

HANDOUT



Supporting Salmon, Wildlife, and Community

May 14, 2026

To: Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission

Re: Resolution 26-08

Members of the Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission,

I write on behalf of the Susitna River Coalition in support of Resolution 26-08.

The Susitna River Coalition is a nonprofit watershed health organization. We strongly support the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's proposal to classify 16 Borough-owned parcels along the Deshka River as watershed lands.

The Deshka River is a major tributary of the Susitna River and supports some of the most important salmon habitat in the region. The parcels identified in this proposal are associated with mapped cold-water inputs that provide critical thermal refuge for salmon during periods of elevated summer temperatures. These areas play an outsized role in maintaining habitat quality when fish are most vulnerable.

This proposal reflects a clear connection between strong research and effective policy. Recent scientific work has identified specific locations where cold, oxygen-rich groundwater enters the river. These places are disproportionately important to salmon during seasonal stress. Classifying these lands as Watershed Lands is a fantastic way for the Borough to recognize and protect that function with the unique opportunity to preemptively safeguard salmon habitat.

As changing conditions continue to affect water temperature and fish distribution across Southcentral Alaska, protecting groundwater-fed habitats and cold-water refugia will only become more important.

We encourage the Planning Commission to move forward with this classification.

Thank you for your consideration,

Margaret Stern

Margaret Stern
Program and Communications Director, Susitna River Coalition
margaret@susitnarivercoalition.org

Deshka land designation as watershed lands

From FishHound Expeditions <fishhoundexp@gmail.com>

Date Fri 5/15/2026 10:10 AM

To MSB Planning Commission <msb.planning.commission@matsugov.us>

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

MatSu Planning Commission,

Hello, my name is Adam Cuthriell. I own a fishing guide service named FishHound Expeditions. We guide day trips and multi-day trips in the valley and across Alaska. I was fortunate to be a part of the King fishery here and at the Deshka before the current collapse. I also had the good fortune to work with Trout Unlimited and the MatSu Salmon Partnership on the study of the "cold water springs" on the Deshka and was able to see and learn the importance of these natural features and their benefit for the future of our fisheries.

I am asking the commission to listen to the studies and scientists and change the land designation as it is compatible with current land uses. This would help the valleys fisheries as well as help the large recreation economy here in the valley.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Adam Cuthriell
907-382-1802

www.FishHoundExpeditions.com

Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Development Services Division
350 E. Dahlia Avenue
Palmer, Alaska 99645

RECEIVED

MAY 14 2026

Mat-su Borough
Development Services

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KNOWLES FAM TR
5240 E 41ST AVE
ANCHORAGE AK 99508

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission will consider the following:

Paul and Elizabeth Knecht, property owners, have applied for a variance under MSB 17.65 for a parcel located on Middle Caswell Lake, Alaska (Tax ID# 6070000L1051). The property is used for outdoor recreation on 0.23 taxable acres. The owners are proposing a new structure to be built and will be situated as close as 32 feet from Middle Caswell Lake. Per borough code, structures are required to maintain a minimum setback of 75 feet from a waterbody. Approval of this variance would allow the owners to construct the proposed residence within the required setback distance.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing concerning the application on Monday, May 18, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Borough Assembly Chambers located at 350 E. Dahlia Avenue in Palmer. Planning 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.

Application materials may be viewed online at www.matsugov.us by clicking on "All Public Notices & Announcements." For additional information, you may contact Rebecca Skjothaug, Current Planner, by phone: 907-861-7862. Provide written comments by e-mail to rebecca.skjothaug@matsugov.us, or by mail to MSB Development Services Division, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, AK 99645.

The public may provide verbal testimony at the meeting or telephonically by calling 1-855-290-3803. To be eligible to file an appeal from a decision of the Planning Commission, a person must be designated as an interested party. See MSB 15.39.010 for the definition of interested party. The procedures governing appeals to the Board of Adjustment and Appeals are contained in MSB 15.39.010-250, which is available on the Borough home page: www.matsugov.us, in the Borough Clerk's office, and at various libraries within the borough.

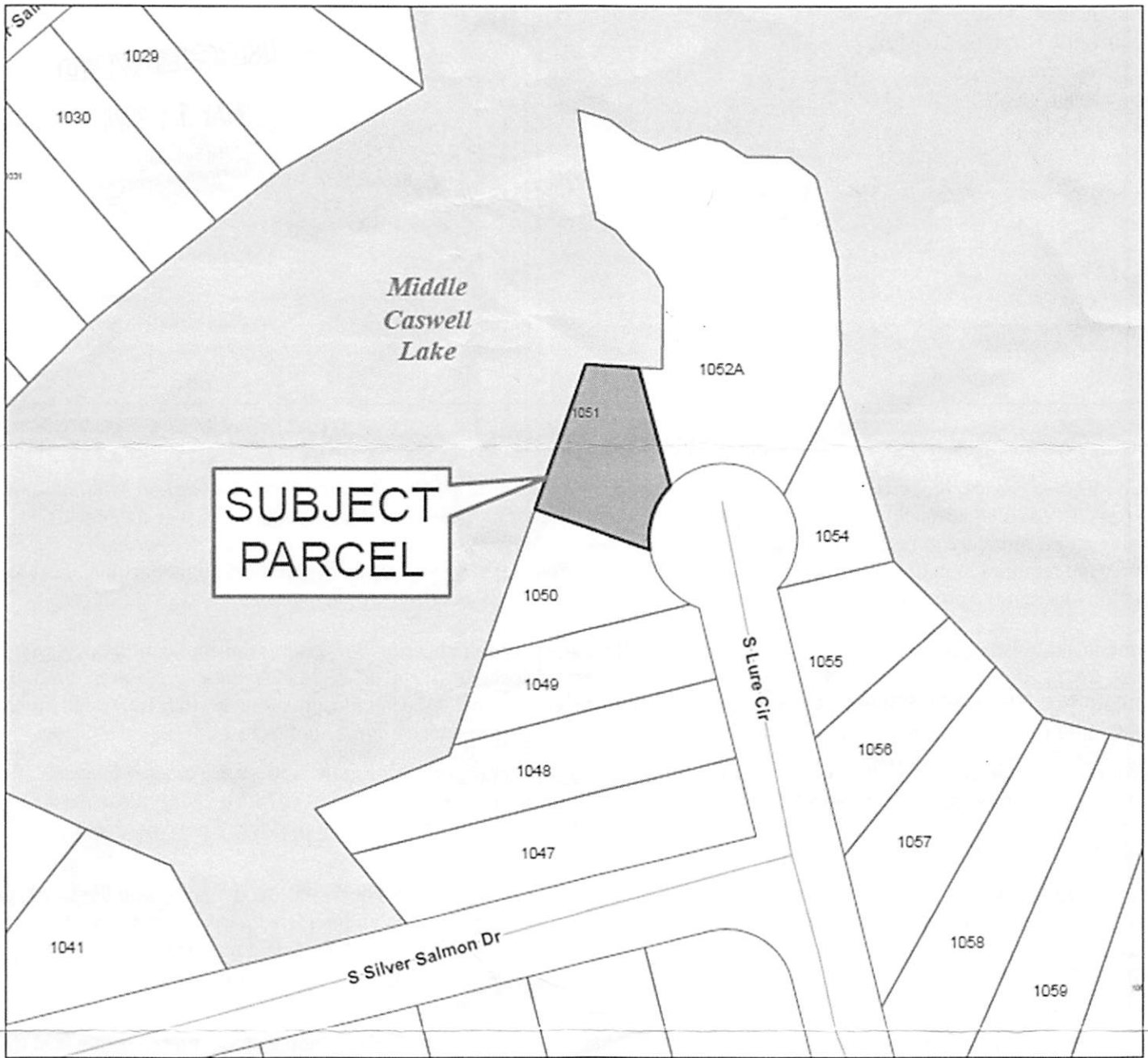
Comments are due on or before May 1, 2026, and will be included in the Planning Commission packet. Please be advised that comments received from the public after that date will not be included in the staff report but will be provided to the Commission at the meeting.

Name: Richard Knowles Mailing Address: 5240 E. 41st Ave Anch., AK 99508

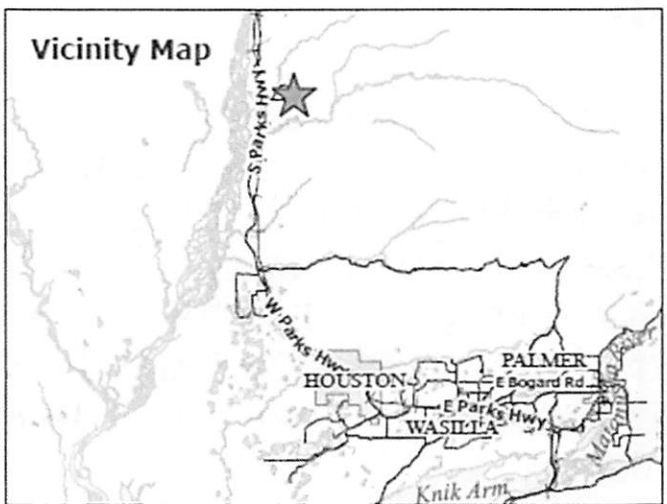
Location/Legal Description of your property: lot 1055, 1056

Comments: I opposed! I think everybody has to follow the rules, why imposed rules & regulations if people are not going to follow it if you approved lot 1051, 1054 will apply next for wawer and other small lots that not large enough for building houses or cabin. I bought an extra lot next to mine so I can follow all the building restrictions as far as the septic, well and cabin distance from the water.

Note: Vicinity Map Located on Reverse Side



6070000L1051



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