

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

Edna DeVries, Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Doug Glenn, District 1
Richard Allen, District 2
Patricia Chesbro, District 3, Vice-Chair
Mike Rubeo, District 4
Chris Elder, District 5
Stafford Glashan, District 6, Chair
Curt Scoggin, District 7



Michael Brown, Borough Manager

PLANNING & LAND USE DEPARTMENT

Alex Strawn, Planning & Land Use Director
Kim Sollien, Planning Services Manager
Jason Ortiz, Development Services
Manager
Fred Wagner, Platting Officer
Karol Riese, Planning Clerk

*Assembly Chambers of the
Dorothy Swanda Jones Building
350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer*

February 28, 2022
SPECIAL MEETING
6:00 p.m.

Ways to participate in the meeting:

IN PERSON: Should you wish to testify in person, please adhere to a 6-foot distance between yourself and others.

IN WRITING: You can submit written comments to the Planning Commission Clerk at msb.planning.commission@matsugov.us. Please do so by noon on the Friday before the meeting.

TELEPHONIC TESTIMONY:

- Dial 1-855-290-3803; you will hear “joining conference” when you are admitted to the meeting.
- You will be automatically muted and able to listen to the meeting.
- When the Chair announces audience participation or a public hearing you would like to speak to, press *3; you will hear, “Your hand has been raised.” (There may be a delay, please be patient with the system.)
- When it is your turn to testify, you will hear, “Your line has been unmuted.”
- State your name for the record, spell your last name and provide your testimony.

Ways to observe the meeting:

FACEBOOK LIVE at www.facebook.com/MatSuBorough

- Questions or comments will **not** be answered; please call the number above if you have a comment or concern.

I. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS

VI. AGENCY/STAFF REPORTS

VII. LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

VIII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (*three minutes per person, for items not scheduled for public hearing*)

IX. PUBLIC HEARING: QUASI-JUDICIAL MATTERS (*Commission members may not receive or engage in ex-parte contact with the applicant, other parties interested in the application, or members of the public concerning the application or issues presented in the application*).

X. PUBLIC HEARING: LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

Resolution PC 22-02 A Resolution of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission recommending approval of an ordinance 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 (Staff: Alex Strawn, Planning and Land Use Director).

XI. CORRESPONDENCE & INFORMATION

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

XIV. COMMISSION BUSINESS:

XV. DIRECTOR AND COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

XVI. ADJOURNMENT (*Mandatory Midnight*)

Disabled persons needing reasonable accommodation in order to participate at a Planning Commission Meeting should contact the Borough ADA Coordinator at 861-8432 at least one week in advance of the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING - LEGISLATIVE

Resolution No. PC 22-02

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA
BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION
RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF AN
ORDINANCE AMENDING MSB 17.30
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR EARTH
MATERIAL EXTRACTION ACTIVITIES TO
ALLOW FOR AN EXEMPTION OF 20,000 CUBIC
YARDS ANNUALLY WITHOUT A PERMIT.

(Pages 3 - 47)

PUBLIC HEARING

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH INFORMATION MEMORANDUM IM No. 22-003



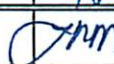

SUBJECT: AN ORDINANCE OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY AMENDING MSB 17.30 CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR EARTH MATERIALS EXTRACTION ACTIVITIES TO ALLOW FOR AN EXEMPTION OF 20,000 CUBIC YARDS ANNUALLY WITHOUT A PERMIT.

AGENDA OF: December 7, 2021

ASSEMBLY ACTION:

MANAGER RECOMMENDATION: Refer to Planning Commission for 90 days and thereafter, introduce and set for public hearing.

APPROVED BY MICHAEL BROWN, BOROUGH MANAGER: 

Route To:	Department/Individual	Initials	Remarks
	Originator	NS	for Assemblymember Tew
	Planning Director	J.O.	11/19/2021
	Finance Director		
	Borough Attorney		
	Borough Clerk	 11/29/21	

ATTACHMENT(S): Fiscal Note: YES ___ NO X
Ordinance Serial No. 22-002 (7 pp)

SUMMARY STATEMENT: This ordinance is sponsored by Assemblymember Tew to amend MSB 17.30 Conditional Use Permit for Earth Materials Extraction Activities to allow for an annual extraction of earth material up to 20,000 yards annually without a permit.

Currently, MSB 17.30 regulates earth materials extraction activities. Extraction of 2,000 cubic yards or less annually on any one parcel does not require an administrative or conditional use permit. For extraction activities which do not exceed 2 years and do not exceed an annual volume of 7,000 yards, an administrative permit is allowable. Beyond those limits, a conditional use permit from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission is required to engage in earth materials extraction activities as defined in the code.

The annual exemption limit of 2,000 yards is too low. The intent of raising the exemption is to allow the citizens and owners of this resource to use and develop the resource without unnecessary regulation and expense. 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. 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.

This ordinance will raise the annual exemption limit for earth materials extraction to 20,000 cubic yards. Below that amount, no permit will be necessary. Above that amount, a permit from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission is required. There will no longer be a need for an administrative permit process because the current levels of extraction for needing that permit are below 20,000 cubic yards. Therefore the administrative permitting process for earth materials extraction activities will be deleted from the code.

CODE ORDINANCE

Sponsored by: Assemblymember Tew
Introduced:
Public Hearing:
Action:

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
ORDINANCE SERIAL NO. 22-002**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY 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.

WHEREAS, the intent and rationale for this ordinance are found in the accompanying Informational Memorandum No. 22-003.

BE IT ENACTED:

Section 1. Classification. This ordinance is of a general and permanent nature and shall become a part of the Borough Code.

Section 2. Amendment of section. MSB 17.30.020 is hereby amended to read as follows:

17.30.020 APPLICABILITY.

(A) This chapter applies to all private and public lands in the borough except where the use is prohibited by ordinance within a special land use district. Where a special land use district regulates earth materials extraction as a conditional use, the granting of a conditional use permit shall require compliance with this chapter. Where this chapter is in conflict with the conditional use permit conditions of the special land use district, the more restrictive conditions shall apply.

(B) This chapter does not apply within the cities of Houston, Palmer, or Wasilla, or the Port MacKenzie Special Use District.

(C) This chapter applies to commercial earth materials extraction activities where the principal activity of use of the property is the extraction of earth materials.

(D) This chapter does not apply when earth material extraction activity is not intended for sale or barter.

(E) Annual extraction of more than [2,000] 20,000 cubic yards of earth materials on property that has not been granted a permit or pre-existing legal nonconforming status as of the date of the enactment of this chapter is required to obtain a conditional use permit [OR ADMINISTRATIVE PERMIT].

(F) [Repealed by Ord. 11-153, § 13, 2011]

(G) Extraction of [2,000] 20,000 cubic yards or less annually on any one parcel does not require [AN ADMINISTRATIVE OR] a conditional use permit. Where a site is exempt under this subsection the exemption is revoked if operations proceed within four feet of the seasonal high water table.

(H) This chapter shall not apply to earth material extraction activities on land owned by the state of Alaska that are in existence as of the date of adoption of the ordinance codified in this chapter except for such operations that extract materials within four feet of the water table. Where a site is exempt under this subsection the exemption is revoked if operations proceed to within four feet of the water table.

Section 3. Amendment of section. MSB 17.30.030 is repealed as

follows:

[17.30.030 TYPES OF PERMITS AVAILABLE.

(A) THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF PERMITS AVAILABLE FOR EARTH MATERIALS EXTRACTION:

(1) ADMINISTRATIVE PERMIT - A USE PERMIT APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR WITH PUBLIC NOTIFICATION MAY BE ISSUED IF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT MEETS THE MINIMUM THRESHOLDS FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION.

(2) CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT - A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT GRANTED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION AFTER A PUBLIC HEARING, WHEN THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT GOES BEYOND THE MINIMUM THRESHOLD FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE PERMIT.]

Section 4. Amendment of section. MSB 17.30.035 is amended as follows:

17.30.035 APPLICATION PROCEDURES.

(A) For all permits required under this chapter, the following shall be submitted to the department:

(1) a completed application form provided by the department;

(2) a site development plan in accordance with MSB 17.28.050 and 17.28.060;

(3) the fee in the amount designated in MSB 17.99; and

(4) reclamation plan in accordance with MSB 17.28.063.

(B) The director may reject any application which is

incomplete or fails to meet the requirements of this section. The rejection shall be in writing and shall state the deficient items. Once the deficiencies have been corrected, the complete application will be processed.

[(C) IF THE MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE PERMIT CAN BE MET, THE DIRECTOR WILL NOTIFY SURROUNDING PROPERTY OWNERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH MSB 17.03, PUBLIC NOTIFICATION, EXCEPT THAT THE NOTIFICATION AREA WILL BE ONE-HALF MILE. WITHIN 30 DAYS OF ACCEPTANCE OF THE APPLICATION, THE ADMINISTRATIVE PERMIT WILL BE ISSUED WITH CONDITIONS TO ADDRESS CONCERNS RAISED BY NEIGHBORING PROPERTY OWNERS, AND AS DEEMED APPROPRIATE BY THE DIRECTOR, TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY AND GENERAL WELFARE.]

(D) [Repealed by Ord. 11-153, § 15, 2011]

(E) [IF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT EXCEEDS THE MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE PERMIT, A] A public hearing before the planning commission shall be conducted within 45 calendar days of the acceptance of a complete application in accordance with MSB 17.03, public notification, except that the notification area will be one-half mile. The applicant may waive the 45-day limit.

(F) The planning commission shall hear any interested parties and shall render a decision on the application for a conditional use permit within 30 calendar days from the date of public hearing, unless the applicant agrees to a time extension. In the granting of a conditional use permit, the planning commission shall state

in writing the conditions of approval of the permit.

Section 5. Amendment of section. MSB 17.30.040 is repealed as follows:

[17.30.040 CRITERIA TO QUALIFY FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE PERMIT.

(A) TO QUALIFY FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE PERMIT, ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA MUST BE MET:

(1) [REPEALED BY ORD. 16-102, § 11, 2016]

(2) EXTRACTION ACTIVITIES SUBJECT TO THE PERMIT SHALL NOT EXCEED:

(A) TWENTY-FOUR MONTHS. A ONE-TIME EXTENSION OF SIX MONTHS MAY BE GRANTED ADMINISTRATIVELY UPON WRITTEN REQUEST FROM THE APPLICANT; PROVIDED, THAT ALL CONDITIONS OF THE PERMIT HAVE BEEN MET; OR

(B) ANNUAL VOLUME OF 7,000 CUBIC YARDS (ONE CUBIC YARD EQUALS ONE AND ONE-HALF TONS) OR LESS; AND

(3) ANY PROPOSED BATCH PLANT USE SHALL NOT EXCEED 24 MONTHS.

(B) THE DIRECTOR MAY ALSO SET BASIC CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR ISSUANCE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE PERMIT, AS APPROPRIATE FOR THE AREA IN WHICH THE DEVELOPMENT IS SITED, FOR THE FOLLOWING:

(1) SETBACKS (NO LESS THAN MINIMUM SETBACK REQUIREMENTS AS ESTABLISHED IN MSB 17.55; HOWEVER, MAY BE INCREASED AS APPROPRIATE FOR EXISTING SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENT);

(2) VISUAL SCREENING, NOISE MITIGATION, LIGHTING

RESTRICTIONS AND ROADS/ACCESS RESTRICTIONS AS APPROPRIATE FOR SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENT AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS REFERENCED IN MSB 17.28.060, SITE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS; AND

(3) ROAD MAINTENANCE MAY BE REQUIRED BY PERMITTEE.]

Section 6. Amendment of section. MSB 17.30.060 is amended as follows:

17.30.060 GENERAL STANDARDS FOR APPROVAL.

(A) In granting [AN ADMINISTRATIVE PERMIT OR] a conditional use permit, the [DIRECTOR OR] commission must make the following findings:

(1) that the use is not inconsistent with the applicable comprehensive plan;

(2) that the use will preserve the value, spirit, character, and integrity of the surrounding area;

(3) that the applicant has met all other requirements of this chapter pertaining to the use in question;

(4) that granting the permit will not be harmful to the public health, safety and general welfare; and

(5) that the sufficient setbacks, lot area, buffers or other safeguards are being provided to meet the conditions listed in MSB 17.30.050(B).

Section 7. Amendment of section. MSB 17.30.150 is amended as follows:

17.30.150 APPEAL PROCEDURES.

(A) The provisions of MSB 15.39 govern appeals from a decision of the planning commission granting, denying, modifying, or revoking a conditional use permit under this chapter. [THE PROVISIONS OF MSB 15.39 GOVERN AN APPEAL OF A PLANNING DEPARTMENT ENFORCEMENT ACTION OR DECISION.]

Section 8. Effective date. This ordinance shall take effect upon adoption.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly this - day of -, 2022.

EDNA DeVRIES, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

(SEAL)

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From: [Claudia Sihler](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Cc: [Amy Pettit](#); [Taylor Raftery](#); [Dot](#); [Wes Hoskins](#); [Dawn Vogt](#); [Stephanie Nowers](#); [Jennifer Anderson](#)
Subject: What is the Matanuska Greenbelt
Date: Sunday, February 13, 2022 10:42:17 AM
Attachments: [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/1HHoidHNk8jwz0xSGVuilX8jgdAz91He/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.

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](#)

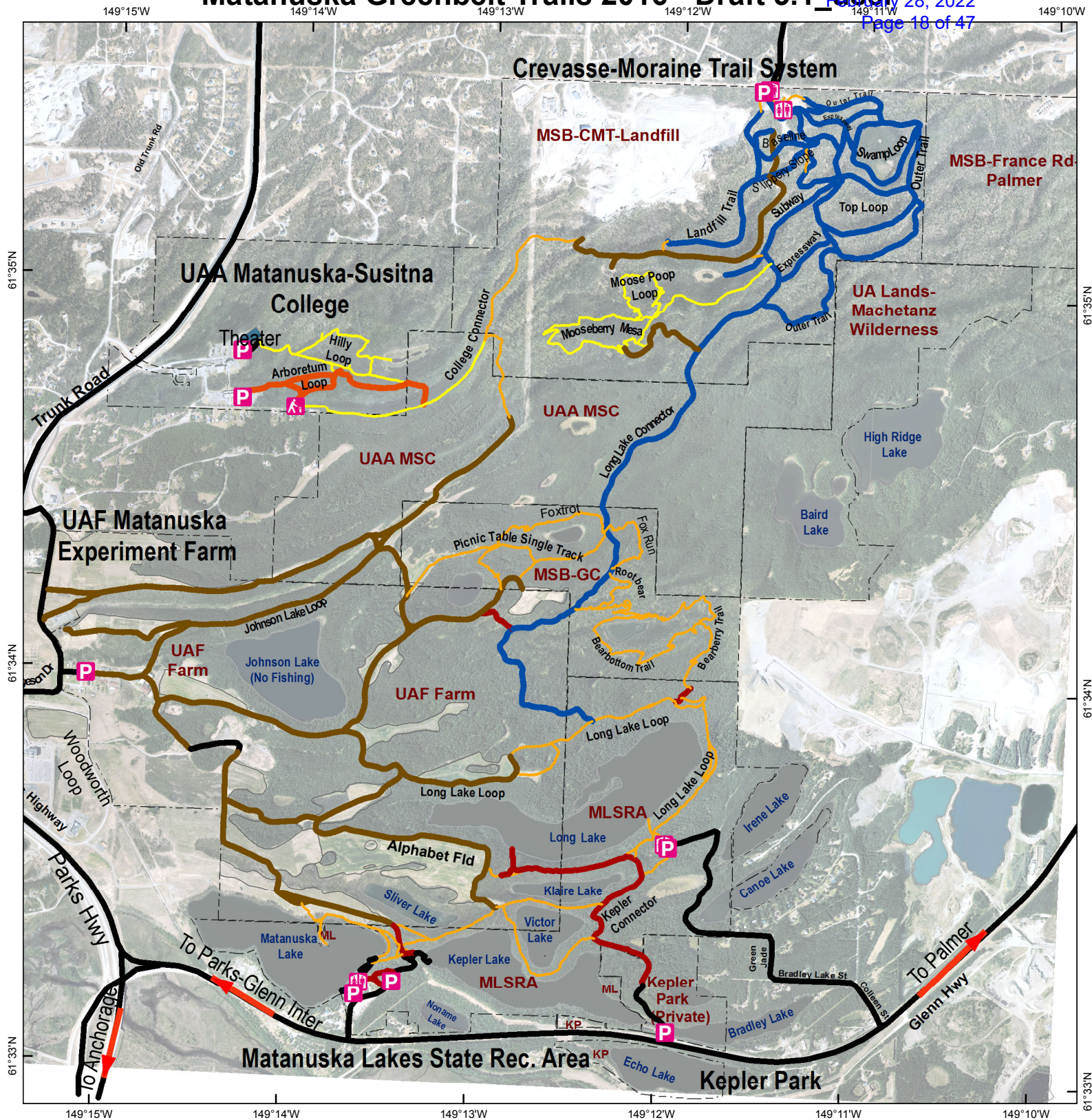
What is it ?

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

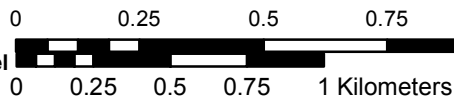
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Legend

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

Version 5.1 2016/01/02

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

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 100th 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

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

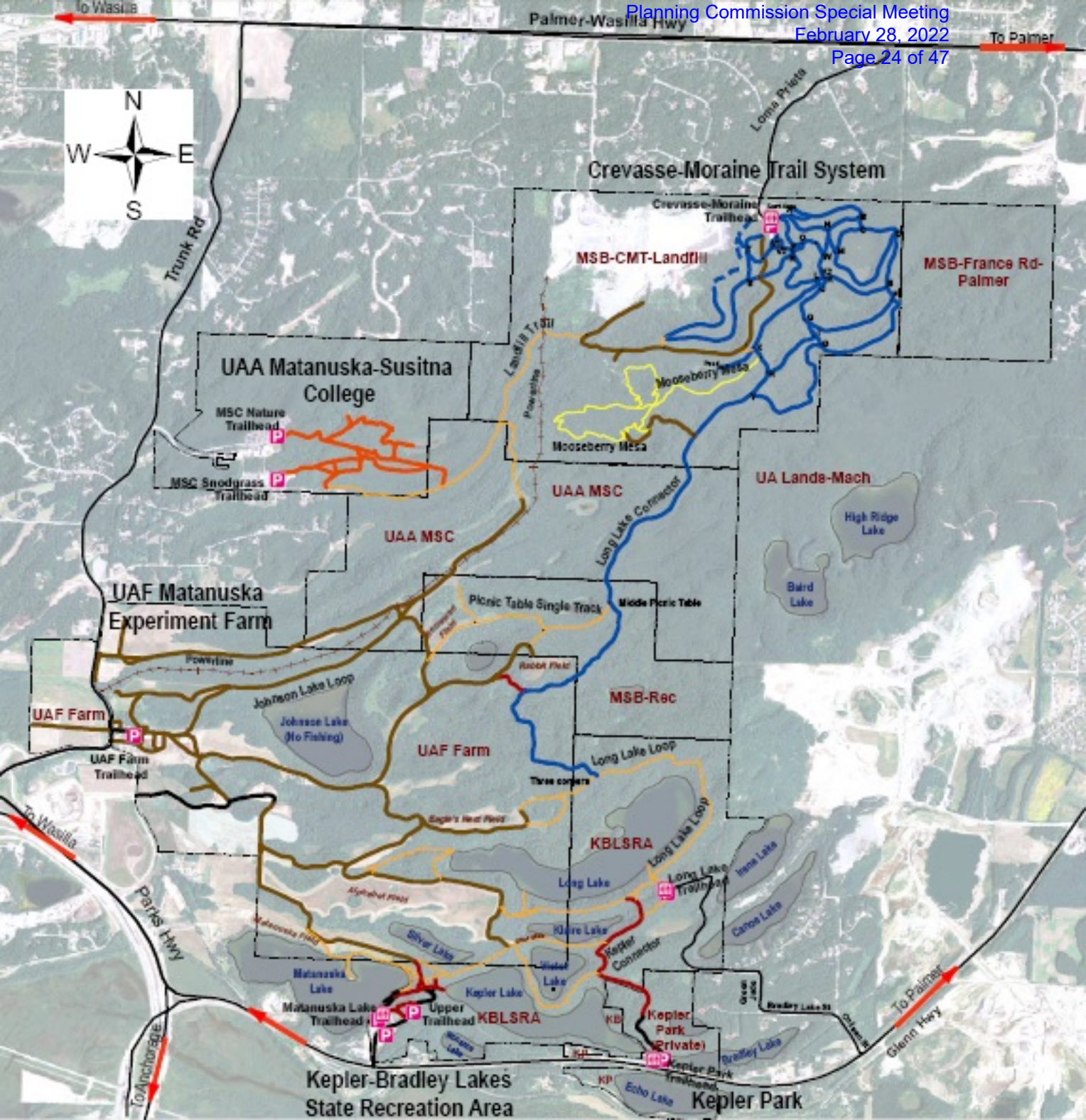
The area is generally too small or hilly for ski-joring or mushing.

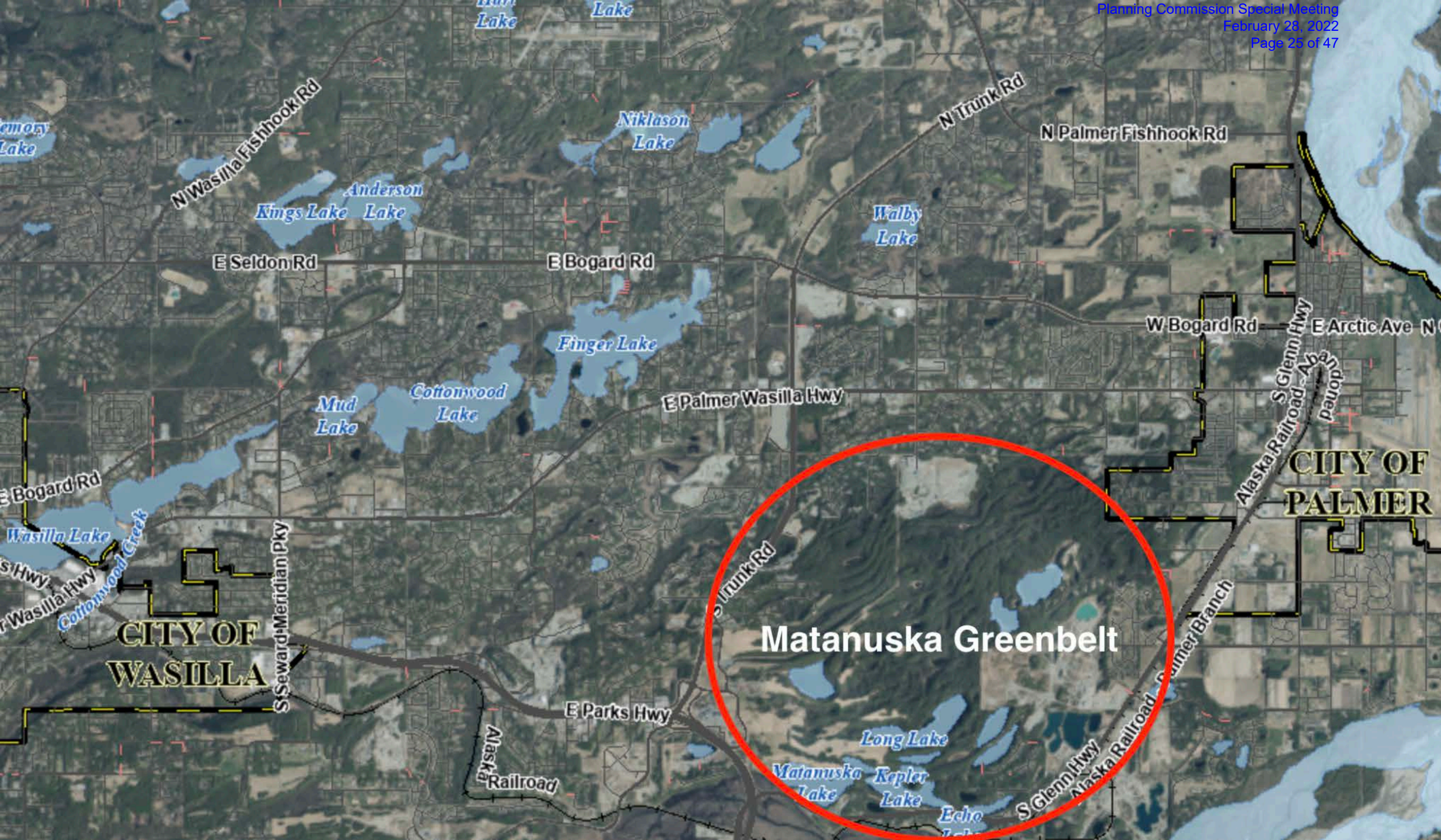
Goal 3: Interagency race permit and map for planning emergency access. Interagency race permits and fees were implemented to be sure that cross-boundary races were permitted by all the relevant owners. In the past, some races may not have had permits for some properties or had inadequate pre-race planning. 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). Machetan 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

**CITY OF
WASILLA**

**CITY OF
PALMER**

MATANUSKA GREENBELT

S17N01E

S17N02E

S GLENN HWY
Inner Branch

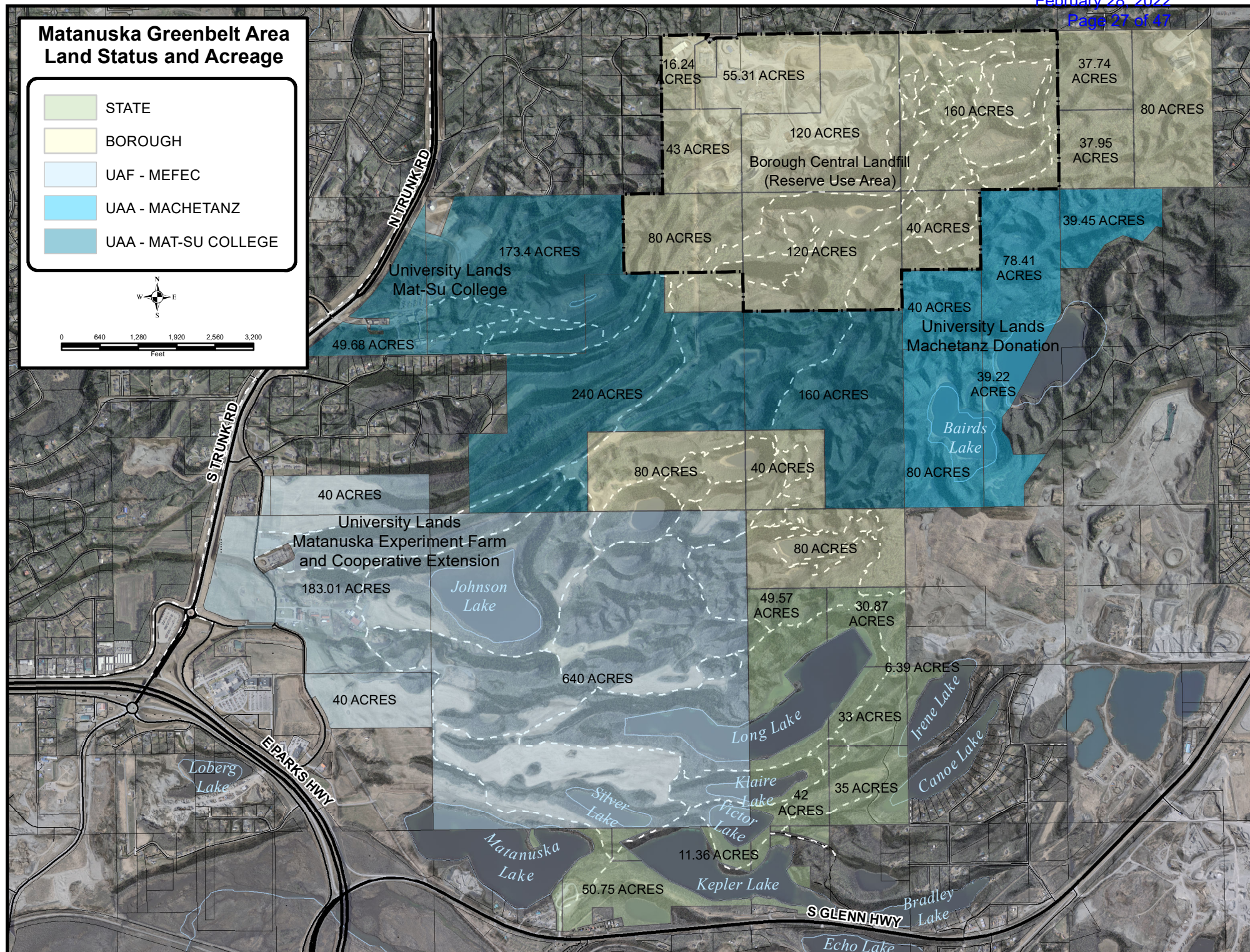
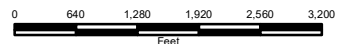
STATE

BOROUGH

UAF - MEFEC

UAA - MACHETANZ

UAA - MAT-SU COLLEGE



2/14/22 Public Hearing Comment on Resolution PC 22-002

Dear Chair Coleen Vague and members of the Mat Su Borough Planning Commission:

The Mat Su Borough (MSB) Planning Commission (PC) Resolution PC 22-02 recommends approval of MSB Ordinance 22-002 which amends 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.

Opposition to this Resolution is widespread throughout the borough from Palmer and Wasilla area residents to Meadow Lakes and on up to the Northern Susitna Valley. To name a few: Matanuska Greenbelt constituency groups, the Mat Su Trails Foundation, the City of Palmer and community councils such as the Talkeetna Community Council, Inc. are opposed with many concerns and legal questions that need clarified.

The Information Memorandum (IM) by Borough staff is the same for this Resolution as the proposed Assembly ordinance. The conclusions to support this Resolution are questionable at best and plain inaccurate.

- The IM states the current 2,000 cubic feet annual exemption is too low. No proof of that has been shown. Where is that statement coming from?
- The IM states that the current code is an unnecessary regulation and expense. Indeed, there is no evidence that the commercial gravel industry in the borough supports this statement or supports the Resolution. In fact, the opposite is true.
The industry, including the Alaska Rock Product Association, has said in two Mat Su Borough Special Assembly Meetings that they are not against the current code for material extraction. They support it.
- The IM seems to think that the amended code with the 20,000 cubic yard annual exempt will lower prices. It is highly unlikely that if this passes that contractors will reduce their prices according to what has been said by the gravel industry in the special meetings.

Subdivision developers and investors want a regulatory and predictable environment. If pits pop up all over the place, this makes business people nervous. If the resolution and the proposed ordinance passes, chaos in the building contracting industry will result with negative impacts to neighborhoods.

A quagmire of Legal Issues: Questions that need Answers, Solidification of Loopholes to be avoided.

I contend that the Planning Commission should not pass this Resolution until these questions are answered.

- Will there be any limits on stockpiled material? Does this ordinance apply to material that would be sold and removed?
- If there is more than one commercial operator on a single site, does each operator get the exemption from a CUP material extraction?
- Let us say that a landowner sells the land with extracted materials stockpiled on it? Will the new owner get to use it without a CUP because they are just taking it and not excavating it?

These are just a few of the questions that come to mind.

In conclusion, borough wide, this would increase 20 times the amount of a gravel pit extraction that could be put next to residences without any public input. Locally here in the Northern Susitna Valley, we have seen many negative impacts from operations 5,000 cu yards or less. This happened because of no CUP in place to try and control the impacts and protect public and private property rights.

The current CUP material extraction code was created in 2005 as a result of flooding and destruction of drinking water wells from a large gravel pit. The current code allows for avoidance and mitigation of negative impacts from a material extraction site.

MSB 17.30.010 Intent and Purpose states the value and importance of natural resource utilization in the borough. But at the same time the CUP process is to promote public health, safety, order, prosperity and general welfare through land use regulations to reduce adverse impacts.

Becky Long

From: [Ron B](#)
To: [MSB Planning Commission](#)
Date: Thursday, February 17, 2022 8:11:35 PM

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

I strongly oppose Assemblyman Mokie Tew's proposal that gravel be allowed to be mined in the Borough without a Conditional Use Permit if less than 20,000 cubic yards is mined 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. Pits would have no requirement to return the property to a usable state, other than that of a hole in the ground.

bax1944@gmail.com

2/14/22 Public Hearing Comment on Resolution PC 22-002

Dear Planning Commission Chair Stafford Glashan and members of the Mat Su Borough Planning Commission:

The Mat Su Borough (MSB) Planning Commission (PC) Resolution PC 22-02 recommends approval of MSB Ordinance 22-002 which amends 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.

Opposition to this Resolution is widespread throughout the borough from Palmer and Wasilla area residents to Meadow Lakes and on up to the Northern Susitna Valley. To name a few: Matanuska Greenbelt constituency groups, the Mat Su Trails Foundation, the City of Palmer and community councils such as the Talkeetna Community Council, Inc. are opposed with many concerns and legal questions that need clarified.

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- The IM seems to think that the amended code with the 20,000 cubic yard annual exempt will lower prices. It is highly unlikely that if this passes that contractors will reduce their prices according to what has been said by the gravel industry in the special meetings.

Subdivision developers and investors want a regulatory and predictable environment. If pits pop up all over the place, this makes business people nervous. If the resolution and the proposed ordinance passes, chaos in the building contracting industry will result with negative impacts to neighborhoods.

A quagmire of Legal Issues: Questions that need Answers, Solidification of Loopholes to be avoided.

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In conclusion, borough wide, this would increase 20 times the amount of a gravel pit extraction that could be put next to residences without any public input. Locally here in the Northern Susitna Valley, we have seen many negative impacts from operations 5,000 cu yards or less. This happened because of no CUP in place to try and control the impacts and protect public and private property rights.

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Becky Long

February 16, 2022

To: Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission

From: John Strassenburgh
PO Box 766
Talkeetna, AK 99676

Re: Proposed increase in CUP threshold for earth materials extraction (PC Reso 22-002)

Dear Chairman Glashan and Planning Commissioners,

I write with respect to Planning Commission Resolution 22-002, which considers the Assembly's proposal to amend MSB 17.30 to raise the Conditional Use Permit annual exemption threshold for earth materials extraction to 20,000 cubic yards (cy) from the existing limit of 2,000 cy.

I urge the PC to recommend to the Assembly that it reject this proposal, for the reasons below.

The Borough is growing rapidly. It is often challenging for the Borough to support this growth but also provide for orderly development in a way that retains the qualities that make the Mat-Su such a great place to live.

There are always going to be tradeoffs, and the current MSB 17.30, including the 2,000 cy exemption threshold, strikes an appropriate balance between facilitating development while at the same time retaining the quality of life that draws people to live and recreate in the Mat-Su.

The Intent and Purpose of the earth materials extraction CUP code, at MSB 17.30.010 (and at MSB 17.30.050 and 060), speaks directly to this point.

People don't want to look at an ugly gravel pit all the time, and so 17.30 has rules about visual screening and setbacks.

People don't want excessive noise, and so 17.30 addresses noise mitigation.

People don't want to pay to fix their roads torn up gravel trucks and so 17.30 provides for collecting the cost of road repair from the operator.

People don't want their water contaminated or its flow altered, and so 17.30 devotes an entire section, 17.30.037, that protects water quality and quantity.

People don't want the commotion of an industrial operation in their neighborhood, and 17.30 addresses that in numerous ways.

People don't want the public safety risk of a parade of gravel trucks barreling by on residential roads, whether it be along a walk-to-school route or near kids riding their bikes.

The list goes on, but suffice it to say, 17.30 addresses the above and more. The code is very important to protecting the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the Borough.

The above public benefits would be lost if this proposal is adopted by the Assembly. We don't know what the public would be getting in return because the IM contains no data, no analysis, no rational thought process or argument to support or justify the change in threshold. The IM ignores the public benefit derived from 17.30 and hangs its hat on the feeble conjecture "2,000 cy is too low." The proposal to increase the threshold is arbitrary, contrary to public and business interests, and is wildly misguided.

Material sites often occur near neighborhoods. 20,000 cy equates roughly to 2000 loaded gravel trucks, and 2000 empty return trips to the pit. It is a lot of truck trips. This level of industrial truck traffic, potentially including huge side dumps, would have significant impact on the surrounding neighborhood; not to mention the risk to water quality and quantity, noise, and commotion and the many other effects of earth materials extraction operations addressed in 17.30. **For all but the largest gravel operations, none of these impacts would be mitigated.**

It is important to note that the Alaska Rock Products Association (AKRPA) supports the CUP regulation. At the January 4, 2022 Assembly work session, Steve Colligan in his closing remarks, said the AKRPA helped develop the existing code and they "embrace" it. He also discussed the importance of the CUP process, saying it was important for "oversight, fair dealing, and communication between the public, the residents, the operators, and the borough."

People have a fundamental right to participate in decisions that affect them, especially when it impacts their day to day lives. The CUP process gives those affected by a project or operation an opportunity to engage and, together with the MSB code, would lessen controversy, lead in many cases to more public acceptance, and foster a more stable business environment.

Opposition to the change is widespread, including trails folks, community councils, AKRPA, the City of Palmer, and the general public.

The current 17.30 CUP process, with its 2,000 cy threshold and CUP process is fulfilling its intended purpose. It doesn't need to be changed.

I urge the Planning Commission to recommend that the Assembly reject its Ordinance 22-002.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

John Strassenburgh

From: [Jeff Lebeque](#)
To: [MSB Planning Commission](#)
Subject: gravel extraction
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 5:18:45 AM

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

Please keep the requirement for permitting any extraction activity to 2000 cubic yards.

Everybody knows that Mokie Tew is a jackass.

From: tamarak@gci.net
To: [MSB Planning Commission](#)
Subject: mining gravel
Date: Thursday, February 17, 2022 3:03:45 PM

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

Mokie Tew's suggestion to change gravel mining rules in the MatSu is a poor idea.

It does not 'love your neighbor'.

It is all about 'me me me'.

Please shut this down.

Amy Henry



February 18th, 2022

Submitted via email to Planning Commission Re: PC Resolution 22-002

To Chair Glashan and members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing on behalf of the Talkeetna Community Council to submit our comments in regards to 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. Our board voted unanimously to write a letter in strong opposition to this resolution at our most recent meeting on February 7th, 2022.

We are against lowering the threshold for a CUP or administrative permit for earth materials extraction for a number of reasons. First of all, the current level of 2,000 cubic yards has not been a problem, and indeed has strong support from within the gravel industry to leave it at its current level.. Secondly, there is no evidence that changing the level to 20,000 cubic yards would have the effect of lowering the price of gravel for the end consumer as stated by proponents of the change. Of course everyone wishes they could purchase things cheaper than they currently are, but no one has been clamoring about the exorbitant cost of gravel in our community. Nor have there been significant complaints from within the industry about the cumbersome regulatory process that currently exists. Finally, our community's economy (like many areas of the Mat Su Borough) is largely dependent on tourism, and any changes to the status quo would have serious negative impacts to the people and businesses who work in that industry.

The CUP is an important process that protects both the community and the contractor. It allows for a process to take place whereas a contractor can lay out his plan for extraction and different stakeholders can weigh in with their concerns about potential impacts. Parties can then get together to discuss ways to mitigate any negative impacts, and ultimately this results in a more predictive and positive outcome for everyone involved. The CUP also protects the environment and ensures that certain minimum environmental standards are followed and adhered to. Lowering the standard would have the effect of drastically increasing conflicts in neighborhoods and communities where extraction would be taking place, as well as having negative impacts to the environment.

Talkeetna Community Council, Inc.
P.O. Box 608, Talkeetna AK 99676

The Talkeetna Community Council strongly urges the Planning Commission to reject resolution PC 22-002, and leave the current exemption limit of 2,000 cubic yards in place. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Korta". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jon Korta

Chair - Talkeetna Community Council, Inc.

jon@talkeetnacouncil.org

(907) 203-2532

From: [Jennifer Anderson](#)
To: [Claudia Sihler](#)
Cc: [Planning](#); [Amy Pettit](#); [Taylor Raftery](#); [Dot](#); [Wes Hoskins](#); [Dawn Vogt](#); [Stephanie Nowers](#)
Subject: Re: What is the Matanuska Greenbelt
Date: Thursday, February 17, 2022 5:24:11 PM
Attachments: [Get Informed, Speak Out, & Influence What Happens in YOUR Mat Su Community! \(5\) \(1\).pdf](#)

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

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> 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.

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

--

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



Virus-free. www.avg.com



Get Informed, Speak Out & Influence Development in YOUR Mat-Su Community!

We know you care, but may be pressed for time, not up to date on what's happening, or are unsure where to start.

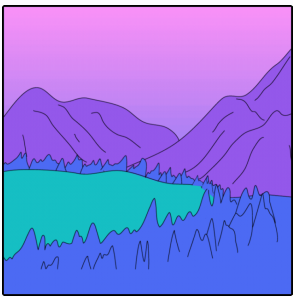
Start here:

Mat Su is the fastest-growing community in the state.

According to 2020 U.S. Census data, there are 107,000 residents in the MSB; an area expected to grow a further 60% by 2045 (Mackintosh, 2018). This is why intentional, sustainable planning and land use are essential for population health!



Urban green space has many benefits.

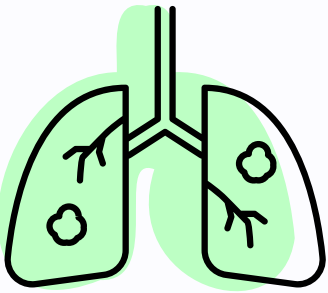


Access to open green space provides opportunities to recreate & socialize, and reduces rates and severity of depression, anxiety, mood disorders, & stress (Douglas & Douglas, 2021). 2020 Census data show that Palmer & Wasilla areas are fast approaching the definition of an urban area- with one or more central locations and populations of 50,000 or >. The MSB Core area has just 262 acres designated as public parks and recreation and 77% of Core Area land is privately owned (Matanuska Susitna Borough Department of Planning & Land Use, 2007).

A gravel pit is proposed at the Matanuska Experiment Farm & Extension Center.

To monetize land holdings, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, which owns the land, is proposing transforming 77 acres of the Farm into a gravel pit.

There are many existing gravel pits in close proximity to the one being proposed. Gravel pits disrupt the water table, often creating new lakes and raising the temperature of adjacent bodies of water. will potentially harm local wells,, degrade air quality (this is a windy area in which debris will get carried in whatever direction the wind blowing), and ravage local habitats, ecosystems, and scenery (Toronto Environmental Alliance, 2008).



Proposed new legislation could limit public input and may drastically alter our community.

On February 7, 2022, the MSB Planning Commission hears testimony on OR 22-003 & OR 22-002, which, if passed, would exempt gravel operations in the MSB from needing a conditional use permit and may lead to a conveyor belt operation across the Crevasse Moraine Trail system.



How to get involved

For the proposed gravel pit:

Contact the University of Alaska Board of Regents Chair, Sheri Buretta, at 907-261-0310 or sburetta@alaska.edu and voice your opinion!

Contact University of Alaska Fairbanks Chancellor, Daniel White, at 907-474-7112 or uaf.chancellor@alaska.edu and advocate for your community.

For proposed legislative changes:

Attend the Planning Commission meeting on February 7, 2022, @ 6 p.m. at the Borough building in Palmer, 350 E Dahlia or via Facebook Live @ <http://www.facebook.com/MatSuBorough>

If unable to attend in person, call 1-855-290-3803 and press 3 to raise your hand to speak., or submit written comments to msb.planning.commission@matsugov.us



"Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is nightmare." – Japanese Proverb

References

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- United States Census Bureau. (2020). QuickFacts Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Alaska.
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/matanuskasusitnaboroughalaska>
- United States Census Bureau, (n.d.) The urban and rural classifications. United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>

About the author

Jen Anderson is a long-time Valley resident, wife, and mother of four children attending public schools. She is currently attending the University of Alaska Anchorage and is slated to graduate in April 2022 with her Master of Social Work degree. Jen is passionate about inclusive community organizing, sustainable land use planning and development, and improving the lives of others through service.

This infographic is part of Jen's Capstone project on land use in her community. You may contact Jen at jranderson2@alaska.edu for more information on how to make a difference.



From: [John Brunton](#)
To: [MSB Planning Commission](#)
Subject: gravel mining permits
Date: Friday, February 18, 2022 9:11:44 AM

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

We are residents of Big Lake and have twice had to defend our property rights regarding gravel pits. Successfully both times. Tews proposal to allow gravel extraction without a permit is bad policy. It should be rejected. The current Borough code requirements work fine. Please do not allow this change to take place.

John and Jackie Brunton
18630 W. Belarde Blvd.
Big Lake, Alaska 99652

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By: Alex Strawn
Introduced: January 17, 2022
Public Hearing: February 28, 2022
Action:

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. PC 22-02

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF AN ORDINANCE 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.

WHEREAS, Currently, MSB 17.30 regulates earth materials extraction activities; and

WHEREAS, extraction of 2,000 cubic yards or less annually on any one parcel does not currently require an administrative or conditional use permit; and

WHEREAS, the annual exemption limit of 2,000 yards is too low; and

WHEREAS, the intent of raising the exemption is to allow the citizens and owners of this resource to use and develop the resource without unnecessary regulation and expense; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, extraction activities which exceed an annual volume of 20,000 cubic yards should be required to obtain a conditional use permit from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission, regardless of duration; and

WHEREAS, earth materials extraction operations that do not extract 20,000 cubic yards annually should be exempt from MSB permitting requirements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission hereby recommends approval of an ordinance 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.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission this __ day of _____, 2022.

STAFFORD GLASHAN, Chair

ATTEST

KAROL RIESE, Planning Clerk

(SEAL)

YES:

NO:

DRAFT