

Fish Creek Management Plan Update

Public Workshop and Draft Plan Review

MTA Building - Palmer, Alaska

March 20, 2008

Agenda

- Project overview
- Chapter 3 review and discussion
- Chapter 2 review and discussion
- Wrap-up and where the plan goes from here

Comments and questions by category (responses to some comments shown in parenthesis)

Overall Level of Development

- Are there better places in the Borough for development than the Fish Creek area? (Willow Sub-basin plan identified many areas for conservation, a few areas, including Fish Creek, for development)
- Clarification that there will be no retroactive alteration of existing lands (e.g. easements will not be applied if they don't already exist)
- The need for this plan update is appreciated but there does not necessarily need to be development in this area.
- One of the alternatives that should be considered is that there should be no development, all the development plans should be taken down (that is not the conclusion of the draft plan)
- How has this plan deviated from the previous (1983) plan? (substantially less focus on commercial agriculture)

Agriculture

- The State and Borough need to work to make agricultural rules and covenants consistent, especially borough policies. Three different existing rules for both State and Borough. (this will be clarified in the final plan)
- Is agriculture a viable possibility in the area? What makes that the case? (yes, several areas of Class II/III soils that were described as similar to Palmer area and better than those at Point MacKenzie.)

Cultural and Recreation Resources

- There should be reference to and evaluation of cultural resources of the area in the plan (this happens prior to land sale, timber harvest, etc.)
- Has there been talk of designating Fish Creek as a legislatively protected area? Will this plan bring increased boat traffic to the area? (not needed/not an issue; Fish Creek has very limited fish and recreation values)
- Mention of caribou should be removed from the plan, they no longer populate the area (agree)

Roads, Trails, Access

- There should be trail documentation in the area (this happens prior to any land sale)
- Is there going to be any infrastructure development prior to development? (yes, for example, roads are needed as a condition of agriculture or settlement land sales)

- What criteria determine feasibility for access and use in the area? (State and Borough regulations require access prior to subdivisions or agricultural sales)
- Is there guarantee of public access to waterways? Will this impact other public access areas? (see plan buffer policy)

Settlement Areas – Planned and Existing

- Need for covenants on land sales, e.g. junk cars (this can be accomplished through MSB land use policy and future homeowner associations)
- Effort needed to protect the rural character of both Flathorn and Lakes Units
- Benefits of property taxes questioned for residents of Flathorn Lake.
- Some residents in the Lakes Unit appreciate the intent and need of the management guidelines for the plan.

Timber Harvest

- One thought for the area is that the entire area could be managed for timber harvest prior to development (plan recommendation is to use the Lower Fish Creek Management Unit for small lot agriculture; this option would be adversely affected by large scale commercial timber harvest)
- Are the Fish Creek timber sales going to be similar to those at the end of Burma Rd.? (no, Burma Rd. was done as fire prevention with the approval of all affected landowners)
- Question the benefit to chipping in the Fish Creek area?
- In the Flathorn Lake area, what does “limited” timber sales mean? (agree - this should be clarified in the plan; intent is that any possible timber sales be limited to a small area at the eastern end of the management unit, well away from settlement areas)
- How would the timber in Homestead Creek be accessed? (this would occur through the development of timber operations further to the east, which ultimately allow for a road to reach west to the Homestead Creek area.)
- One of the lessons from Point MacKenzie is that managed forestry doesn’t preclude other uses. The area is now prime moose habitat. (agree)
- One benefit that timber development could provide is the access and infrastructure development prior to land sales.
- In the sections that discuss settlement forestry access wording should be changed to *will* not *may*.

Next Steps

- Comments accepted through April 14th
- Plan can be view at website, www.agnewbeck.com, comments can be sent to tomas@agnewbeck.com.
- Repost plan and notification of Borough planning meetings will be sent out
- Borough Approval process
 - Parks, Recreation & Trails Committee
 - Real Property Assets Management Committee
 - MSB Planning Commission
 - MSB Assembly
- State approval process
 - Intent to approve posted concurrently with MSB Assembly approval
- Planning approval efforts happening jointly