Use (Figure 9), illustrates this concept of existing levels of recreational use in FNBP.

### 1.2.8 Land Ownership

#### *1.2.8.1 Municipality of Anchorage Lands*

Two parcels of land were granted to MOA from the original Campbell Tract prior to the 1976 transfer legislation. These parcels include municipal water facilities managed by Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility in the northeastern and southern portions of the park. Other municipal facilities, such as the Anchorage Police Department, the MOA's Project Management and Engineering facility, the Transit Department, the Animal Control Shelter, and a snow dump facility, are all located outside of the FNBP boundary, but within the study area for this plan.

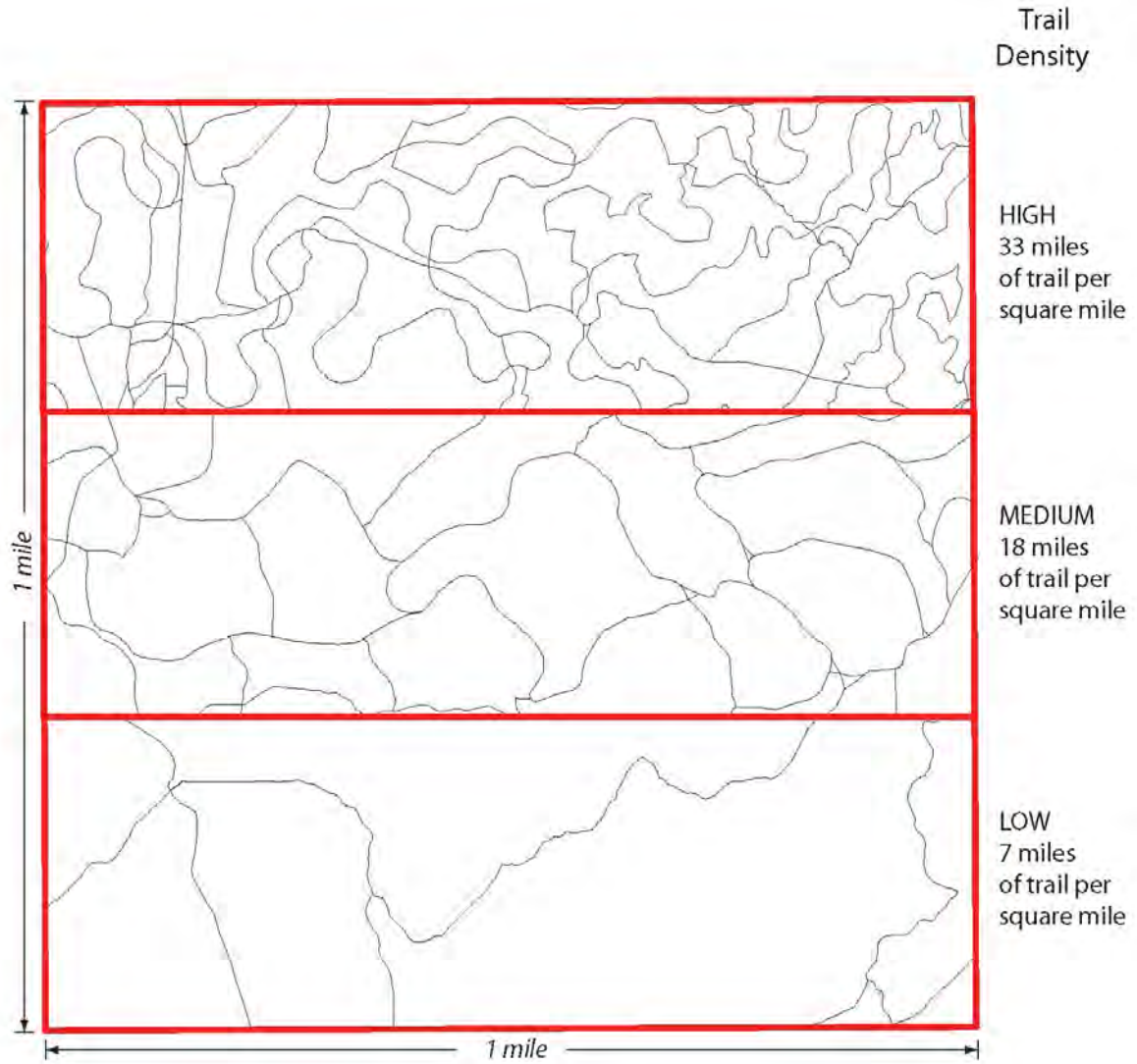
#### *1.2.8.2 State of Alaska Lands*

The State of Alaska has one in-holding within the FNBP property that is used by the DOT&PF as a storage facility area and communications tower site. It is located south of the existing State Health Labs and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue. The State of Alaska Health Laboratories and the State of Alaska Public Safety Complex are located north of FNBP within the study area.

#### *1.2.8.3 Bureau of Land Management Property*

The BLM operates and manages 730 acres of property in the central portion of the FNBP study area. The BLM Headquarters, an airstrip, and the Campbell Creek Science Center are all located on this property. The BLM is committed to providing outdoor non-motorized recreation opportunities on their trail system and has worked with MOA P&R to create seamless boundaries between the BLM property and FNBP. Although the 1974 FNBP Master Plan called for

development of active recreation areas, such as sports fields, those lands have not been relinquished by the BLM to the MOA, and this area currently holds the Campbell Creek Science Center.



**Figure 9: Diagram of Existing Recreational Use**

#### *1.2.8.4 Heritage Land Bank Lands*

In the northern part of the FNBP study area, between the park and Tudor Road, HLB lands are managed under the 3500 Tudor Road Master Plan. This plan defines development guidelines for the area from Tozier Track to the west along Tudor Road to the eastern boundary of Boniface Parkway. Other HLB lands, that include existing dog mushing trails, hiking trails, and wetlands, lie directly north of the BLM property.

#### *1.2.8.5 Anchorage School District*

The Benny Benson School, off Tudor Road, borders FNBP to the north, while Service High School and Trailside Elementary, off Abbott Road, border to the south. These facilities use the FNBP trail systems, open space, and recreation areas, and they provide access and parking for other FNBP trail users. Service High School in particular acts as a trailhead for users during both summer and winter. The open space behind the high school, just to the east of the track, is a staging area for junior Nordic skiing and is the start area for the 40- and 50-km portions of the Tour of Anchorage (TOA) ski marathon race.

The FNBP trails are an integral part of the high school and middle school athletic programs. From early November to late February, the Nordic ski teams of Service and South use these trails daily for practice. Goldenview and Hanshew Middle Schools use these trails in January and February. On a normal weekday in January, there are up to 300 school athletes on the trails. When the snow conditions at the other schools' ski venues are not safe for skiing, the athletes are bused to the Hillside trails. There are days when all the Anchorage High Schools are using the trails. At least one race per year is staged from Service High School. Typical turnout is 400 athletes. Also, the cross country running teams use these trails in August and September. NSAA is contracted by the Anchorage School District to provide grooming service for the high school and middle school ski programs.

#### *1.2.8.6 Alaska Sled Dog and Racing Association*

Alaska Sled Dog and Racing Association (ASDRA) owns and operates their start and finish area for competitive races at the Tozier Track facility, in the northwest corner of the study area,

adjacent to Tudor Road. This location provides ASDRA with easy access and good visibility from this major arterial road corridor. They operate on trails that start from the Tozier Track facility and continue onto HLB lands and into FNBP. A land use agreement between HLB and ASDRA allows for dog mushing. The ASDRA trails extend into the northern and eastern portions of FNBP and into the BLM property.

#### *1.2.8.7 Alaska Botanical Garden*

The ABG leases over 129 acres of HLB land along Campbell Airstrip Road in the north central portion of the study area. ABG has a series of short hiking trails through the different garden areas and has future trail projects outlined in their recently completed master plan. Historically, dog mushing trails ran through the ABG property. However, based on the new master plan for ABG and discussions between the ABG and ASDRA, these trails were recently relocated to the perimeter of the property.

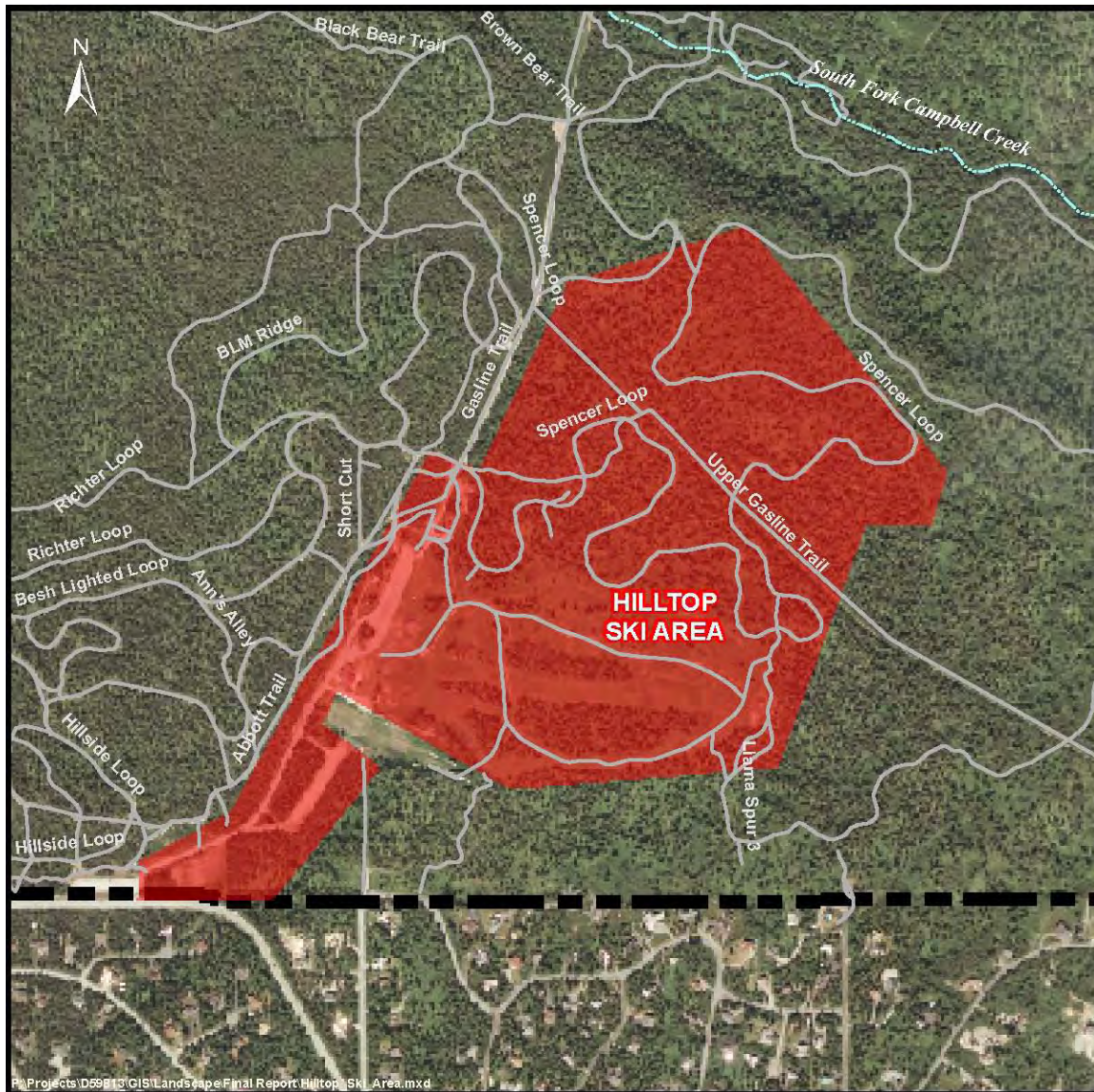
#### *1.2.8.8 Hilltop Ski Area (Youth Exploring Adventure Inc.)*

The Hilltop Ski Area is located in the southeastern portion of the park and is accessed from Abbott Road and Hillside Drive. The Hilltop Ski Area consists of one chair lift, a chalet building housing the ticketing, a restaurant facility, and training and education areas. They currently have a lease agreement with the MOA (see Figure 10 for approximate lease boundary area).

#### 1.2.9 Study Area

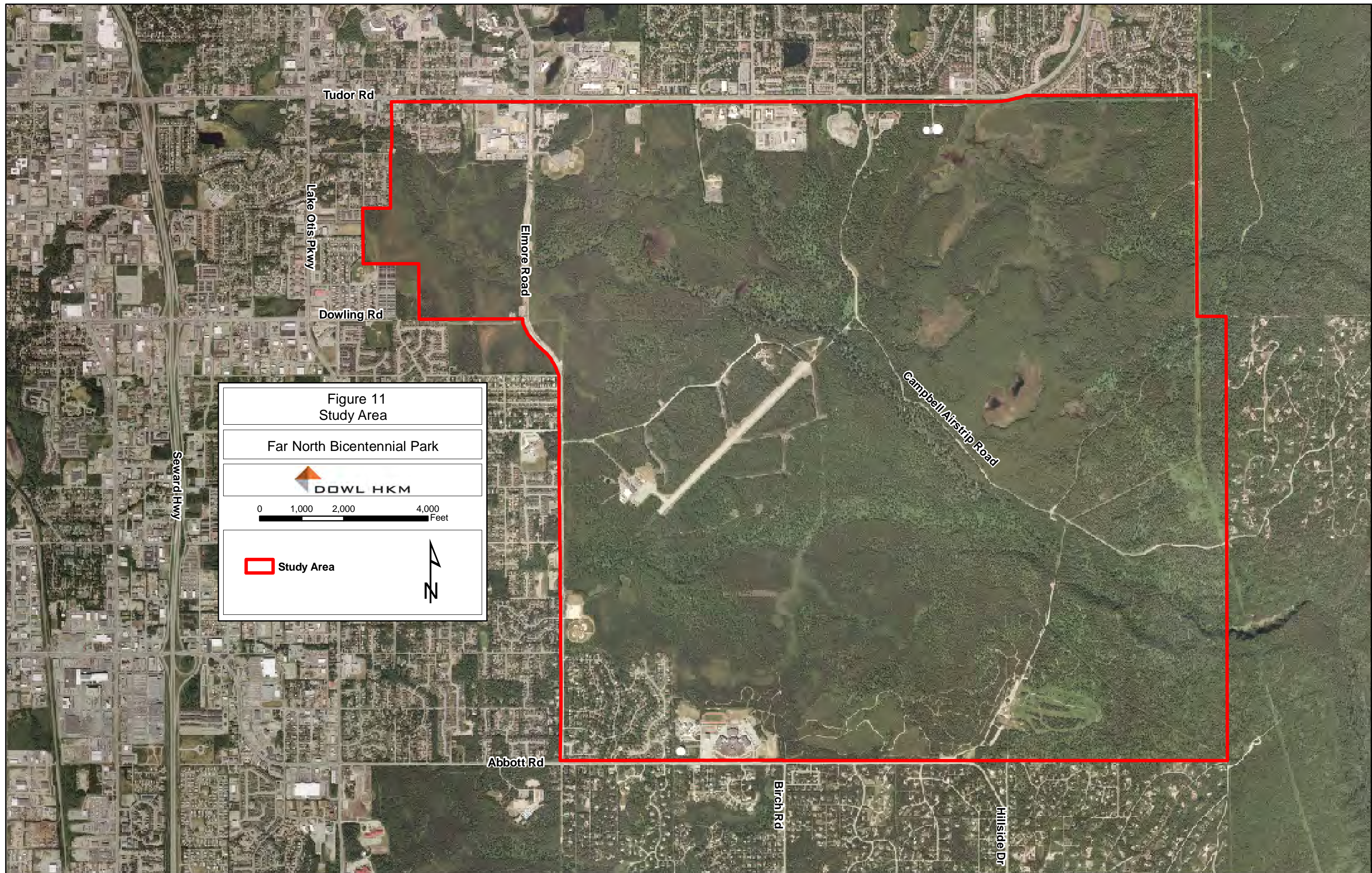
Many of the FNBP trails continue into other adjacent governmental properties, such as the BLM Campbell Tract, and contiguous HLB lands. The legal boundaries of FNBP, BLM, and HLB lands are invisible to trail users, thus the study area for this Trail Improvements Plan exceeds the actual boundaries of FNBP (Figure 11). Essential trail connections are present throughout the various properties and these are considered in this Trail Improvements Plan for consistency and integrity of the overall trail system. The northern boundary of the study area is Tudor Road from Folker Street to the gas line dividing FNBP from Fort Richardson. The eastern boundary is the gas line from Tudor Road and Klutina Street south to the entry drive to the Prospect Heights Trailhead. The southern boundary is Abbott Road from the Prospect Heights Trailhead entry drive to the Elmore Road intersection. The western boundary is along the west side of Elmore

Road from the Abbott Road intersection to the East Dowling Road right-of-way, where it jogs west up to Folker Street.



**Figure 10: Hilltop Ski Area Lease Boundary**





Tudor Rd

Lake Otis Pkwy

Dowling Rd

Elmore Road

Seward Hwy

Figure 11  
Study Area

Far North Bicentennial Park



0 1,000 2,000 4,000  
Feet

 Study Area



Abbott Rd

Birch Rd

Hillside Dr

Campbell Airstrip Road

## 2.0 INVENTORY/DATA COLLECTION

### 2.1 Goals of the Trail Improvements Plan

Some of the goals of the FNBP Trail Improvements Plan are to document the extensive network of existing trails, assess the condition of these trails, and develop a list of recommended trail projects in FNBP. The initial step was to gather and review existing information. A GIS database was developed and the existing trails and facilities within FNBP were entered into GIS. Information on existing conditions and trail improvement needs were also gathered through the public process. The trail improvement projects identified are designed to provide for the needs and desires of the community while maintaining a balance between development and the natural character of the park.

### 2.2 Previous Plans and Reports

A variety of plans, studies, and reports were evaluated in development of this plan. Resources consulted are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Resources Consulted**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>
Updated FNBP Master Plan	MOA	1985
FNBP Master Development Plan	MOA	1974
FNBP Planning and Development Project Study and Report Phase Final Report	MOA	1995
FNBP Trails Committee Strategic Action Planning	FNBP Trails Committee	February 2005
Sled Dog Trails in the Anchorage Bowl Trails Plan	ASDRA	December 2000
Ten-Year Plan for Soft Surface Trails	Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage (NSAA)	June 2005
Anchorage Bike Plan Draft	MOA	In progress
48th Avenue/FNBP Trails Study	DOWL HKM	February 2007
Incorporating Trail Fundamentals and Trail Management Objectives in Alaska, Alaska Recreation and Park Association	United States Forest Service (USFS)	Spring 2007
3500 Tudor Road Master Plan	DOWL HKM	December 2007

### 2.3 Database Development/Data Gathering

Initial data was gathered and collected by the FNBP User Group Trails Subcommittee. Their work on the Strategic Action Planning document for FNBP was the building block for the

development of more trail data. A FNBP trails database was developed using existing MOA GIS data and the USFS model data dictionary. Data collection for the FNBP Trail Improvements Plan was based on the USFS Trail Assessment and Condition Survey (TRACS). The USFS developed TRACS to provide trail-specific information needed for the management and planning of trails and facilities. Other governmental agencies in Alaska, such as the National Park Service (NPS), Alaska State Parks, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are also working to adopt this method. An accepted and established set of standards for trails allows public land agencies to more efficiently manage trails when they cross over multiple boundaries. This system establishes five different trail classifications, and provides trail users and governmental agencies a clear understanding of what type of experience, along with the design parameters and maintenance standards, is expected from each type of trail.

Although the MOA database contained information on both formal and informal trails, data was collected on formalized trails and those that made major connections or loops with other trails. MOA P&R staff collected additional data on the managed trails within the study area with a handheld GPS unit.

The TRACS system is an organized approach for the collection and maintenance of field data on trail conditions and defines or prescribes the improvements required to bring trails up to a specified standard. In order to determine the relevant data needed for the FNBP Trail Improvements Plan, trail classifications and standards were determined prior to the field survey. MOA P&R staff and an intern from June 24 to August 13, 2008, conducted the survey. After the field survey was completed, the desired or designed use of each trail was identified with design parameters related to the tread width, the grade of the trail, the cross slope, the clearing width and height, and permitted and prohibited uses during different seasons. Trail classifications are discussed more in Chapter 4.0.

## **2.4 Public Involvement Participation**

Public involvement was a key component in the documentation of existing trails and facilities, as well as in the identification of potential projects for the FNBP Trail Improvements Plan. A variety of measures were implemented in order to obtain as much input, information, and feedback as possible (Appendix A).

A Steering Committee was formed with representatives of park users with strong interests in cross-country skiing, dog mushing, skijoring, biking, hiking, running, and general park and trail use. A Technical Advisory Committee was also formed with representation from municipal, state, and federal land, water, and wildlife resource agencies, as well as other trail experts. Other user groups were also contacted in order to understand their vision for FNBP (Table 2). At these meetings, maps of existing trails were available for the stakeholders to mark up to provide input on new trails, trail improvements, issues or conflicts, and areas that should remain undeveloped in FNBP. These maps were combined into a summary map (see Figure 12) that was reviewed by the Steering Committee, the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), and regulatory agencies, who provided insight related to the wildlife and wetland issues in the park. Stakeholder meetings were also held with the adjacent landowners.

Finally, the project team met with the FNBP Trail Users Group and the general public at two public meetings during the regularly scheduled FNBP Trail Users Group meetings. The first meeting was interactive with maps provided to give trail users an opportunity to express their thoughts on the maps. At the second public meeting, the project team presented the information gathered through public involvement combined with the MOA GIS information and the summer trail survey fieldwork. The presentation included a summary of the stakeholders input, the trail classifications for each trail in the park, trail design parameters for each trail user, the proposed trail network, and a list of proposed projects. The meeting notes and the public input/comments are included in Appendix A. This second meeting included information and mapping that took into account the feedback from both the user groups and the land and resource agencies. With this information, a balanced approach to the trail improvement plan was created. Not all of the trails that were on each user group's wish list were incorporated into the plan.

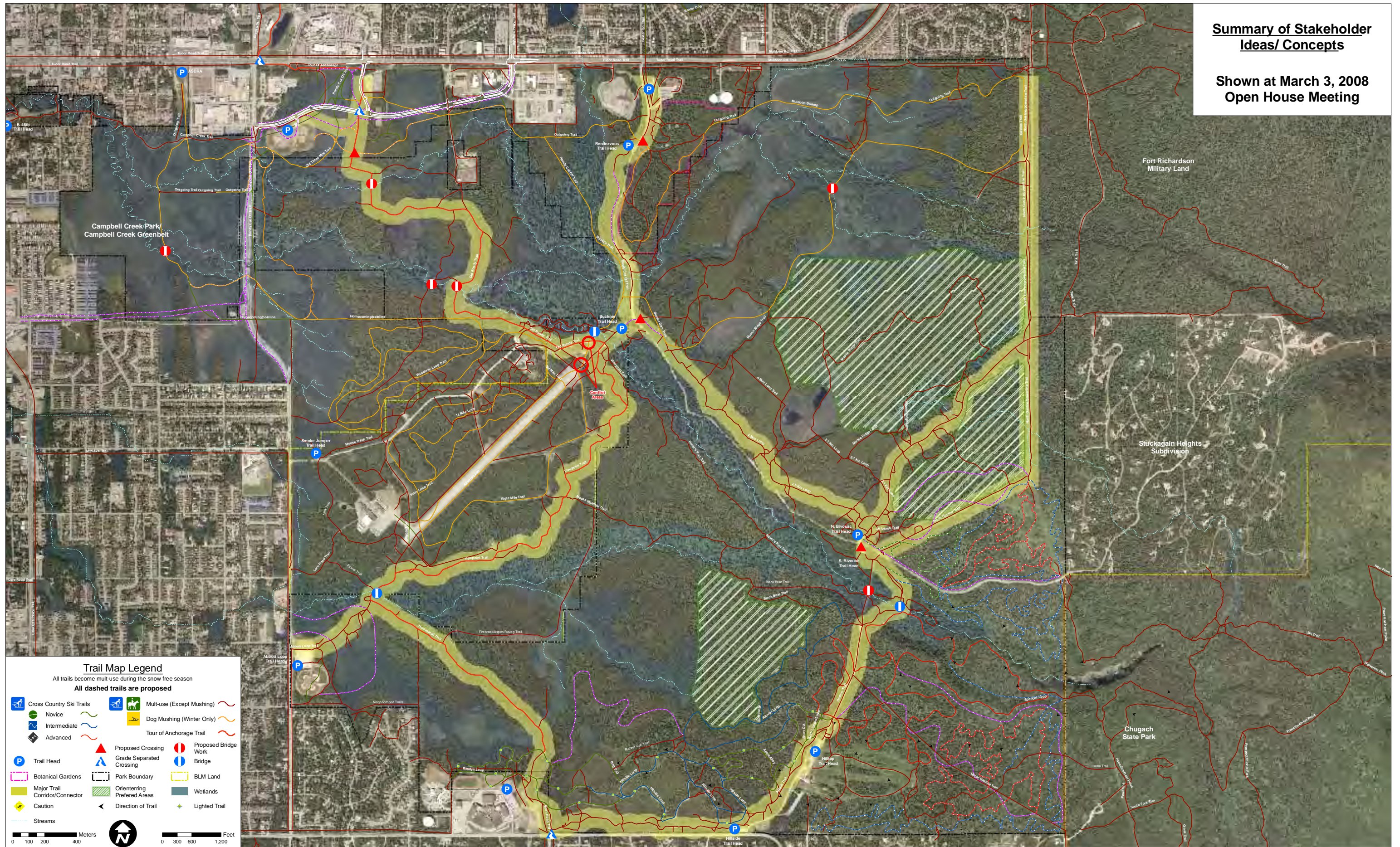
Table 2 lists the user group meetings conducted for the study.

**Table 2: Public Involvement Meeting Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Group</b>
January 28, 2008	<b>Steering Committee</b>
January 29-31, 2008	<b>User Group Meetings</b>
	ASDRA
	Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage (NSAA)
	Arctic Orienteering Club
	Anchorage Unleashed
	Equestrians
	Anchorage Trails and Greenways Coalition (ATGC)
	Hilltop Ski Area
	Anchorage Skijor Club
	STA
	Anchorage Bike Park
	ABG
March 3, 2008	<b>Steering Committee Meeting</b>
	<b>FNBP Trail Users Group/Public Meeting No. 1</b>
March 4, 2008	<b>Landowner Meeting</b>
	Anchorage School District (Service High School)
	BLM
	Fort Richardson
	Alaska State Parks
	HLB
March 5, 2008	<b>Regulatory Agency Meeting</b>
	USACE
	MOA Wetlands Staff/Physical Planning
	ADF&G
March 6, 2008	<b>TAG Meeting #1</b>
	NPS
	Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)
	Alaska Trails
	MOA Trails Coordinator
August 20, 2008	Meeting with Equestrians and Audubon Society
September 8, 2008	<b>Steering Committee Meeting</b>
	<b>FNBP Trail Users Group/Public Meeting No. 2</b>
September 10, 2008	<b>Regulatory Agency Meeting</b>
	USACE
	MOA Wetlands Staff
	ADF&G
January 28, 2009 and February 2, 2009	<b>Steering Committee Meeting: Draft Plan review</b>
May 5, 2009	<b>TAG Meeting #2</b>

**Summary of Stakeholder  
Ideas/ Concepts**

**Shown at March 3, 2008  
Open House Meeting**



**Figure 12**

### **3.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: ISSUES, CONCERNS, AND CONCEPTS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This section of the plan summarizes the issues, concerns, and suggestions obtained through meetings with the steering committee, the TAG, various user groups, and other stakeholders.

#### **3.2 Steering Committee**

A Steering Committee was put together to provide guidance on the Trail Improvements Plan. The Steering Committee consisted of a variety of trail users and leaders within the existing FNBP Trail Users Committee. The project team met with the Steering Committee four times during development of this draft plan. The Steering Committee acted as the liaison for the membership of their respective trail users groups. Many of the Steering Committee comments were related to the planning process and overall park management. Specific concerns addressed included design specifications, access, coordination with neighboring land uses, increasing safety at trailheads, addressing social trails, and addressing the user capacity of the park. Specific projects suggested during Steering Committee meetings are listed below:

- A separated and hardened trail is needed along Campbell Airstrip Road from the north entry to the Bivouac Trailheads.
- Additional connector trails are needed from Stuckagain Heights to FNBP.
- Improvements are needed on the TOA Trail near 48th Avenue: drainage issues and leveling of trail.
- More lighting and maybe security cameras at trailheads could reduce crime.
- Consider paving the Hillside Trailhead parking lot.
- Consider an improved trailhead at the most northeast entry to FNBP (Klutina Street).
- Block informal trailheads to reduce vandalism.

- Repair or replace both TOA bridges south of 48th Avenue to span the wetland/floodplain area.
- Provide safer street crossings for pedestrians accessing the park.
- Consider lighting the multi-use trail along Abbott Road.
- Off-leash trail proposal could result in conflicts with orienteering areas.
- A one-way ski loop is needed near the Richter Loop.
- Show large open areas for no new trail development.
- Trail bridge standards should be developed for FNBP.
- Trail from Abbott Loop Community Park into FNBP trail network needs reduced slope.
- Re-vegetate South Bivouac Trailhead entrance with bollards/boulders to close off parking. Focus parking at North Bivouac Trailhead.
- Improve “Little Hill” parking pull-out on Campbell Airstrip Road with parallel parking spaces and bollards/boulders to delineate edge.
- Show a trailhead at Chuck Albrecht Ball Fields.

### **3.3 Technical Advisory Group**

A TAG was established with representatives from various groups with Alaska trail-building experience. Representatives from the NPS, RTCA, Alaska Trails, and the MOA’s Trails Coordinator were included. This group provided insight into the needs/issues related to FNBP, as well as input on trail construction issues in Alaska.

The TAG believes that the use of utility corridors should be reconsidered. An East Anchorage Connector Trail is needed; however, the existing power line corridor is too steep and therefore is not sustainable as a trail. The TAG suggested upgrading the dog mushing trails to allow for more use in the winter, and the possible use of geoblock or geogrids to raise the trails out of wet



areas. The TAG discouraged the development of new trails next to Campbell Creek due to bear activity, and suggested that proper sight distances should be provided on existing trails. They noted that the TOA Trail is a commuter route for cyclists and there is a need for bike lanes along Campbell Airstrip Road. The TAG also expressed a need for more beginner/junior Nordic ski trails north of Service High School and down into Abbott Loop Community Park.

### **3.4 User Groups**

#### **3.4.1 Dog Sledding/Alaska Sled Dog and Racing Association**

The ASDRA currently owns and operates the Tozier Track facility along Tudor Road. It functions as the start and finish area for their racing and training runs. They have expressed their desire to move to a location within FNBP. ASDRA has the following concerns and recommendations for their safe operation on FNBP trails:

- Trail maintenance is a high priority for ASDRA.
- The preservation of continuous dog mushing trails separated from other uses is another major concern.
- Conflicts between existing mushing trails and the TOA Trail occur at two at-grade crossings. The crossings present potential hazards for dog mushers and other trail users as dog teams cannot be stopped quickly and collisions with other trail users can result in injuries to dogs, mushers, and other trail users. These crossings occur at Campbell Creek and south of the proposed 48th Avenue Extension (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue). Grade-separated crossings are desired at these locations.
- ASDRA is concerned over the potential disappearance of dog mushing trails on HLB lands as these lands are developed or sold in the future.
- The identification of dog mushing trails and trail improvements in an adopted MOA plan could facilitate fundraising for ASDRA trail construction and maintenance.
- Any improvements to their Tozier Track facility would require upgrades to the building to meet municipal code standards.

### 3.4.2 Cross-Country Skiing/Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage

The Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage (NSAA) provided a priority list of improvements to FNBP trails. This list was divided into four categories and prioritized as follows: maintenance; access; development of new trails; and conflict mitigation. While NSAA has specific concerns related to their interests, they also recognize the need for a variety of trail standards and that not all trail users want wide, clear trails.

- Maintenance - The NSAA grooms the Hillside Park ski trails and the TOA Trail. Slightly crowned trails with a smooth surface facilitate grooming during periods of low snow cover.
- Access - The NSAA proposed improved access into FNBP for East Anchorage residents. A trailhead or increased parking at Klutina Street where the North Gasline/Powerline Trail terminates in East Anchorage was suggested. Another improvement suggested was a lighted connection from the Bivouac Trailheads to the Hilltop area.
- New Trails - The NSAA proposed several new trails for development, including four trails they classified as high priority:
  - A multi-use trail connector from Gasline/Spencer Loop Trail area to Chugach State Park that would be groomed in winter.
  - New trail loops from Abbott Loop Community Park (beginner level ski trails).
  - New Classic Ski Loop Trail (extension of existing trails).
  - A new equestrian loop connecting to the Lore Road Trailhead.
- Conflict Mitigation
  - NSAA recommended the development of a separate loop trail for equestrians be established within FNBP to reduce horse traffic on the TOA Trail.
  - NSAA also recommended the lighting of the multi-use Abbott Road Trail, which would mitigate foot and bicycle traffic on ski-only trails in the winter.

- Develop a trail connection from the South Gasline Trail up to the Prospect Heights Trailhead in Chugach State Park to provide an alternative to hikers and bikers being on ski-only trails in the winter.

### 3.4.3 Orienteering/Arctic Orienteering Club

The Arctic Orienteering Club expressed concerns with the development of any new trails in FNBP. They consider FNBP an ideal place for orienteering as it is. The wooded areas are easy to roam and are relatively open, with good terrain features. The Arctic Orienteering Club identified the following recommendations for the Trail Improvements Plan:

- Areas along the north side of Campbell Airstrip Road in the Moose Ridge Trail system and an area to the northwest of the Hillside Park ski trails were outlined as ideal locations for orienteering. They recommended that these areas remain free of any new trail development.
- The Arctic Orienteering Club expressed the need for a more efficient parking lot at the Campbell Airstrip Trailhead.

### 3.4.4 Off-Leash Dog Walking/Anchorage Unleashed

Anchorage Unleashed is a non-profit volunteer organization that supports off-leash dog walking in parks in Anchorage including FNBP. An official off-leash dog walking area exists currently along the North Gasline Trail. Anchorage Unleashed noted the following trail improvements and recommendations for the FNBP trails:

- The North Bivouac Trailhead is the preferred access point into FNBP and it can also be accessed from the Chugach Foothills Trailhead off Klutina Street.
- Anchorage Unleashed suggested that the cleared area along the North Gasline Trail, near the North Bivouac Trailhead, be used as a dog training area.
- Develop a loop trail off the North Gasline Trail to provide for a more interesting walk.

- Install facilities at trailheads for handling dog waste, information on dog parks in Anchorage, information on bear/moose sightings, and trash cans.
- Concerns were expressed about potential conflicts with bikers and skijorers along the designated off-leash trail.

#### 3.4.5 Ski Area

Youth Exploring Adventure, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to providing recreational programs for Anchorage youth, operates the Hilltop Ski Area. They signed an agreement with the MOA in 2000 to lease the Hilltop Ski Area until 2030. Youth Exploring Adventure recently changed its plans to expand into the Spencer Loop trail system due to the high cost of clearing to create new ski runs, the distance from the existing chalet, and the cost of relocating the Spencer Loop. Youth Exploring Adventure identified the following issues, conflicts, and improvements:

- There are conflicts with cross-country skiers using the Hilltop Ski Area slopes when the Hillside Park trails have inadequate snow cover.
- Youth Exploring Adventure noted that drainage off the ski slopes and the Spencer Loop Trail are flooding the Hilltop Ski Area parking lot. They indicated that a drainage study for this area needs to be done to mitigate this spring runoff.

#### 3.4.6 Skijoring/Anchorage Skijor Club

The Anchorage Skijor Club, a non-profit volunteer organization, promotes the sports of skijoring and ski pulk by sponsoring skijor and ski pulk races, and by leading skijor tours. Anchorage Skijor Club uses trails throughout the MOA park and trail system, and FNBP provides them with the only loop trail in the system. The Anchorage Skijor Club has the following priorities for trail development or improvements in FNBP:

- Upgrade or widen Mellen's Way Trail or develop a hardened trail along the northeast side of Campbell Airstrip Road to maintain a loop trail for skijoring within FNBP. These trails should be improved as skijor or multi-use trails.

- Move Mellen's Way Trail out of the wetlands and improve the trail by widening and smoothing it.
- Cut lower limbs of trees adjacent to multi-use trails to provide better sight distances for skijorers.
- Improvements need to be made to the two TOA Trail bridges.
- Reorganize the Campbell Airstrip Trailhead with a more efficient parking lot.
- Develop a non-profit group similar to Sitka Trail Works, Inc., to be formed to help trail users acquire funding and build new trails.

#### 3.4.7 Mountain Biking/Single-Track Advocates

STA was formed to advocate and participate in the preservation, maintenance, and construction of single-track trails. Single-track trails are narrow trails that are primarily constructed for mountain biking and can be used by hikers and runners. STA has identified the following priorities for trail development and concerns that they have related to FNBP trails:

- STA has recently planned and developed 8-10 miles of new trail in the southeast corner of FNBP above the Hilltop Ski Area.
- STA would like to continue the construction of single-track trails as approved by the MOA P&R Commission in their Phase II development plan. Those proposed trails are located along the north side of Campbell Airstrip Road, between the Stuckagain Heights subdivision and the North Bivouac Trailhead.
- STA expressed a desire for the development of trail standards, trail management objectives, and trail classifications to guide new trail construction in FNBP.
- Develop a multi-use trail connection between the South Gasline Trail and Chugach State Park.

- Extend the existing separated trail along Campbell Airstrip Road from the Rendezvous Trailhead to the Campbell Airstrip Trailhead.
- Develop the Chuck Albrecht Ball Fields as a trailhead in both summer and winter.
- Maintain the Moose Ridge Trail system on the northeast side of Campbell Airstrip Road as is; they are great for beginner mountain bikers.

### 3.4.8 Anchorage Bike Park

Anchorage Bike Park is an organization with the goal to provide a fun and safe outlet for off-road bicycling. This group sees an opportunity to use the Hilltop Ski Area in the summer as a lift-served mountain bike park. It would be a free-ride park that includes downhill trails, a dual-slaloms course, a shuttle into Chugach State Park for a downhill route on the Gasline Trail, a bicycle motocross track by the lower parking lot, wooden features in the wooded areas, a dirt jump park, and a pump track. Free-ride parks combine different aspects of mountain biking such as downhill trail riding and dirt jumping on constructed features or obstacles. A business plan has been developed that includes leasing the ski chalet and working with volunteers to construct the bike park features. This may help eliminate the renegade trail builders from creating features within other areas of FNBP.

### 3.4.9 Equestrians

Equestrian uses of the trails in FNBP are both by private horse owners and a commercial concessionaire. The equestrian's priorities for trail improvements and use on FNBP trails is as follows:

- Maintain access for equestrians on multi-use trails in FNBP.
- They suggested that a longer red light on Elmore Road would provide a safer road crossing for access to the Lore Road Trail.
- The majority of conflicts occur between equestrians and skiers or skijorers.

- They acknowledged that post holes from horses on the winter-groomed trails can be a problem for other trail users.
- Trailheads should incorporate gravel surfaces, as opposed to asphalt or hard surfaces, for loading and off-loading horses (Abbott Loop Community Park). They also suggested the need for additional tie-up areas at trailheads.
- Manure can be an issue, as horse riders find it difficult to dismount and clean up. Concessionaire suggested more organized clean-up events in FNBP.
- Equestrians prefer narrow trails in the woods; yet can run their horses on wider trails with good sight distances.

#### 3.4.10 Anchorage Trails and Greenways Coalition

The Anchorage Trails and Greenways Coalition (ATGC) is a non-profit corporation established to improve trails and greenways in the Anchorage area through service, education, advocacy, and cooperation among diverse interests. ATGC would like to maintain access onto the Fort Richardson trails from the FNBP trail system. They suggested that there is a need for a major trailhead on the north side of FNBP that could be accommodated by using the Chuck Albrecht Ball Fields. ATGC supports the following trail improvement projects:

- New connector trail from the North Gasline Trail to the Stuckagain Heights entrance.
- New trail connection from Hillside Park Spencer Loop to Chugach State Park near the Prospect Heights Trailhead.
- Continue the existing separated, paved trail from the Rendezvous Trailhead, along Campbell Airstrip Road, down to the Campbell Airstrip Trailhead and continuing up to Stuckagain Heights.
- More signage needed: “You are here” and directional signage needed along the trails.
- Clear snow on Elmore Road bike lanes for winter bike commuting.

- Develop a junior Nordic ski loop in Abbott Loop Community Park.
- Need to maintain access onto trails that go into and through military land (Fort Richardson).

#### 3.4.11 Friends of Bicentennial Park

Friends of FNBP is a group of interested citizens that are committed to maintaining FNBP as a public park, preserving the environmental quality of the park, providing for recreational use consistent with environmental protection, providing for public uses consistent with adjacent uses, and providing for regulations to accomplish these goals.

- Recommends doing a pilot project of single-track trails so that the public and MOA P&R can evaluate the trails and then propose new ones if applicable.
- Investigate potential for a trailhead off of Nettleton Drive.
- There is a concern with Hilltop Ski Area encroaching into FNBP.

#### 3.4.12 Audubon Society

The Anchorage Audubon Society chapter is a volunteer non-profit organization that is dedicated to the conservation of Southcentral Alaska ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. Volunteers provide field trips, natural history presentations, newsletters, the bird hotline, and other educational programs for adults and children. Their concerns and issues of development of trails in FNBP are as follows:

- They enjoy trails with narrower widths opposed to the wider, more open trails.
- Bird walks and tours occur in FNBP starting from the Campbell Creek Science Center.

### **3.5 Adjacent Agencies**

#### 3.5.1 Alaska Botanical Garden

The ABG displays northern horticulture and native plants on a 110-acre spruce and birch woodland in Anchorage. A perimeter fence along the property boundary provides moose



protection for the gardens. ABG has a series of walking trails throughout the different garden areas and has the following desires, issues, and concerns:

- Worked with ASDRA on re-routing a dog mushing trail along their perimeter fence.
- Dogs are not allowed in the garden; however, that rule has not been well respected.
- ABG supports a trail along Campbell Airstrip Road that would connect the Campbell Airstrip Trailhead to the existing paved path on the east side of the road near ABG.

### 3.5.2 Bureau of Land Management

The BLM maintains and operates the Campbell Tract and airstrip within the FNBP study area. They indicated the following concerns, issues, and recommendations for trail projects:

- Concern over off-leash dogs gaining access to inappropriate areas.
- Concerned about the safety of trail users gaining access onto the airstrip.
- Brown Bear Trail is unfinished and should be completed properly - roots should be armored, log retaining walls should be installed to increase the turning radius, and features or obstacles should be removed for safety.
- A connector trail from the Hillside Park trails to Chugach State Park and the Prospect Heights Trailhead is needed.
- Open the dog mushing trails to other users when mushers are not using them.
- Install more directional signage.
- Consider zoning within the park and identifying different zones for different levels of trail density to guide future development.

### 3.5.3 Chugach State Park

Chugach State Park is located directly east of FNBP. Chugach State Park has been working with interested parties on the potential for increased access points into the park.

- There should be a seamless connection between Chugach State Park and FNBP.
- The existing Chugach State Park Trailhead at Stuckagain Heights has some management issues and needs improvements.
- Chugach State Park has just begun working on a Master Plan/Access Plan.
- There is a desire for additional access from East Anchorage into Chugach State Park.

#### 3.5.4 Fort Richardson

Fort Richardson is a United States Army installation in north Anchorage. Fort Richardson has property located to the northeast of FNBP, and there are trails that cross from FNBP into these army lands. As security concerns have increased nationwide, access restrictions have increasingly become a concern. In addition, the army may increasingly be looking to use their lands for training.

- Users do not know how to access the military land available to public use. There is a Personal Identification Number to call when going on and off army property.
- The army is not interested in increasing access to their lands.

#### 3.5.5 Heritage Land Bank

The HLB is the MOA's property management agency. HLB owns lands that are designated as part of FNBP, as well as adjacent lands that are not designated as parklands.

- HLB suggested projects be managed by MOA P&R rather than HLB.
- Graphics should clearly show what lands are owned by HLB.

### **3.6 Regulatory Agencies**

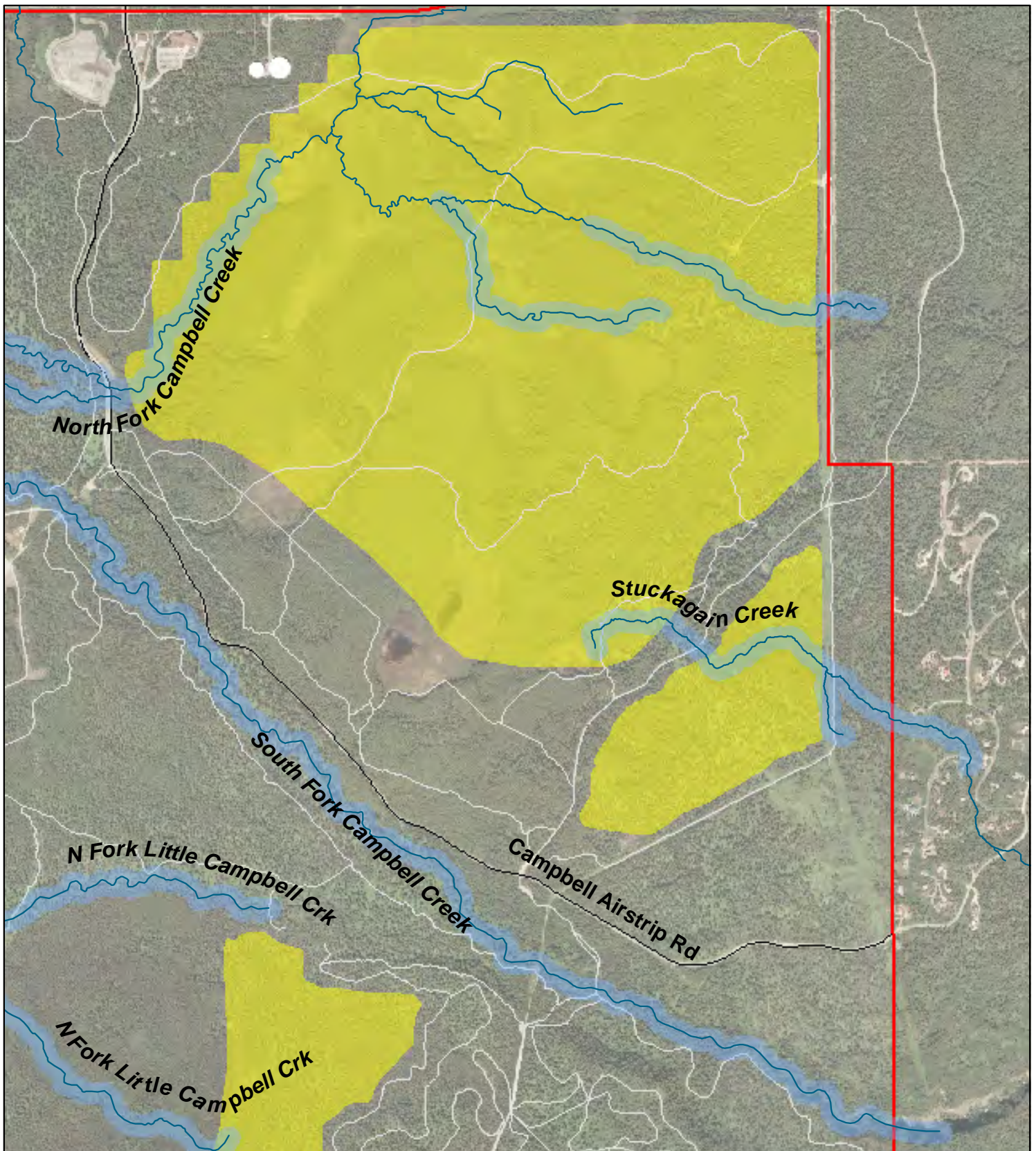
There were two meetings with regulatory agencies during the planning process. The agencies included the USACE, the MOA Wetlands Staff, and the ADF&G. The Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service were also invited but did not attend. The regulatory agencies provided insights related to wildlife and wetland issues in FNBP. Potential FNBP projects were discussed and the agencies provided the project team with







valuable information and recommendations. The USACE provided suggestions on permitting strategies for development of trail projects within wetland areas in FNBP.

The ADF&G provided insight on the wildlife corridors in the study area, as well as recent and historic bear activity in the park. Research on grizzly bear activity in FNBP by state biologists indicated the presence of bears along the creek corridors throughout the summer. The bear routes were focused in areas near the South Fork of Campbell Creek adjacent to Mellen's Way Trail. Bear movement also occurs in the northeastern portion of FNBP, from Fort Richardson into FNBP along the North Fork of Campbell Creek. ADF&G suggested that trail development should remain a minimum of 100 feet from each side of the creek, with the exception of the gorge area in the southeastern portion of FNBP. The Habitat Division of ADF&G discussed the need for stream setbacks, barriers or buffers along creeks, and controlled access points for horses and dogs to deter stream bank erosion.

MOA Wetlands staff discussed the need for an assessment or recreational carrying capacity study for FNBP. They noted that the USACE would require the Purpose and Need portion of the wetland permit for any new trail development that would impact the wetlands.

The USACE suggested doing one Individual Permit for all the projects in order to provide the most flexibility to permit future projects. It was also suggested that a pre-application meeting be set once the Draft Trail Improvements Plan is complete. The USACE suggested wetland delineations be done for the areas where priority projects will most likely occur. Stream bank restoration projects could be proposed to offset some of the impacts of future trail improvements in wetland areas. The agencies were supportive of the concept of creating a zone of no new trail development on the northeast side of Campbell Airstrip Road as shown on Figure 13.



	Study Area		No New Trail Development Areas
	Established Trails		Creek Buffer
	Major Roads		
	Streams		

N

0 500 1,000 2,000  
Feet

Figure 13  
No New Trail Development

Far North Bicentennial Park



July 21, 2009

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