

Cayman Reynolds

From: Jerry Birch <jbirch@taigamining.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 1:47 PM
To: Platting
Cc: cayman.reynolds@matsugov.us; Tiffany Richards; Brandon Tucker; Kayla Smith; Jerry Birch
Subject: Comments on proposed Feather Lake Plat located east of Horseshoe Lake by Chris and Miranda Wallstrum

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

March 18, 2026

Dear Members of the Platting Board for the Mat-Su.

My name is Jerry Birch and I am owner of property adjacent to the Wallstrum's. I want to first state that my wife and I are supportive of planned, responsible development that is transparent, follows the rules and notifies the public.

We have concerns with. One concern is the sensitive nature of wetlands, how disturbing them can impact our lakes and water quality, the hydrology, and drainage as well as the impact on wildlife and migratory birds and their nesting sites. Both the Mat-Su Borough Code Title 43 and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have established clear guidelines for how wetlands can be developed responsibly.

The Wallstrum's bought a private lot on Horseshoe Lake adjacent to us that everyone assumed was for them to build on for themselves. Then they built what everyone assumed was a driveway in the fall of 2001, crossing known wetlands with their "driveway" with no wetlands permit. I know this because I had looked at buying this property and had a sit-down meeting with the Corp of Engineers to discuss the Wetland issues and what sort of mitigation was going to be required. This "driveway" that was built **without** a permit is now proposed as an "access" route to Horseshoe Lake for the Development. This was the beginning of the lack of transparency with this project.

There was a July 28, 2023, application for the first phase of development to construct two runways and lake access for airplanes. This was conveniently applied for as disturbed acreage limited to 0.49 acres. By doing so, it was eligible to be applied under a General Permit and thus was less noticed as there was minimal public input into the process. I wasn't aware of any of this proposed action until the equipment was rolling on site.

Then on January 23, 2025, there was a notice for the proposed Development on Horseshoe Lake involving two driveway sections, an airplane/boat launch and six boat ramps. All of this conveniently has a disturbance of 0.49 acres again to allow the use of another General Permit. This phase is titled the Horseshoe Lake Road Driveway Project. Thus, if a developer limits the total project to phases of 0.49 acres, they can discretely proceed using General Permits without looking at the cumulative effects of the whole project and getting minimal public scrutiny. In reviewing the Army Corp of Engineers documents

regarding the project, it appears that the entire development plan was comprehensively planned by the applicants.

If you know the fine print of the permitting system well enough, it seems that the system can be “gamed” or manipulated to slip in a larger development without the complete picture of the development being noticed until far into the process.

To the rest of the Horseshoe community, this appears to be a classic example of how a developer can work a system without having to address the environmental impacts and disclosures until after plat approval. If the plat is approved, then the burden and cost of dealing with the environmental issues fall upon the unsuspecting buyers of these potential lots. This doesn’t seem like a responsible process to serve the public.

I realize that some of my prior comments may not be within the scope of the Platting Board. But some of the concerns that my comments include should probably be incorporated into the process. There should be public notice to affected parties, especially neighbors or neighborhoods. The entire scope of a development project should be disclosed at the beginning of the process so that everyone has a full understanding of what is being proposed to be done. The current method that was used in this process is deceitful by piecing the whole development in small enough sizes to utilize general permits and to avoid public exposure. A responsible development would have been transparent with the local public that will be impacted.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Regards,

Jerry Birch

Cayman Reynolds

HANDOUT # 2

Feather Lake

CASE # 2026-176

MEETING DATE: MARCH 19, 2026

Comments and Questions

To:
Subject:

From: Keith Dobson <keithrdobson@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 8:45 AM

To: Fred Wagner <Frederic.Wagner@matsugov.us>; Cayman Reynolds <cayman.reynolds@matsugov.us>; Tiffany Richards <Tiffany.Richards@matsugov.us>; Kayla Smith <Kayla.Smith@matsugov.us>

Cc: Keith Dobson <keith.r.dobson@gmail.com>; Paul Clark <paul.clark@matsugov.us>; Tina Dobson <tsdobson@gmail.com>

Subject: Feather Lakes Subdivision – Consolidated Community Comments and Questions

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

Dear Members of the Planning and Platting Divisions and Platting Board,

Thank you for your continued time, professionalism, and responsiveness throughout the review of the proposed Feather Lakes Subdivision (301 S Horseshoe Lake Road). I read through the "Revised Platting Board Agenda" for the upcoming meeting on March 19th. I am puzzled why the agenda notes say "7. **There were no objections from the public in response to the Notice of Public Hearing**". Below is a summary of both my communication to your team and the comments I have gathered from my neighbors who have also written or emailed to each of you.

Here is a consolidated summary of **community comments and concerns** gathered from myself and several neighboring property owners. These comments are offered in good faith and in support of **responsible, well-planned development** that protects both private property rights and the long-term health of the Big Lake area.

1. General Position – Support for Responsible Development

There is broad agreement among neighbors that **development is appropriate and expected** in this area. Our concerns are not about stopping development, but rather ensuring that it is carried out with **full transparency, proper sequencing, and careful stewardship of sensitive lands and water systems**.

2. Wetlands, Hydrology, and Lake System Impacts

A primary concern raised consistently is the **sensitive nature of wetlands and their direct connection to surrounding lakes**, including Horseshoe Lake.

Wetlands in this area serve essential functions:

- Water storage and flood control
- Filtration and protection of water quality

- Groundwater recharge
- Habitat for fish, birds, and waterfowl

Community members are concerned that:

- Incremental development activities (driveways, septic systems, building pads, and access improvements) may **collectively alter hydrology over time**
- Changes in drainage patterns could impact **lake levels, water clarity, and nutrient loading**
- Disturbance to wetlands and shoreline areas could affect **wildlife habitat and waterfowl populations**

These concerns reflect both lived experience and observation of **existing changes in water dynamics**, including impacts from prior infrastructure such as the rail bed.

3. Phased Permitting and Deferred Review Concerns

It is now understood that under current Borough practice:

- **Platting approval focuses on lot layout**
- **Permits and environmental compliance are often addressed later** (at recordation or development stages)

While this approach may be procedurally correct, it raises several concerns:

- The public and decision-makers may not have a **complete picture of ultimate buildout impacts at the time of approval**
- There is potential for **cumulative environmental impacts** that are not fully evaluated upfront
- Approval may create an expectation of buildability before **key constraints are fully analyzed or disclosed**

As noted in community discussion, this creates a perception that development may be **approved in phases without full visibility into the end state**, even if technically compliant with code.

4. Permitting Gaps and Scope Limitations

Based on available records and community review:

- Existing USACE authorization (POA-2022-00539) appears to be **limited in scope** to runways and a boat/floatplane ramp (~0.49 acres of wetland impact)
- Additional permits related to **residential development, septic systems, roads, and broader wetland impacts** are not clearly documented in the current platting record

This has raised questions about:

- Whether sufficient documentation exists today to fully understand **future development impacts**
 - Whether approval relies on **future or speculative permitting outcomes**, rather than verified conditions
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5. Observed Construction Practices and Compliance Concerns

Several neighbors have raised concerns based on **direct observation of work already completed on the property**.

Specifically:

- Neighbors did **not observe visible Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) controls**, including measures typically used to manage runoff and sediment
- There was no clear evidence of **erosion control practices or fabric underlayment** being installed in areas where fill was placed
- From visual observation, there is concern that:
 - The **extent of fill and disturbance may exceed what was originally authorized**
 - Work may have **deviated from the plans submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**
 - Runoff and sediment control may not have been implemented consistent with expected standards

We respectfully request:

- Any **available documentation, inspection records, or photos** demonstrating that the work completed to date complied with USACE and Alaska DEC requirements
- Clarification on whether **SWPPP requirements were triggered and, if so, how compliance was verified**

These concerns are not raised lightly. Rather, they go directly to **confidence in future compliance**. If early work appears inconsistent with expected standards, it creates uncertainty about whether **future development phases will be carried out with the same level of care required for sensitive wetland environments**.

Our intent is not to assume wrongdoing, but to request **verification and transparency**, so that the community can have confidence that:

- Work completed to date was done properly
 - Future work will follow all applicable guidelines
 - Wetlands and adjacent lakes will be protected as intended under federal and state regulations
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6. Public Notification and Transparency

Several neighbors expressed concern that:

- **Initial development activity occurred before many residents were aware** of the broader subdivision plan
- There may have been **limited or unclear public notice** regarding permitting actions or scope changes
- Community members are seeking a process that ensures **early awareness and meaningful participation**

There is strong interest in maintaining a process where **public input occurs before significant irreversible actions take place.**

7. Cumulative Development and “Scope Creep”

A recurring concern is that:

- Individual elements of development (roads, docks, access, septic, etc.) may appear minor when viewed separately
- However, when combined, they may result in a **much larger overall impact than initially presented**

This has been described by neighbors as a concern around **“scope creep”**, where the final use and intensity of development may differ from early-stage understanding.

8. Lake Naming Concern (Community Identity)

A specific question raised by multiple neighbors is:

Why is the developer being allowed to assign a new name (“Feather Lake”) to a lake that has long been known locally by a different name?

- This lake has an established identity within the community
 - Renaming it through the subdivision process creates confusion and raises concerns about **historical and local recognition**
 - Clarification is requested regarding:
 - The authority to name or rename a lake
 - Whether community input is considered in that process
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9. Request for Clarification and Consideration

In light of the above, we respectfully request:

1. Clarification on how **wetlands and hydrology impacts are considered holistically**, even if permitting occurs later
 2. Confirmation of what **environmental documentation is currently verified vs. deferred**
 3. Consideration of how to ensure **transparency for future buyers and neighbors** regarding environmental constraints
 4. Clarification regarding the **naming of the lake** and the process by which that name was determined
 5. Confirmation and documentation of **compliance with erosion control, SWPPP (if applicable), and approved USACE plans for work already completed**
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Closing

We appreciate the structure and intent of the Borough's subdivision process and understand the distinction between plat approval and later permitting stages. At the same time, we believe it is reasonable for both the Board and the public to seek a **clear and complete understanding of long-term impacts** at the time key decisions are made.

Our goal is simple:

To support development that reflects **good stewardship, transparency, and long-term thinking**, ensuring that Big Lake remains the special place that we all value.

Thank you for your time and for considering these comments as part of the public record.

Respectfully,

Keith Dobson

(on behalf of myself and neighboring property owners)