

**Planning Commission  
Resolution 22-02 Packet**

**Amending MSB 17.30  
Conditional Use Permit for  
Earth Materials Extraction  
Activities to allow for an  
exemption of 20,000 cubic yards  
annually without a permit**

Public Comments Received  
02-18-2022 through 02-28-2022

**HANDOUTS**



## Karol Riese

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**From:** Krister Bowman <krister.bowman@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 18, 2022 5:48 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** IM 22-003 comment

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission,

I'm writing to express my strong opposition to IM 22-003, the proposal to allow gravel extraction with no permitting, up to 20,000 cubic yards.

The Borough is undergoing a period of rapid growth, it's critical that we have safeguards in place to ensure that that growth proceeds in a way that protects the beauty and sanctity of this place we call home.

20,000 cubic yards is an industrial scale gravel operation and the idea that any entity, public or private could proceed to extract earth at this scale with zero oversight is not a responsible way to plan for the future.

I'm not opposed to growth, but am opposed to unfettered, unregulated and unconsidered growth - tourism is an important source of revenue for many local businesses and residents in this area. Keeping the valley beautiful, quiet and pristine ensures that the tourism economy will remain strong in the years to come.

I see no evidence that the current threshold of 2000 cubic yards poses an undue burden on operators.

Please vote down this ordinance.

Krister Bowman  
Talkeetna Resident



## Karol Riese

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**From:** timpenny@gci.net  
**Sent:** Friday, February 18, 2022 6:34 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** PC 22-002

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To All It May Concern,

Please be advised that we oppose the proposed Conditional Use Permit for gravel pits. Assemblyman Mokie Tew has proposed that gravel be allowed to be mined in the Borough without a Conditional Use Permit if less than 20,000 cubic yards is mined in a year (Resolution PC 22-002). That equates to 2,000 truck-loads a year, 4,000 vehicular trips a year. Mines could be started in a neighborhood without public comment, without regard for water and air contamination, high noise levels and increases in traffic, and wear and tear on roads. Pits would have no requirement to return the property to a usable state, other than that of a hole in the ground. Current Borough code requires a permit if greater than 2,000 cubic yards is mined. This change would allow 10 times the gravel to be mined without a permit.

We have a place in Talkeetna River Subdivision that is within a quarter mile of a gravel pit that was used in 2016 - 2017 for improvements to the Talkeetna Airport and FAA facilities. That was a bit of a nightmare in terms of noise (crusher ran for 12 hours per day), dump truck loading and tail gate banging, hours of operation, wear and tear on Beaver Road, and the air quality to our subdivision, the East Talkeetna subdivision and to nearby Christensen Lake residents.

(KTUU)

By Dan Carpenter

Published: Oct. 14, 2016 at 9:53 PM AKDT

" . . . Close to two weeks from November McCarthy says 85,000 tons of gravel has been used for the project which will be allowed to settle over the winter."

That's a lot of dirt, noise, dust, and wear and tear. This proposed conditional use cannot be allowed to pass. It will turn residential life into a nightmare for quiet, home life areas and non-commercial property owners.

Sincerely,

Timothy R. Johnson  
Penny C. Johnson  
L1 Blk 2 TRS, MSB  
L8, Blk 2 TRS, MSB



**Karol Riese**

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**From:** Maura Shea <mjshea1@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 19, 2022 7:02 AM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Resolution PC 22-002

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

Greetings,

It is my understanding Assemblyman Tew proposed a change to the amount of gravel that can be mined without a Conditional Use Permit and that the Planning Commission would review this proposal on February 28, 2022. I am vehemently opposed to increasing the amount of gravel that can be mined from 2,000 cubic yards to 20,000 cubic yards. Residents of the Borough should be informed before gravel pits are permitted in their neighborhoods. Residents should have the opportunity to comment on a land use that could contaminate their water and air, bring large trucks into residential streets, and create high noise levels.

Please do not approve this change to the Borough code.

Sincerely,  
Maura Shea



**From:** Cody McLaughlin <cody@prospergroupcorp.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 19, 2022 8:05 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Proposed gravel ordinance

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

I am STRONGLY OPPOSED to the ordinance attempting to bypass public comment on gravel pits.

They serve no purpose in our community except to demolish property values and the peace and quiet for which many of us moved to this area.

Vehemently oppose this and shame on Mokie Tew for pushing for the removal of the public's right to comment on things affecting our homes.

<https://matsugov.us/docs/meetings/22337/Packet-02-28-2022-Special-Meeting.pdf>



**Karol Riese**

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**From:** James Scheu <jimdea83@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 20, 2022 8:37 AM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Mining in Borough

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

I am against mining gravel and such without more stringent borough laws in place. We already have an ugly half @") operation at corner of Church and Seldon that isn't used much. Close these parcels down and make them convert to original land status. Please.

Jim Scheu

Sent from my iPhone



**From:** Barry Santana <bwsantana@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 20, 2022 5:01 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** LEGISLATIVE Resolution No. PC 22-02

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To the Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission

Comments:

**LEGISLATIVE Resolution No. PC 22-02**  
**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING MSB 17.30**  
**CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR EARTH**  
**MATERIAL EXTRACTION ACTIVITIES**

I am **not in favor of this resolution** which allows an increase in permit exemptions from gravel mining activities from 2,000 cubic yards (cu yds.) to 20,000 cu yds. annually. I don't think for a minute that the intent is to allow normal citizens and owners of the resource any purposeful relief. The resource value is small compared to the cost of hauling material to the building site. This resolution appears to be more targeted to allow medium to large gravel mining operations to get more profit from a regulatory change.

I am concerned about several downsides:

1. The borough will lose the ability to catalogue the location of 10-fold larger gravel mining activities.
2. The borough will lose the ability to evaluate and enforce the seasonal high water table restrictions to maintain gravel mining operations 4 feet above the water table.
3. Raising the exemption will increase round trips previously in the hundreds (200-300) to the thousands (2,000 to 3,000). This will dramatically impact subdivisions where the exemptions occur. Residents will be likely to learn about the mining activity when equipment arrives, with no public notice requirement.
4. Nothing defines spacing between the larger exempted sites. A large tract (say 40 acres) could be mined using multiple small sites using the exempted rule.
5. This resolution has the effect of changing the exempted sites from about ½ acre (mining to a depth of 3 feet) to 4 acres (mining 3 feet) or 2 acres mining 6 feet deep.
6. There are no provisions for site remediation. This could result in open pits (holes) several acres in size, potentially full of water or, at a minimum, an unsightly clear-cut.

There should have been provisions in this resolution to deal with site remediation, encroachment of mining within 4 feet of the seasonal high water table and restriction of multiple exempted sites on larger tracts if it was even slightly reasonable.

I believe **MSB 17.30 should not be changed with this resolution.**

Barry Santana  
3397 N Meadow Lakes Dr.  
Wasilla, AK 99623

**From:** Roger Oliver <ropaoliver@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 21, 2022 2:18 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** gravel to be mined up to 20,000 cubic yards without conditional permit

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

To the Commision:

I am 100 % against this proposal. To think even a neighbor could mine on the lot next to you and take 20,000 cubic yards go off and just leave a big hole. that is absurd with no public comment or borough control.

We all live in the mat su borough. We pay taxes and must have some control over not only gravel pits but all planning and zoning. I ask you that you turn down this proposal. They are just trying to change rules so they can mine more gravel around neighborhoods without anyone having any say. I want you to think of your own home and your neighbor beside you mined 20,000 cubic yards and left a big hole for you and family to fall in or destroy someone's water source.

I hope you will make the right decision for all the people in the Matsu borough!!

Roger and Olena Oliver



## Karol Riese

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**From:** julie holbrook <holbrook@mtaonline.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 21, 2022 8:41 AM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** change to proposed gravel pit CUP

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

Members of the Matanuska Borough Planning Commission:

I am vehemently opposed to the changes proposed to the CUP requirements for gravel pits. Mokie Tew and the assembly pushed this through even though public outcry was evident. The proposal to allow any piece of property to be mined without a conditional use permit if less than 20,000 cubic yards is removed is a terrible idea. That amount of gravel would equate to 2,000 truck loads a year. Currently, 2000 cyd is the cut off for a permit. This change will allow 10 times the amount of gravel to be pulled out of the ground with no over site, no requirement to remediate the pit and no recourse for people who live in residential neighborhoods and do not want to be exposed to the noise, pollution, possible well water damage, and increased traffic.

What we currently have as a process works. There is no good reason to change it. There are numerous pits already in operation in the valley. We don't need more, and we don't need the residents of our borough cut out of the process of testifying on whether or not they support a proposed gravel pit. The Conditional Use Permit process works, please leave it as is.

Sincerely,

Julie Holbrook

7421 W Sunridge Circle,

Wasilla AK



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## Karol Riese

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**From:** matt medinnas <gomedinas@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 21, 2022 1:46 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** CUP Permit Changes Mat-Su DISSAPPROVAL

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Thank You

I wanted to write to you to express my disapproval regarding the proposed changes to Borough requirements for obtaining a CUP to mine gravel. Mokie Tew's proposal should be rejected! I cannot believe we are taking land use advice from someone who had his maintenance contracts pulled in 2016 for illegally disposing of waste on borough land. I think people are quick to forget things these days but this would be another travesty in the making if we let this go. Can you imagine the amount of destruction borough wide if there was no requirements to mine 20000 cubic yards of dirt wherever they pleased!!

This seems like zero common sense is being applied and zero thought to the environment. Please do not allow this to go through.

Matthew Medinas  
907-333-4506



## Karol Riese

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**From:** Karen <kzaj2ch@mtaonline.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 21, 2022 2:58 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Gravel Pits

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

I am emailing in regard to the latest issue involving gravel pits in our borough. I am in opposition to Assemblyman Tew's proposal pertaining to a conditional Use Permit and the changes he suggests. Please vote to reject the proposed ordinance. Thank you, Karen Zajchowski

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

## Karol Riese

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**From:** Deanna Smith <smithdeanna7358@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 19, 2022 2:38 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

I've been hearing rumors that we're talking about changing the law from 2,000 to 20,000 on gravel pits inside limits.

I'm not agreeing or wanting that to be able to happen. So I've read about the proposal and say, he'll no.

Deanna Smith  
Wasilla



## Karol Riese

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**From:** Greg Campbell <gregsdevice@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 21, 2022 7:04 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Objection to Resolution PC 22-02

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

I strongly object to changing the permitting from 2,000 cubic yards to 20,000 cubic yards for a number of reasons.

The current exemption allows for small operations or individual landowners to excavate small amounts of gravel. If a landowner wants to extract a few dump truck loads of gravel for a project they should not need a permit. However, 20,000 cubic yards of gravel a year is a large operation, and nearby landowners and the general public should be involved in the permitting process.

Not every acre of land in the borough is suitable for a gravel pit. The permitting process weeds out those places where that sort of development is not appropriate, or places conditions on the extraction of materials. A site next to a school, a church, a park or other recreation area, or an area of extreme environmental sensitivity such as a salmon stream may not be the best place for a gravel pit when plenty of undeveloped land exists in the borough.

Mr. Tew's 2014 permit for a gravel operation along Church Road is a good example of why the permitting process is important. Mr. Tew was granted a permit, but with the condition that it not be operated on Sundays. That shows the process works, the operator got to extract gravel and the public concerns about the operation were taken care of.

I also believe that it is a major conflict of interest for Assemblymember Tew to be sponsoring legislation where he will benefit financially. This should be reason enough for this body to reject this change.

Thank you,  
Greg Campbell  
Talkeetna, Alaska

## Karol Riese

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**From:** Monica Alderman <malderman@mtaonline.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 22, 2022 10:45 AM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Cc:** malderman@mtaonline.net  
**Subject:** Proposed gravel pit change

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Good morning...

My husband, Mark Alderman and I live at 7350 W Sun Ridge Rd, Rainbow Heights Estates in the Meadow Lakes Community. We were just recently involved in the fight to keep QAP and Alaska Mental Health Trust out of our residential area and, by the good graces of those making decisions, it was opposed.

We are now against the proposal for the gravel pit ordinance being pushed thru by Mr. Tews who, from our understanding, is and/or has been affiliated with gravel extraction in the Borough. This is such a conflict of interest for the Assembly and Borough constituents. By passing this ordinance just puts money in a few people's pockets and causes a huge strain on the Borough taxes because gravel pits will lower everyone's property value. There has to be regulations or the Borough will look like a mining town with NO concern for its citizens. Is the following what we want our prime, beautiful Valley to become?

"Mines could be started in a neighborhood **without public comment, without regard for water and air contamination, high noise levels and increases in traffic. Pits would have no requirement to return the property to a useable state, other than that of a hole in the ground.**"

Please vote "no" on this ordinance...permits are needed to keep the Valley habitable.

Thank you for your time.

Monica Alderman  
Rainbow Heights Estates HOA  
Sec/Treasurer  
907.355.8584



## Karol Riese

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**From:** Claudia Sihler <bettercompanion@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 13, 2022 10:40 AM  
**To:** Planning  
**Cc:** Amy Pettit; Taylor Raftery; Dot; Wes Hoskins; Dawn Vogt; Stephanie Nowers; Jennifer Anderson  
**Subject:** What is the Matanuska Greenbelt  
**Attachments:** MatGreenbelt\_location.jpg; Map2\_0\_scrnshotforweb.jpg; Matanuska Greenbelt Location.png; MGT for Assembly.pdf; MatanuskaGreenbelt2020\_v2.pdf

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

Please add this email and its attachments to the package for the special meeting on February 28th, 2022, regarding the OR 22-002.

To the Planning Commission members and chair,

at the last public meeting on February 7th, 2022, your chair Stafford Glashan had asked about the Matanuska Greenbelt (MG). This was in regards to the OR 22-003, which got voted down. As the Matanuska Greenbelt could also be impacted by the OR 22-002, I felt it is important for you to understand the role the MG plays for the Matanuska Valley before going into the special session on February 28th, 2022.

I have attached a document from 2017 (MGT for Assembly) and a few extra pictures to this email that explain the history, importance and collaboration that led to what we now call "Matanuska Greenbelt" (MG) or "Matanuska Greenbelt Trails" (MGT). You can also use this [LINK](#) to open the document "MGT for Assembly."

The collaboration between the different ownerships of the land (Mat-Su Borough, State of Alaska, UAA, UAF and private ownerships) has for example created a **unified trail marking** system across all parcels and an **Interagency Event Permit** for events being held at the Matanuska Greenbelt (e.g. foot races and bicycling events), that can be found here:

<http://www.matanuska-greenbelt.org/events>

The University has conducted a **survey of trail users in 2020**, that underlines the importance of the Matanuska Greenbelt for health and recreation. Link to the survey results:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HHoidHNnk8jwz0xSGVuilX8jgdAz9lHe/view?usp=drivesdk>

Two overview pictures (attached) show how this area is embedded between heavily populated areas of Wasilla and Palmer, making this a prime location for outdoors recreation and events.

Two additional pictures show the different ownerships of the land and the 30+ miles of trails within that area.

The person who knows the most about the history as having been there and promoted this collaboration from the beginning is **Dot Helms**, cc'd in this email as [aktrailrun@gmail.com](mailto:aktrailrun@gmail.com).

We hope you will support the MSB residents in keeping this core area intact as much as possible, knowing that the landfill will claim parts of it over time - making it even more important to keep the rest of it, if not even expanding the area where possible!

Claudia Sihler, member of the Mat-Su BCHA  
Acting on behalf of the president, Dawn Vogt  
Mat-Su chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of America

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Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KSA, IAABC-ADT  
The Better Companion, LLC  
Wasilla, Alaska, USA



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## Matanuska Greenbelt Highlights for MSB Assembly

Over the past years, we've noticed puzzled looks on Assembly people's faces when Matanuska Greenbelt is mentioned in discussions or legislation. This is a brief introduction to the 2000-3000 acres (depending upon how you count) of non-motorized greenspace populated by trails, wildlife, vegetation, and lots of opportunities for outdoor education and exercise. It lies between Palmer-Wasilla Highway, Parks Highway, and Trunk Road. It probably has the greatest diversity of trail or non-trail users of any open spaces in the core area of MSB – and probably beyond. There is infrastructure for the Central Landfill, two university properties, state park, and private park around the edges. Before the Greenbelt became known as such, it was most known as a place to get lost – for hours, and many people would not come back. Others like the adventure. We try to accommodate all non-motorized trail users.

A website contains several kinds of maps – static, interactive, emergency planning (events).

<http://www.matanuska-greenbelt.org/trail-maps>

What is it?

Who uses the Matanuska Greenbelt?

Start?

Goals:

1. Maps and signage
2. Trails plan (only CMT)
3. Interagency race permit
4. Trails plan (all of MGT)
5. Education and outreach

### What is it ?

Around 2004 or so, with lots of core expansion, including the new hospital, an increased demand for electricity and water/sewage lines presented a threat to the greenspace. Land owners did try to work together to minimize impacts to the area. Everyone – land owners and trail users alike – recognized that working together to keep this jewel would be essential. It's also been part of some older MSB trails plans to work with everyone.

The MSB Community Development manager wrote an unsuccessful proposal to NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) for help with an overall Matanuska Greenbelt Trails plan. While the assistance wasn't provided, it did establish the intent for all agencies to work together. The Matanuska Greenbelt considers all the properties as part of the whole – as contiguous neighbors. The missions and properties of all lands were to be respected by all to have any chance of the partnership working.



# Matanuska Greenbelt Trails 2016 - Draft 5.1\_user

149°15'W

149°14'W

149°13'W

149°12'W

149°11'W

149°10'W

61°35'N

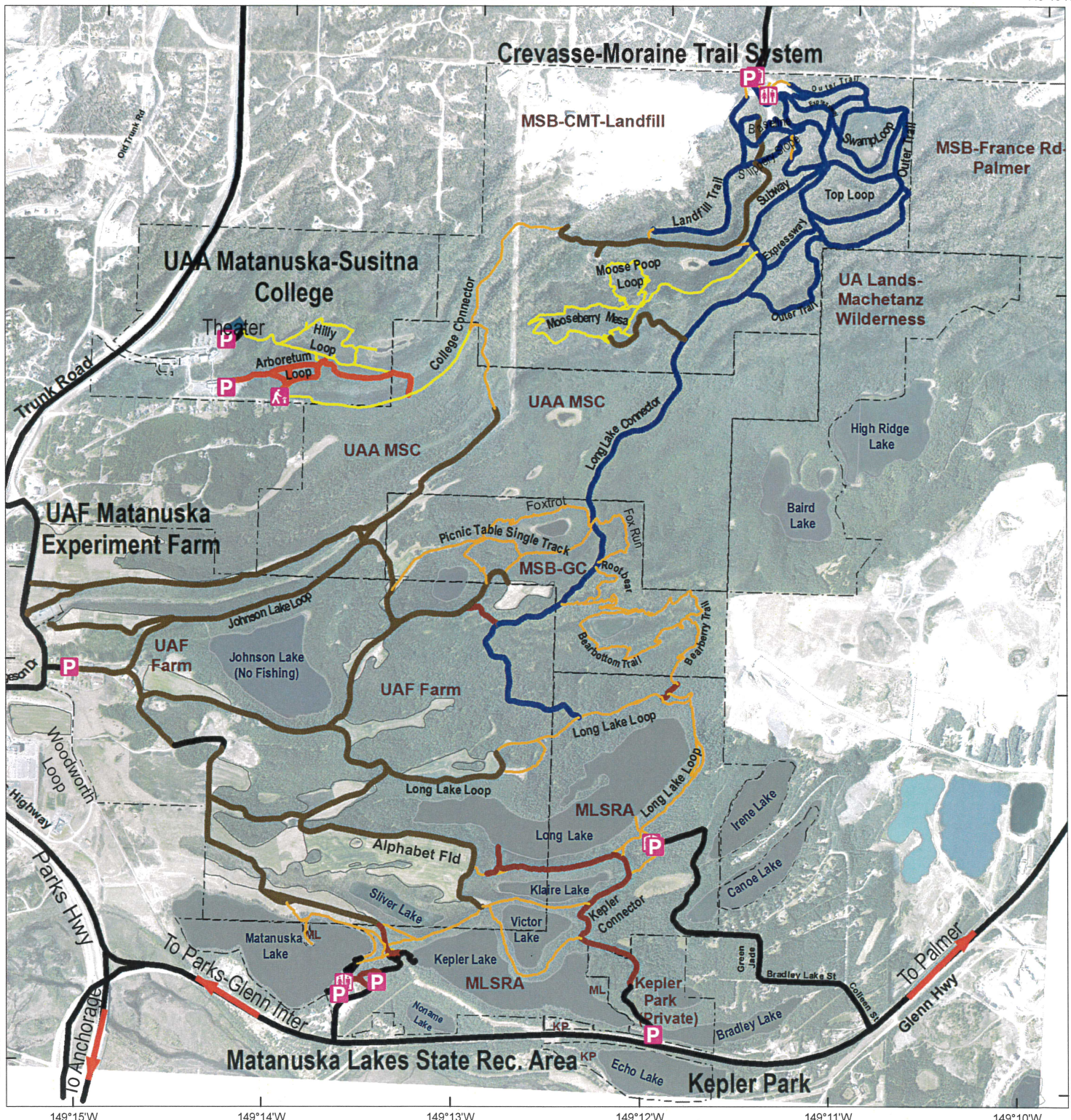
61°34'N

61°33'N

61°35'N

61°34'N

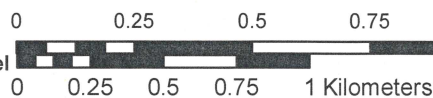
61°33'N



## Legend

### Trail Tread

- Hardened-asphalt, gravel
- Dirt roads
- Groomable ski
- Wide track
- Wide track-no horses
- Single track
- Single track-no horses



[www.matanuska-greenbelt.org](http://www.matanuska-greenbelt.org)

Version 5.1 2016/01/02

Google road map: <http://goo.gl/maps/RA5l>

1 Miles

Crevasse-Moraine Trail System (MSB-CMT-Landfill) - Turn south (left coming from Palmer, right coming from Wasilla) on Loma Prieta off Palmer-Wasilla Highway. Managed by Matanuska-Susitna Borough, which also manages Greenbelt Central (MSB-GC).

Matanuska Lakes State Recreation Area (MLSRA) - Turn north (left coming from Anchorage, right coming from Palmer) off Glenn Highway about 0.5 mi east of Glenn - Parks interchange. Managed by Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

University of Alaska Anchorage Matanuska-Susitna College (UAA-MSC) - Access from Trunk Rd, parking is behind Snodgrass Hall. Please respect the privilege of being able to access their trails. No horses on trails and not maintained for public use.

University of Alaska Fairbanks Matanuska Experiment Farm (UAF Farm) - Active research farm. Please yield to farm equipment and operations. Stay on trails and off fields. No motorized vehicles for general public. Not maintained for public use.

Kepler Park is a private park in southeast corner of greenbelt for non-motorized access. Not for navigation or legal purposes.



Crevasse-Moraine Trails, managed by Matanuska-Susitna Borough Community Development, lies at the north end – as a temporary use of Central Landfill property until the Landfill needs it. We've worked with the Landfill to adjust our maps as they expand their active footprint and close and open trails. We've helped with trash cleanup days where the trash escapes the Landfill. France Road property is owned by MSB and leased by City of Palmer. (It's the blank space with no official trails to east of CMT / Landfill)

University of Alaska Lands (UA Lands) owns the properties for University of Alaska Anchorage's Mat-Su College and UA Fairbanks' Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center – frequently called "the Farm", which is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> year. They also own the part extending eastward to the Machetanz Wilderness area. This property was donated to the University by the Machetanz family in the 1980s for 50 years for ecological research where even research was to have a minimal impact. It's a beautiful property with historical features.

The MSB also owns the Greenbelt Central property near the middle of the Greenbelt. Several new bike trails were built there recently.

The Matanuska Lakes State Recreation Area is at the south end with many property boundaries with the Farm. Our understanding is that the property was selected by the State because of the density of glacial landforms and lakes. At one time they were trying for a National Natural Landmark, like Lake George, but it fell through the cracks. Nevertheless, the features are still there with a huge educational potential, which we hope to include in outdoor classroom.

The private Kepler Park has a ROW that acts as an access to the state park. It dates back to 1952.

## **Who uses the Matanuska Greenbelt?**

We have no idea how many people really use the Greenbelt. Currently, there are 8 official trailheads, which sometimes move over the years to accommodate construction: CMT, Mat-Su College, Snodgrass, Mat Experiment Farm, Mat Lake, Upper, Long Lake Trailhead, and Kepler Park. A few have vehicle counters at their trailheads; most don't. And people entering any one of those can reach any of the others. Whether it's official or not, people use the Greenbelt as a single entity – and our signage and maps encourage that. So while most managers see things from the perspective of their trailhead, users see it from the center looking out - with major mixing in the center of the Greenbelt. Hence successful trails plans need to consider the whole area.

Trail users include foot, wheel, hoof, paws, snow. (see later for more detail to get better grasp of diversity) Users – either by type or by desires and interests and skills – may prefer / need different types of trails or trail surfaces. The entire Greenbelt area provides the ability to do that. (In contrast, CMT is mostly ski trails.)

As you might expect, different trailheads may be more suitable for some user types and desires than others, not to mention distance from home or work.

When we started in 2008, many trail areas (GPRA, Colony, Matanuska Park) were not as developed as MGT. But increased population of the Core area has resulted in more trail users, presumably.

Trails vary from “social” (class 0-1, informal, moose, herd, formed generally by people using the same route repeatedly) to class 5 (probably hardened with gravel or asphalt). Each has its purpose – from researchers / educators (usually off main trails) to recreational users to wheel chair accessible. Some are more challenging – deliberately – than others.

**Goal 1: Work together on maps, wayfinding signs, and trailhead posters to facilitate users’ experiences and improve safety. (2009-2011, then revised as needed) (awards from Mat-Su Convention and Visitors’ Bureau and University of Alaska)**

**Goal 2: Trails plan for entire Matanuska Greenbelt Trails** – got lost in communications with MSB and only plan for CMT was done. (2012-2014) MSB had no permanent trails administrator at this time, and others had about 6 trails plans (15-20 meetings) – MSB, MSTPF, Palmer, Chickaloon Native Tribal Council - in that general time frame ). IOW confusion reigned, and people didn’t realize what meeting they were in sometimes.

**Goal 3: Interagency race permit and map for planning emergency access. (2013-2015)**

**Goal 4: Trails plan – all of MGT.** Some of this could facilitate what trails work best for which users (not necessarily restricted) or could have new trails where appropriate. Much may be educational – interpretive or research – either traditional agricultural / natural resources, trails, or working with Landfill. (2017--?)

**Goal 5: Education and Outreach**



## Start of Matanuska Greenbelt

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In 2007, we inquired among the managers about having a mountain bike race through all the properties to provide a way of showing off the area and, more importantly, getting the local managers talking with each other and becoming aware of the entire Greenbelt area. Several managers and many users were unaware of the extent of the area and number of trailheads. In December 2008, the MEF (Matanuska Experiment Farm, UAF) invited the managers, trail groups (that we had contact info for), and trail users to a lunchtime presentation (an on-going function at the Matanuska Experiment Farm - MEF) on trails.

Representatives of all major local land managers and many volunteers / users were present and voted on a name - Matanuska Greenbelt- which was unique and simple and made for good identity. Our priorities were producing a map and signing the system – or at least the Long Lake Connector backbone. The managers did not want us to be a 501c3, but to work together, see how that worked out with respecting everyone's mission and lands, and decide whether to continue from there. It was a partnership based on trust. We had so much success with the signage, we continued until we ran out of intersections – over 100 posts and 300 signs - about 5 times our original intent.

### **Goal 1: Work together on maps and wayfinding signs to enhance users' experiences.**

The logo was “designed in committee” (volunteers, owners, staff, etc) with a birch tree and trail overarching the name and logo of the owner. This showed the unity of all, but respects the individual land owner. Trail map lines were color coded to represent the type of trail. The trails were checked by the land managers (or any knowledgeable people we could find) to be sure we had the correct trails and left out the ones they didn't want (some social trails). Trail names were obtained from users or descriptive of the area, e.g. Long Lake Loop circles Long Lake. Numbers, which users intensely disliked, were replaced by trail names. Personal names were not used.

<http://www.matanuska-greenbelt.org/projects/maps-and-signs>

Map was intended for users to use in field – robust lines, distinctive colors, and fills the paper as much as possible - and can print on their own printer. Interactive maps were developed to make them easier to read and contain more content, like the post number and donor name. It was developed in ArcGIS so has database of various features like Buy a Posts at intersections, gate numbers for first responders, etc.

Funding, materials, and labor came from an assortment of places – staff of all landowners, volunteers, year-end funds, grants (MSB Bed Tax Grant, Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation), but one of the more popular in terms of binding this area together was the Buy-a-Post program. People

paid \$100 for a post with their inscription on a small plate and wayfinding directions on regular wayfinding sign. Later a post number, sign side letter were added for inventory and user identification, and lat/long (degrees decimal minutes for consistency with emergency responders) were added.

Maps for emergency responders were also made after talking with Palmer's Chief of Rescue and Fire since we're in their area for rescue. This would be used by race RD's for planning self-rescues also.

Post and hardware cost about \$140+ as prices changed over the years and protective backing were needed to reduce corrosion resulting from changed wood chemistry that was available in Alaska.

Trailhead structures followed state parks designs and the posters were developed with MSB staff so that we had something standard across the MGT, but unique for each trailhead. Because of changes with trailheads, trails, and rules over time, we generally redo the posters every 2 yrs. Fade-resistant inks are used on polyethylene and printed by Alaska State Parks. Later some CMT intersection structures which had been vandalized (front cover broken) were added next to trailhead structures to form a message board for announcements –like races, bears, etc.

The Matanuska Greenbelt Trails Association was awarded the Mat-Su Convention and Visitors' Bureau Community Service Award (2011) and University of Alaska awarded a Meritorious Service Award (2012) for helping enhance users' experience in this area. There was minimal signage in a couple areas and no signs in others before the MGT group worked toward making the area look like it was owned by someone and make the place a little safer.

**Goal 2: Trails plan for entire area** was aiming for 2011, but got lost in communications with MSB. Re-trying now with State Parks, MEF, and private individuals. We are hoping MSB will participate for completeness and that all users are included.

**Trail users include:**

Foot - Walkers, hikers, runners,, orienteers, geocachers, moms with jogging strollers, dog walkers.

Wheel - Mountain bikers, fat-tire bikers.

Hoof – horse and riders of various skill sets, horse and cart (sometimes accompanied by pony and dog)

Snow – snowshoers, Nordic skiers (groomed or ungroomed)

Paws - Dogs may accompany any of the above users – on or off leash (despite what rules are).

Bird and other wildlife watching.

Anglers – summer and winter.

Kids education (solo, home schooling, groups) both science and etiquette

The area is generally too small or hilly for ski-joring or mushing.

**Goal 3: Interagency race permit and map for planning emergency access.** Interagency race permits and fees were implemented to be sure that cross-boundary races were permitted by all the relevant owners. In the past, some races may not have had permits for some properties or had inadequate pre-race planning. The fees are shared among the Greenbelt as needed to repair damages to the trails resulting from the increased use and cover operational costs of other facilities (extra outhouse pumping, etc).






**Goal 4: Trails plan – all of Matanuska Greenbelt this time (not just CMT).** Some of this could facilitate what trails work best for which users (not necessarily restricted) or could have new trails where appropriate. Some may be educational – either traditional agriculture, trails, or working with Landfill, glacial landforms, and cultural resources. Prior trails plans mostly focused on mountain bike trails. This will, hopefully, include all user types (or at least more types), their needs, and maybe destination points (interpretation signage).

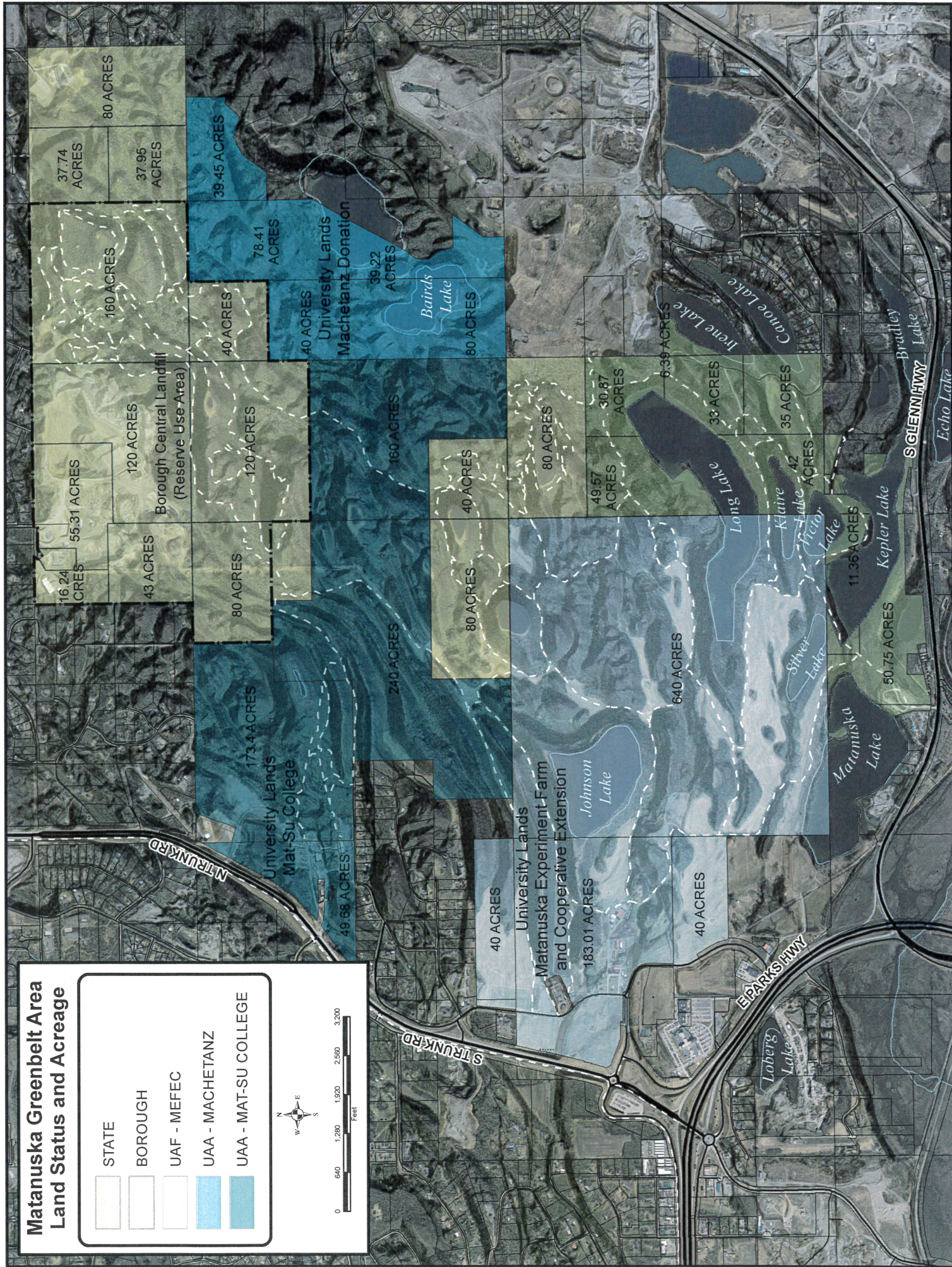
**Goal 5: Education and Outreach** – both outdoors and classroom. In 2016, we started a Know Your Greenbelt evening talk series at the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center to contribute to their educational mission and share local knowledge. This includes natural and cultural resources and history, especially in the area as well as safety. The Farm will have some agricultural / natural resources presentations, we will continue to have input from Landfill Manager and/or Recycling Center, and ADF&G (sponsors Outdoor Heritage Foundation, Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats) will continue their Wildlife Wednesdays. Education and Outreach is expected to be expanded to schools and other groups both for education and to spread the word of the MEF and MGT to others. Over the years, there's been NRCS ecological education, IMBA / Alaska Trails trail training (classroom and field). Machetanz Elementary School created a Quest Trail on an existing Farm trail. Classrooms can be used in Recycling Center, Animal Control, Mat-Su College, and MEF, which includes distance delivery.

Point is that there are numerous indoor classrooms as well as lots of trails, fields, forests, edge effect (forest-field) for wildlife in over 2000 acres of greenspace. It's home to both recreational and educational opportunities as well as great place for recreational and health exercise for relieve stress.

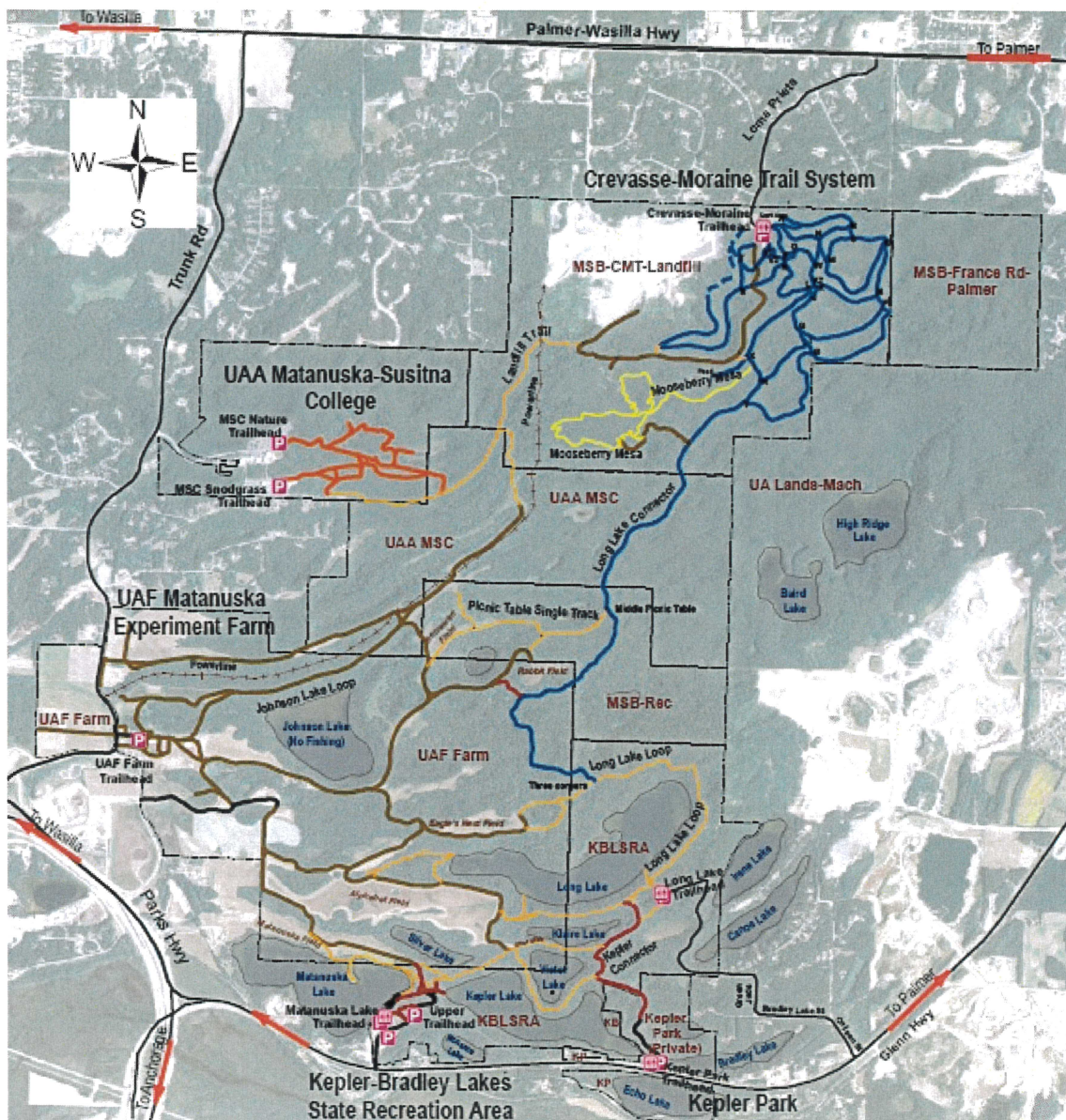


# Matanuska Greenbelt Area Land Status and Acreage

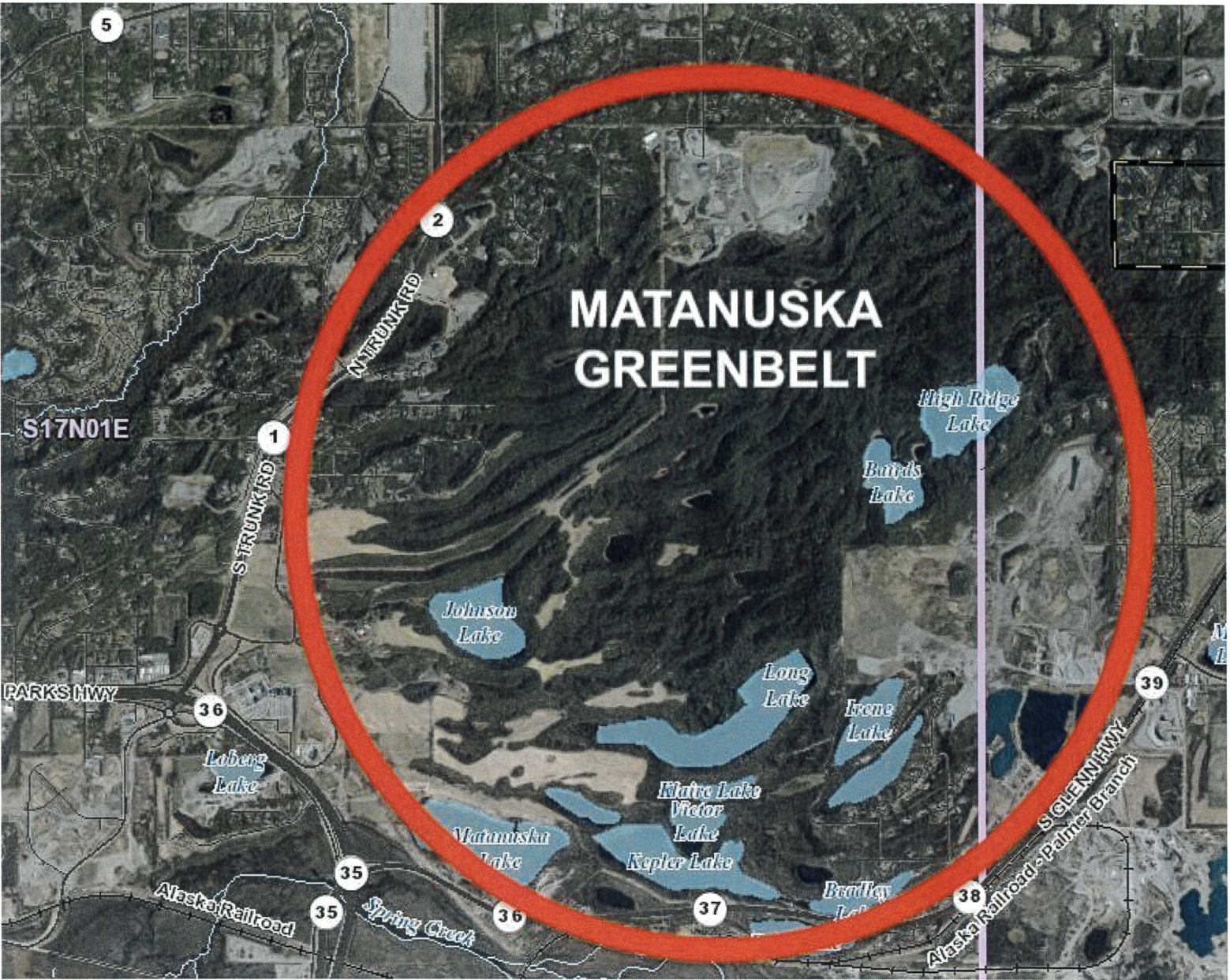
- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
|  | STATE                |
|  | BOROUGH              |
|  | UAF - ME FEC         |
|  | UAA - MACHETANZ      |
|  | UAA - MAT-SU COLLEGE |













## Karol Riese

---

**From:** Claudia Sihler <bettercompanion@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 18, 2022 1:20 PM  
**To:** Jennifer Anderson  
**Cc:** Amy Pettit; Dawn Vogt; Dot; Stephanie Nowers; Taylor Raftery; Wes Hoskins; Planning  
**Subject:** Re: What is the Matanuska Greenbelt

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

I would first like to see a higher number of group members on Facebook, to see that there's interest enough to host a town hall meeting.

How would people be invited/reached about that meeting? I'd want to make sure we have more than ten people showing up. ;-)

Claudia

On Fri, Feb 18, 2022 at 10:32 AM Jennifer Anderson <[jranderson2@alaska.edu](mailto:jranderson2@alaska.edu)> wrote:

Hi Claudia,

Thanks for responding. I already follow that FB group and appreciate information there. Are you interested in collaboration toward a town hall to gather feedback and data on trail use?

Best,

Jen Anderson

On Fri, Feb 18, 2022, 9:19 AM Claudia Sihler <[bettercompanion@gmail.com](mailto:bettercompanion@gmail.com)> wrote:

Jennifer,

That is a great infographic!

The date for the Planning Commission meeting would now need to change to 2/28, where they'll hear the public and discuss OR 22-002.

I don't mind you using my stuff at all, it's a compilation from what Stephanie Nowers and Dot Helm gave me.

I would like to see more people joining the Facebook group "Friends of the Matanuska Greenbelt", to get stronger in numbers.

Please join yourself and then get the word out! Invite friends, share in user groups!

And then I can add anybody of you core people as admin.

Claudia

On Thu, Feb 17, 2022 at 5:23 PM Jennifer Anderson <[jranderson2@alaska.edu](mailto:jranderson2@alaska.edu)> wrote:

Claudia & Others

This is very well done and comprehensive work. I have chosen a public education campaign around the conservation of the open green space at MEFEC and surrounding trails and greenbelt as my capstone project for my Master of Social Work degree. Can I share and use this information? I see in your literature it states that no one knows how many trail users there are and what their feedback is and values are surrounding the space. In my opinion, what is missing is public voice, and that is the goal of my project-to increase public awareness and voice.

I am looking to collaborate to achieve this goal and I am wondering if you or others in this thread are interested in discussing the planning of a town hall meeting event so that we can elicit interest and gain valuable insight into public opinion on the value of this green space. We can then bring that feedback to the stakeholder group and, hopefully, inform decision-making. I have attached an infographic that I distributed earlier this month ahead of the first Planning Commission Meeting.

I look forward to hearing everyone's thoughts on the town hall. I am proposing that this take place in early April.

I have included my personal cell phone and welcome contact.

Thank you!

Jen Anderson  
907 232 7149

On Sun, Feb 13, 2022 at 10:40 AM Claudia Sihler <[bettercompanion@gmail.com](mailto:bettercompanion@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Please add this email and its attachments to the package for the special meeting on February 28th, 2022, regarding the OR 22-002.

To the Planning Commission members and chair,

at the last public meeting on February 7th, 2022, your chair Stafford Glashan had asked about the Matanuska Greenbelt (MG). This was in regards to the OR 22-003, which got voted down. As the Matanuska Greenbelt could also be impacted by the OR 22-002, I felt it is important for you to understand the role the MG plays for the Matanuska Valley before going into the special session on February 28th, 2022.

I have attached a document from 2017 (MGT for Assembly) and a few extra pictures to this email that explain the history, importance and collaboration that led to what we now call "Matanuska Greenbelt" (MG) or "Matanuska Greenbelt Trails" (MGT). You can also use this [LINK](#) to open the document "MGT for Assembly."

The collaboration between the different ownerships of the land (Mat-Su Borough, State of Alaska, UAA, UAF and private ownerships) has for example created a **unified trail marking** system across all parcels and an **Interagency Event Permit** for events being held at the Matanuska Greenbelt (e.g. foot races and bicycling events), that can be found here:  
<http://www.matanuska-greenbelt.org/events>

The University has conducted a **survey of trail users in 2020**, that underlines the importance of the Matanuska Greenbelt for health and recreation. Link to the survey results:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HHoidHNnk8jwz0xSGVuilX8jgdAz91He/view?usp=drivesdk>

Two overview pictures (attached) show how this area is embedded between heavily populated areas of Wasilla and Palmer, making this a prime location for outdoors recreation and events.

Two additional pictures show the different ownerships of the land and the 30+ miles of trails within that area.

The person who knows the most about the history as having been there and promoted this collaboration from the beginning is **Dot Helms**, cc'd in this email as [aktrailrun@gmail.com](mailto:aktrailrun@gmail.com).

We hope you will support the MSB residents in keeping this core area intact as much as possible, knowing that the landfill will claim parts of it over time - making it even more important to keep the rest of it, if not even expanding the area where possible!

Claudia Sihler, member of the Mat-Su BCHA  
Acting on behalf of the president, Dawn Vogt  
Mat-Su chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of America

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Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KSA, IAABC-ADT  
The Better Companion, LLC  
Wasilla, Alaska, USA



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Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KSA, IAABC-ADT  
The Better Companion, LLC  
Wasilla, Alaska

--

Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KSA, IAABC-ADT  
The Better Companion, LLC  
Wasilla, Alaska



## Karol Riese

---

**From:** Dot <aktrailrun@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 21, 2022 4:02 PM  
**To:** Jennifer Anderson  
**Cc:** Amy Pettit; Claudia Sihler; Dawn Vogt; Planning; Stephanie Nowers; Taylor Raftery; Wes Hoskins  
**Subject:** Re: What is the Matanuska Greenbelt

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Nice work. Not sure if my suggestions came through but did use tracking.

I've got a lot of stuff to do before my contractor comes through tomorrow. But I will try to get a quick outline of things that are needed to know profits from gravel and "how to use trail signs" by next Monday, hopefully in next few days. Depends on how much time i need to spend with my contractor. History of MGT will be in pieces since I've ended up going back to glaciers. Many reasons why, and I'll show outline of chunks.

Dot

On Mon, Feb 21, 2022 at 14:05 Jennifer Anderson <[jranderson2@alaska.edu](mailto:jranderson2@alaska.edu)> wrote:  
That is understandable (about your business). Thank you!

Jen

On Mon, Feb 21, 2022, 1:05 PM Claudia Sihler <[bettercompanion@gmail.com](mailto:bettercompanion@gmail.com)> wrote:  
I finally found time to look through the article! Well done!

I did make some changes and edited them under "Track Changes".

BTW, Anybody in this emailing group can be an admin on our Facebook Group "Friends of the Matanuska Greenbelt". I just wanted to get it started, but it's by all means NOT "my" group! Send me a short text to 907-355-2521 with your facebook name and I'll add you as an admin!

I hope the attached document is the correct one with my changes. One important change is to not mention my business "The Better Companion". I try to stay non-political with the business. I have used it as to define who I am and what my credentials are when talking to an entity, but since we don't know where this article all lands, I feel I want to leave it out. I might be wrong about this, but for now, I feel better that way.

Claudia

On Mon, Feb 21, 2022 at 7:56 AM Jennifer Anderson <[jranderson2@alaska.edu](mailto:jranderson2@alaska.edu)> wrote:  
Good Morning Everyone.

I am wondering how the group feels about (me) potentially publishing an article (similar to the one attached) with a map showing the proposed gravel pit and another map highlighting the Greenbelt? It could include a lot of the information previously sent, which I have attached here. Please let me know your thoughts and any feedback about what to change.



Thank you.

Jen Anderson

On Sun, Feb 13, 2022 at 10:40 AM Claudia Sihler <[bettercompanion@gmail.com](mailto:bettercompanion@gmail.com)> wrote:

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Two overview pictures (attached) show how this area is embedded between heavily populated areas of Wasilla and Palmer, making this a prime location for outdoors recreation and events.

Two additional pictures show the different ownerships of the land and the 30+ miles of trails within that area.

The person who knows the most about the history as having been there and promoted this collaboration from the beginning is **Dot Helms**, cc'd in this email as [aktrailrun@gmail.com](mailto:aktrailrun@gmail.com).

We hope you will support the MSB residents in keeping this core area intact as much as possible, knowing that the landfill will claim parts of it over time - making it even more important to keep the rest of it, if not even expanding the area where possible!

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Acting on behalf of the president, Dawn Vogt  
Mat-Su chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of America

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Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KSA, IAABC-ADT  
The Better Companion, LLC

Wasilla, Alaska, USA

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Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KSA, IAABC-ADT  
The Better Companion, LLC  
Wasilla, Alaska, USA

--

#Don'tFeedTheLandfill

## Karol Riese

---

**From:** Wes Hoskins <whoskins@matsutrails.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 22, 2022 11:48 AM  
**To:** Dot  
**Cc:** Jennifer Anderson; Amy Pettit; Claudia Sihler; Dawn Vogt; Planning; Stephanie Nowers; Taylor Raftery  
**Subject:** Re: What is the Matanuska Greenbelt

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Thanks for your work on this, Jen. Couple things I saw in the 1st paragraph of page 2. Switch Parks and Trails in our name: Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation. And I think the proposed U-Med concept is a "medical" district rather than "medicine." But I'm not sure what the official title is.

Nice job!

-Wes

Wes Hoskins | Executive Director  
**Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation**  
Office 907-746-8757  
Cell 907-341-9878

[matsutrails.org](http://matsutrails.org)

I live, work, and recreate on the ancestral territory  
of the Dena'ina and Ahtna peoples.

## Pick.Click.Give.

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Acting on behalf of the president, Dawn Vogt  
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Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KSA, IAABC-ADT  
The Better Companion, LLC  
Wasilla, Alaska, USA

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#Don'tFeedTheLandfill

## Karol Riese

---

**From:** Amanda Adams <klundera@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 22, 2022 12:18 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Proposed Gravel Ordinance

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To Whom it May Concern:

Please do not take away your friends and families right to public process. The proposed gravel ordinance, in its current form, is not good for the Valley. Development is important however it needs to be done responsibly. By taking away that public process it eliminates property owners, your friends and families, ability to defend themselves against irresponsible development. At the very least that ordinance needs to be overhauled to prohibit pollution, which is a liability to the Borough, as well as allowing for the public process and more reasonable permitting requirements.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Amanda Adams

Sent from my iPhone



February 23, 2022

To Chair Glashan and members of the Planning Commission:

My name is Kathy Trump and I am the chair of the Comsat Quarry Committee as well as a citizen of Talkeetna. I am writing to oppose PC Resolution 22-002, which proposes to amend MSB 17.30 Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for Earth Materials Extraction to allow for an exemption of 20,000 cubic yards or less of earth material extraction annually without a CUP or an administrative permit.

This resolution would increase the amount of earth materials exempted from a CUP twenty times the amount currently allowed from 2,000 cubic yards to 20,000 cubic yards. What type of unregulated development would this resolution engender? Talkeetna is a tourist town, as is Alaska. People come here to experience the wonder of nature, game animals, and our outdoor opportunities. Unregulated earth materials operations with their attendant noise and environmental degradation tops no tourists list.

Additionally, people who have homes and businesses in the area lose a sense of stability as the possibility of gravel pits and earth extraction sites will be allowed without oversight. Businesses and families need a sense of order and continuity, not chaos from lack of regulation.

Where is the proof, as stated in the IM, that changing the level to 20,000 cubic yards would lower the price of gravel as stated by proponents of the change? The gravel industry did not complain about the current regulatory process or prices, so why is the borough striving to solve a problem which doesn't exist?

The language in the resolution is vague and likely to cause more problems than it solves. For example, will there be limits on stockpiled material? Does this ordinance apply to material that would be sold or removed? If more than one commercial operator works on a single site, are both operators exempt from a CUP and can they both take up to 20,000 cubic yards without a CUP?

Here in the Northern Valley, we are aware of the stress of an earth material site and how extraction disrupts a neighborhood, hurts the environment, and impacts tourism. We have been fighting the lack of CUP and regulation at the Comsat Quarry Site for years. A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) process allows citizens and contractors to fairly discuss issues and come to a shared agreement.

Please vote against this change in MSB regulation. We expect growth here in the Northern Valley, but keeping expansion incremental allows the community to process

change. Please keep at bay the vagaries of unmitigated development, like this resolution.

Sincerely,

Kathy Trump  
P.O. Box 470  
Talkeetna, AK 99676  
kathy.trump@yahoo.com



## Karol Riese

---

**From:** kathy trump <kathy.trump@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 23, 2022 8:51 AM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** PC Resolution 22-002  
**Attachments:** PC Resolution 22-002.pdf

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

Dear Clerk Riese:

Please include my comments in the Planning Commission Packet for February 28.

Thank You,  
Kathy Trump

## Karol Riese

---

**From:** trt190987@gci.net  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 23, 2022 2:46 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Urge rejection of PC 22-02 (replacing previous email)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Planning Commission:

I emailed in a copy of this letter just now, but neglected to add family members who wishes to be included. Please replace my previous email with this one:

MSB 17.30, which regulates extraction of earth materials, applies to any amounts greater than 2000 cubic yards, and states clearly that its purpose includes to “protect the quality, peace, quiet, and safety of Mat-Su neighborhoods” and “enhance the character and stability of residential....areas...in a manner that will not devalue the.... neighboring properties” by requiring the resource extraction of materials of greater than 2000 cubic yards be governed by a process requiring obtaining a permit, and involving public input.

Now comes this resolution increasing the limit exempted from requiring a conditional use permit and public input from 2000 CY to 20,000 CY, which is entirely unacceptable. 2000 cubic yards would amount to scraping 1.5 feet from the surface of an acre of land (destructive enough) to 20,000 cubic yards, which would turn that acre into a 15 foot deep pit. Annually.

As a landowner in the MSB, increasing this exemption amount by tenfold would absolutely **negatively impact** the quality, peace, quiet, and safety of many Mat-Su neighborhoods, **degrade** the character and stability of many residential areas, and **devalue** many neighboring properties.

While 17.30 addresses the habitat concerns of humans, this proposed deregulation of extraction activities also threatens the habitats of innumerable creatures. This deregulation would negatively impact the lives, recreational opportunities, food sources, and livelihoods of all the Alaskans that rely on a stable and healthy wildlife population in the MSB.

I am absolutely opposed to Resolution PC 22-02, which does the opposite of its stated purposes, and I urge the Commission to reject it.

Tina Tomsen  
Patrick McGownd  
Tucker McGownd

## Karol Riese

---

**From:** Jody Moore <jody65@mtaonline.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 24, 2022 4:52 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Opposed to the change of Conditional Use Permit for Gravel Mining

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows  
To Whom it May Concern:

I am strongly opposed of the proposal made by Assemblyman Mokie Tew that 20,000 cubic yards or less of gravel be allowed to be mined in the MatSu Borough without a Conditional Use Permit. This proposal is clearly being made to benefit him and his excavating contractor business. He has proven over time that he has a shady disregard for environmental concerns. There would be no accountably held for disruption and destruction of neighborhoods, air, water and noise pollution, and who is going to make sure the area that is being mined be put back into a useable state?

This proposal would allow 10 times the gravel to be mined without a permit. That is just absurd!

Please Do Not change the mining of gravel within the MatSu Borough without a Conditional Use Permit code.

Thank you,  
Jody Moore  
4001 S Birch Cove Dr.  
Wasilla, AK 99623



## Karol Riese

---

**From:** Ruth Wood <tothedogs@mtaonline.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 24, 2022 10:11 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Comments on Resolution PC 22-02  
**Attachments:** Comments Resolution PC 22-02.pdf

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

Attached as a pdf and included below are my comments on Resolution PC 22-02. Please distribute to the commissioners. Thank you.

TO:

MSB PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM:

RUTH WOOD, TALKEETNA, ALASKA

DATE:

FEBRUARY 24, 2022

RE:

RESOLUTION PC 22-02

Dear Planning Commissioners:

Please vote NO on Resolution PC 22-02. **The proposed ordinance to amend MSB 17.30 Conditional Use Permit ... to allow for an exemption of 20,000 cubic yards annually without a permit is outrageous.** It is a slap in the face to the residents of the Mat Su Borough.

There is an enormous amount of gravel in the Mat Su Borough. Most of the area was covered by glaciers, and when the glaciers receded a lot of gravel was left behind. The State and the Borough have not paid much attention to that as they approved subdivision after subdivision without providing for separation of residential areas from industrial areas.

The consequence is that when people buy property and put their precious resources into building their homes they depend on the borough and the state to protect their interests. That's why we have rules like those in MSB 17.30. That's how you encourage people to live here. That's how you protect their economic investment. That's how you maintain property values, and as the only real taxes we have in the MSB are property taxes, that's important not only to the residents, but also to the borough itself.

The Information Memorandum, IM 22-003, that accompanies the proposed ordinance, doesn't even mention the impact on people who reside next to extraction sites. The summary statement is ridiculous:

- The IM states that the annual exemption limit of 2,000 yards is too low, yet cites no support for that statement.
- The IM states that the intent of raising the exemption is to allow use and development of the resource without unnecessary regulation and expense. **There is no unnecessary regulation and expense in MSB 17.30**, and it is disingenuous to state that without any reasons or examples whatsoever.
- The IM states that resource development is one of the primary activities in the State of Alaska and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough should be encouraging development and use of our natural resources. But, resource development is not the only primary activity and the MSB should be encouraging development and use of our natural resources in places that are suitable for development, not in our neighborhoods.
- The IM states that by lowering costs of development, materials prices will be lower which will benefit everyone in our community as we continue to experience the highest population growth rate in Alaska. That statement is just not true. There is no guarantee that prices will be lower, and lower prices wouldn't benefit everyone in the community anyway.

It is time that Information Memorandums be information memorandums. That means they need to cite the pros and the cons of the issue. An IM that purports statements that cannot be substantiated is a disservice to the citizens of the MSB.

Conditional Use Permits for earth extraction activities are critical to the health and welfare of the residents of the MatSu borough. Some of the concerns dealt with in CUPs are times of operations, noise levels, dust control, reclamation, traffic issues. The hearing for the CUP is the only opportunity residents and neighbors ask the borough to set limits that make living near an extraction site bearable.

Under no circumstances should the exemption be raised from 2,000 cubic yards annually to 20,000 cubic yards annually. 20,000 cubic yards annually is a major industrial site, not a gravel pit. The size of such an operation and the impact of the traffic that would accompany such activity are tremendous factors, and it would be unconscionable to exempt those operations from regulations.

**It is clear to me that no reasonable official with the best interests of the citizens of the Mat Su Borough could support this proposed ordinance. Please vote no on Resolution PC 22-02.**

Sincerely,

Ruth D. Wood  
Talkeetna, Alaska

**Karol Riese**

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**From:** Mark Westman <denalimark@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 18, 2022 7:10 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Comment on Resolution PC 22-02

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

Hello,

I am a resident of the Christiansen Lake subdivision in Talkeetna.

I am writing to submit an official comment with respect to the MSB planning commission's scheduled meeting at 6 PM on February 28th to discuss the proposed Resolution PC22-02, which proposes to increase the permit exemption for materials extraction by tenfold, from 2000 CY to 20,000 CY. This action would specifically impact the Comsat Road quarry, which I, along with my wife Lisa Roderick and many of the area's residents already vigorously oppose.

As many of us in the area have repeatedly commented, we are strongly against the continued use of the Comsat quarry owing to the myriad of impacts to our quality of life that it has imposed upon us residents, as well as its negative impacts upon our local park system.

I am writing to overstate the obvious, which is that my household objects in the strongest terms possible to the proposal outlined by Resolution PC22-02 to increase the permit exemption for materials extraction from 2000 CY to 20,000 CY. We are already engaged in an attempt to close this quarry permanently with respect to the noise issues which invade our home spaces, the increased traffic dangers, and the imposition upon the adjacent Talkeetna Lakes Park system which is widely used by area residents and visitors and which is incurring negative impacts from the quarry operations.

Your proposal to drastically increase the usage of this site in the midst of a strong community pushback represents a decidedly hostile and dismissive action against the citizens of the Christiansen Lake subdivision and the Talkeetna community in general, who have made our views of this site's usage crystal clear, and are a total disregard for our desire to self-regulate the quality of life of our small community.

The MSB shut down the proposed quarry site in Meadow Lakes based on robust local community opposition, but apparently some among you believe that the sparser populations of more rural Alaskan communities that aren't the size of Wasilla are fair game for exploitation and running roughshod over the local residents and their comparative lack of political power. It's worth noting that CALLA's request to designate the area in question as public recreation (widely supported by our community) was denied IN PRIVATE and WITHOUT PUBLIC INPUT.

In conclusion, I want my household's voice added to this debate over this resolution. I emphatically and respectfully ask that you reject it, and to respect the views of our community.

Sincerely,  
Mark Westman  
Talkeetna, Christiansen Lake Subdivision



## Karol Riese

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**From:** Anita Golton <goltking@mtaonline.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 25, 2022 8:54 AM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Comment on RESOLUTION PC 22-02

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

Dear Planning Commissioners:

Please vote NO on Resolution PC 22-02. **Amending MSB 17.30 Conditional Use Permit to allow for an exemption of 20,000 cubic yards annually without a permit is a terrible idea.** The negative impact to Mat Su Borough residents and the life we chose to live here would be irreparable.

Please protect the interest of residents who have invested their life's work and savings into buying property, building homes, frequenting businesses, and supporting schools and infrastructure with property taxes. We depend on the borough and the state to think these things through to help maintain property values and help create a place that people want to live. Resource development is not the only primary activity and the **MSB should be encouraging development and use of our natural resources in places that are suitable for development, not in our neighborhoods.** There is no guarantee that prices will be lower, and many of the reasonings in the proposal are misleading and unsupported with real, specific, proven facts. Pros and the cons of the issue are not stated in this memorandum, only pros which is a disservice to everyone who resides in the Borough and really an unfair representation of the issue. Where does this IM discuss important and relevant topics such as times of operations, noise levels, dust control, reclamation, and traffic issues. The hearing for the CUP is the only opportunity residents and neighbors ask the borough to set limits that make living near an extraction site bearable.

Do not raise the extraction limit from 2,000 cubic yards annually to 20,000 cubic yards annually. 20,000 cubic yards annually is a major industrial site, not a gravel pit. The size of such an operation and the impact that would accompany such activity are significant factor. It would be detrimental to exempt such large operations from regulations.

**Our officials should have the best interests of the citizens of the Mat Su Borough in mind at all times and therefore cannot support this proposed ordinance. Please vote no on Resolution PC 22-02.**

Sincerely,

Anita Golton

Talkeetna, Alaska

## Karol Riese

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**From:** Arthur Mannix <arthurjmannix@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 25, 2022 9:31 AM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** NO on Resolution PC 22-02

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

Dear Planning Commissioners,

As a 43-year resident of Talkeetna, I am vehemently opposed to the proposed ordinance to amend MSB 1730 Conditional Use Permit which allows for the exemption of 20,000 cubic yards without a permit! My brother and I have been General Contractors for over 3 decades and conduct our business responsibly with an eye towards leaving every job-site as a betterment of our community.

Hopefully, the future will last a long time. With that in mind, it makes no sense to allow such unregulated excessive gravel extraction to be codified by your body. Please reconsider this proposal.

NO ON RESOLUTION PC 22-02

Sincerely,

Arthur & Karen Mannix  
15296 East Golden Eagle Ave.  
Talkeetna

## Karol Riese

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**From:** Sonja and Eric <sonjaanderic@gci.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 25, 2022 10:36 AM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Opposition to Ordinance 22 0002 -

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

To the Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission:

My name is Eric Hestnes. My wife and I own property on Christiansen Lake, close to the “Illegal” Comsat Gravel Pit/Quarry.

I wanted to express my shock and outrage at the most recent proposal, 22-002, by Assembly Member Tew.

MSB 17.30 regulates extraction of earth materials greater than 2,000 cubic yards. Its purpose is suppose to protect the quality, peace, quiet, and safety of Mat-Su neighborhoods, by a process that requires a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and allows Public input.

Proposal 22-002 would increase the exempted limit to 20,000 cubic yards – **10 TIMES THE AMOUNT** without any Public input. It would do away with a check and balance to assure that all laws and land use plans, SPUD, SWPP, SHPO, NEPA and zoning laws are abided to and there is accountability.

We have witnessed first hand the results of the DNR allowing a shocking lack of care and concern for the Talkeetna Community. Incredible noise levels, equipment operating from Dawn to Dusk, blasting without warning, water tables breached, many safety violations violated. Only thru Public Pressure did the state make any attempts to pacify local outrage. And now there is a proposal to compound the problem **10 x ??**

Does the commission realize the impact this will have on our community?? On tourism, the Parks, wildlife, water quality of nearby wells and natural waterways, etc??

**I urge you to NOT PASS this poorly thought out proposal.**

Thank-you.

Eric and Sonja Hestnes

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows



**Karol Riese**

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**From:** Denita G <denita.rust@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 25, 2022 4:31 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** No thank you Mike Tew - re: gravel mines

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

Good evening,

I would like to submit my comment for public record.

I believe allowing mines to operate without a conditional use permit is a terrible idea.

Mines could be started in a neighborhood without public comment, without regard for water and air contamination, high noise levels and increases in traffic. Pits would have no requirement to return the property to a useable state, other than that of a hole in the ground. Current Borough code requires a permit if greater than 2,000 cubic yards is mined. This change would allow 10 times the gravel to be mined without a permit.

Please do not allow this to pass.

Kind regards,

Denita Gotowicki

1071 N Amber Dr

Wasilla, AK 99623

Karol Riese

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**From:** lfinney57@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 27, 2022 1:15 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Proposed Amendment to MSB 17.30 Conditional Use Permit for Earth Materials Extraction Activities

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

There are reasons gravel extraction operations are required to have a conditional use permit. Gravel extraction is a high impact activity which not only impacts the extraction site itself but can negatively affect surrounding areas including water and roads. Removing opportunities for the public to comment on this type of activity should not be supported. This is the second proposal I've seen from Assembly Members to remove public input from high impact land use in recent months. I find it concerning that Borough representatives are attempting to restrict public involvement in decision making relating to conditional use permitting. I am firmly against supporting this proposed amendment to MSB 17.30. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Lindsey Finney

**Karol Riese**

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**From:** maryostermick <maryostermick@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 27, 2022 9:04 AM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** RESOLUTION PC 22-02

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

RE: RESOLUTION PC 22-02

Dear Planning Commissioners:

**Please vote NO on Resolution PC 22-02**, the proposed ordinance to amend MSB 17.30 Conditional Use Permit. This resolution allows very large amounts of gravel to be extracted from pits that would be totally inappropriate to residential areas or many areas of the Mat-Su Borough. This resolution ignores the ability of people to live somewhere being assured they won't be hearing large trucks moving materials and heavy equipment disturbing their kids playing outside or the neighborhood BBQ. There is a certain level of calmness we all like to experience where we live and supporting this resolution takes away any possibility of a normal life being supported in residential areas.

Allowing up to 20,000 cubic yard/year of gravel extraction creates an industrial site and ignores quality of life in area neighborhoods and therefore ignores the very people who make up the Borough, support it, and pay taxes. This is a shortsighted focus and bows to a few interests while ignoring the good of the entire community. Again, I ask that you **vote NO on Resolution PC 22-02**.

Thank you,

Mary Ostermick

P.O Box 827

Talkeetna, AK



## Karol Riese

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**From:** Amy Schachle <amyschachle@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 27, 2022 1:24 PM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Resolution PC 22-02

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Hello,

I am writing to voice my opposition to resolution PC 22-02. Please do not cut out the public's ability to voice their opposition, support, ideas and concerns when it comes to permitting gravel pits in the valley.

Please do not change the current process, please allow the public to participate and allowing their voices to be heard.

Thanks you,  
Amy Schachle  
7494 West Sun Ridge Circle  
907-982-3869

## Karol Riese

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**From:** Conni Goodwin <crggoodwin@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 28, 2022 6:10 AM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Resolution PC 22-02

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

I am against eliminating residents' rights to give input about new gravel pits.

Sincerely,

Conni Goodwin

## Karol Riese

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**From:** ROGER AXBERG <axberg@mtaonline.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 28, 2022 8:28 AM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Resolution PC 22-02 Change of CUP

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]**

I am a resident of the Mat-Su Borough. I am opposed to Resolution PC 22-02 which would allow for gravel to be extracted without the knowledge or comments from the surrounding homeowners. It is only right and fair that the public process of the local residents being able to voice their comments and concerns be in place. Especially, regarding an activity with high noise level and increased traffic that would affect them, their family, quality of life, and property value. It is not right to eliminate a residents right to speak out on something affecting them. Thank you for your genuine consideration of this.

Respectfully,

Jane Axberg



**Karol Riese**

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**From:** mymothunder@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Monday, February 28, 2022 8:43 AM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Gravel pit changes

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

I would like it to be noted in the meeting and to all assembly members that as a Mat-Su resident and owner of multiple properties in the Mat-Su I strongly oppose the proposed changes to gravel pit permitting and extraction. These changes would cause considerable permanent damage to our land. It would lead to more dust and health issues in our community. It would destroy the tranquility that we all love about the valley. We do not need micro gravel extraction happening on our neighborhoods and next to our schools. These operations also cause a lot of road damage. Look at Church road for example the stretch of road driven by dump trucks removing gravel for the Parks road construction is a pothole and damaged mess. They have already had to patch it in multiple spots this year and it needs it again. Many spots on Church are single lane when the potholes open up. Please vote against the proposed changes to the gravel pit extraction.

Breanna

**Karol Riese**

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**From:** Jill Adamson <alaska3ssa@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 28, 2022 9:44 AM  
**To:** MSB Planning Commission  
**Subject:** Re: Proposed Mat-Su Borough Ordinance No. 22-002

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Re-sending per your request.

February 22, 2022

RE: MATANUSKA-SUSTINA BOROUGH ORDINANCE SERIAL NO. 22-002  
AN ORDINANCE OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSTINA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY AMENDING MSB 17.30, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR EARTH MATERIAL EXTRACTION ACTIVITIES, TO ALLOW AN EXEMPTION OF 20,000 CUBIC YARDS ANNUALLY WITHOUT A PERMIT.

Dear Matanuska-Sustina Borough Planning Commission Members,

We had previously written our assembly members of the Matsu Borough on December 7, 2021, registering our disapproval of the above ordinance now before the Planning Commission for the February 28, 2022 Special Session after a split vote before the Assembly and Mayor DeVries forwarding the issue to this Board for review and proper Public Notice.

Earth material extraction includes hard rock extraction and the associated blasting necessary to get to the deeper hard rock. Historically, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP) was a way for the public to hold land owners, those issuing contracts and contractors accountable for following federal and state laws, land use plans, Storm Water Protection Plans (SWPP), State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) surveys, National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), and more.

Any local contractors, boroughs or state receiving funds from the Federal Highway Transportation Act (FHTA) are bound to following these laws and to have additional eyes as a check and balance is a good thing. There are already examples in the upper valley of state and federal law violations when it comes to 'material earth extractions'. As constituents of this great state we would hate to see Alaska lose funding because of pile on violations where the borough choses to look the other way. Mat-Su Planning and Land Use Director, Alex Strawn has incorrectly stated at public meetings the onus of oversight on following federal and state laws falls on the Federal Government. Mis-information and "tacit" agreements not backed by documentation and promises to reach out to the SHPO office after desecration of greater than seven acres of area identified by Dena'ina Elder, translator and cartographer Shem Pete as "Beaver Stream Ridge" is plain preposterous given our governor is married to an Indigenous Alaskan woman!! Perhaps this will be turned over to Secretary Haaland and Secretary Buttigieg, as Mr. Strawn when asked for clarification then doubled down on his statement. This Commission has the opportunity to correct the mis-steps of the past and future.

Ethically, Ordinance 22-022 as proposed by Assembly member Mokie Tew, a former contractor feels self-serving as it would increase the volume of side-dump trucks from two hundred to two thousand without a CUP. Imagine, two thousand side dumps in the middle of summer turning left off of Comsat onto Talkeetna Spur with busloads of tourists heading into Talkeetna. No road safety assessments have been completed and we feel strongly this is a set up for disaster. There have been instances of rock trucks crossing the double yellow lines on blind S curves into oncoming traffic. The proposed ordinance affects are not exclusive to Talkeetna. Sutton, Big Lake, Trapper Creek and other Unincorporated villages will remain unprotected.

What about Public Notice for only a half a mile? In winter and summer under certain conditions with wind, plumes of dark cloud debris can waft farther than a half mile and the sound from sorters, shakers and loading carries through valleys. As with other sites in the Mat-Su area and specifically, the Comsat site in Talkeetna, state and federal laws have been violated while DOT, DNR, Mat-Su Borough, ACOE when boxes were ticked for funding with NHTA and public officials denied accountability when these items were brought to their attention. Ethically, all Borough Boards, State Agencies, and employees who wiped their hands clean of observing laws and ordinances are complicit of fraud, waste and abuse and questionable collusion of underserved communities and indigenous federal laws and EPA standards. We feel this is not this true transparency to the general public and expanding the extraction amounts only sets up expanded ethical conflicts of interests, mis-information and no specific outlined advantages of the best interests of the public.

We do NOT believe the proposed ORDINANCE NO. 22-022 would this be in the best interest to the general public. It would be a disservice to the great citizens of this state and borough to lose out on federal grants due to forever lack of PUBLIC NOTICE and accountability through ten fold expansion of CUP. The daily fines incurred could bankrupt the Borough and state.

Kind Regards,

Dan and Jill Adamson

Cc: Mike Brown, Alex Strawn, Talkeetna Community Council, Inc., Governor Mike Dunleavy

On Feb 24, 2022, at 9:48 AM, Jill Adamson <[alaska3ssa@gmail.com](mailto:alaska3ssa@gmail.com)> wrote:

Greetings Ms. Riese,

Please register the attached to the Planning Commission packet for the February 28, 2022 6:00

pm meeting.

Thank you in advance for your assistance,

Dan and Jill Adamson

<2022.02.28.MSB.Planning.Commission.Adamson.pages>