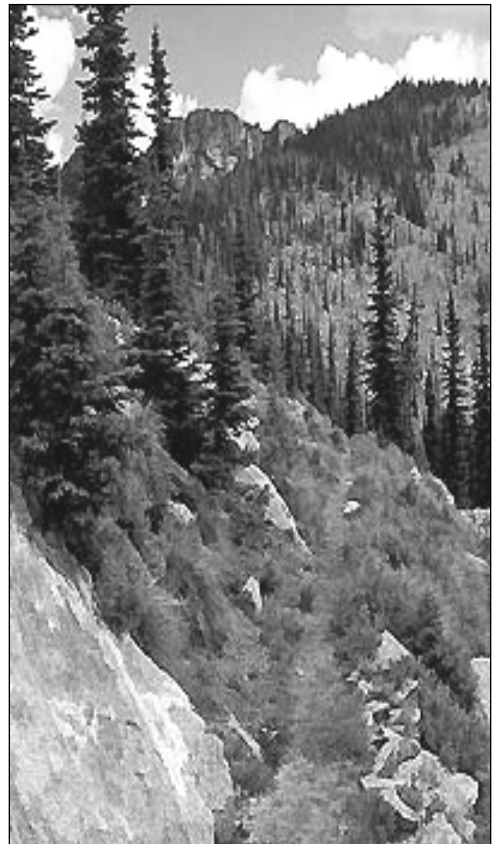




## **Matanuska-Susitna Borough RECREATIONAL TRAILS PLAN**

*Adopted March 2000*

*Updated August 2016 to include amendments approved  
2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010*



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH  
**RECREATIONAL TRAIL PLAN**  
**Adopted June 2017**  
Amended 2004, 2006 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2016

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Purpose and Limitations**

This plan supplements the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's Trails Element of the Public Facilities Plan from 1984 (and amended in 1987). It evaluates the needs and desires of Borough residents and landowners with regard to recreational trail development. It is the intent of this plan to provide guidance for trail preservation, acquisition, development and management.

The main focus of this plan is the study of the primitive, unpaved, backcountry recreational trails and related issues throughout the Borough. The Borough recognizes that separated paths and paved trails are an important element of the overall trails system, however, extensive federal transportation funding, right-of-way acquisition methods, and appropriate planning processes are already in place for separated paths through the Borough's capital improvement program process. This is not the case with primitive, backcountry trails, hence this plan focuses upon these less known, and under funded, primitive trails.

It is not the purpose of this plan to provide a mechanism for property owners to develop access to their remote properties (although this is may be a side benefit of many trail development efforts). Nor is it the intent to provide miners and other businesses access to natural resource development sites. These and other transportation needs are sufficiently different from the recreation needs and desires of Borough residents that they would be more appropriately dealt with in the long range transportation plan and other transportation planning processes and hence are not included within the Trails Plan.

For many years local trail advocates and outdoor recreationalists have looked to the Borough for assistance with trail development and preservation. Maintaining a current Recreational Trails Plan is a critical step in providing that assistance.

The Borough has identified a number of more specific purposes of the trails plan including:

- To evaluate public demand for trails and trail development.
- To identify and map appropriate principal recreational trail corridors in the Borough.
- To set priorities for trail development including easement acquisition.
- To identify and analyze major trail related issues hindering trail development or preservation and offer possible solutions for successful resolution.
- To provide guidance for Borough and agency staff on trail related development issues.
- To establish management guidelines for trails in need of such restrictions. To identify funding sources which are available for trail acquisition, planning, design, construction, maintenance and promotion

- To improve cost sharing and cooperation between government agencies and private groups to accomplish the trail plan goal.
- To develop a broad based public support for both trail planning and implementation through an informed and involved public.

There are some things the trails plan does not do or is not capable of doing. These limitations include:

- The trails plan cannot change constitutionally protected private property rights and does not give the Borough legal authority to simply designate trails that cross private property as legal public access. The court system is the arbiter of such decisions, not the Borough.
- The trails plan cannot, by its mere adoption, achieve success. Successful implementation of the trails plan will require ongoing effort, adequate funding and many years in order to achieve success.
- The trails plan cannot succeed without the efforts and support of local community groups. Community support for trail projects has often been the deciding factor in whether landowners are willing to co-operate with the Borough and therefore it is important the trails plan reflects community desires.

### **Planning Process**

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Recreational Trails Plan was developed through an extensive planning and public involvement process from 1995 through 1998. Development of the Plan was guided by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Trails Committee, a citizen's advisory group responsible for providing guidance to the Borough Assembly and Borough staff on trail issues. The Trails Committee was composed of seven members appointed by the Borough Mayor and confirmed by the Borough Assembly. Each member serves a two year term.

The planning effort began in the fall of 1995. Initial work focused on finding out what people wanted. A survey was mailed to 600 randomly selected property owners to determine community attitudes toward trails development and trail issues. Over 100 responses were received and served to guide the Trails Committee in their decision making. Meanwhile, background information was compiled by Borough staff.

The next step was to determine the goal of the plan and the purpose of the plan. The Trails Committee identified issues which have been, or are anticipated to be, a hindrance to achieving the identified goal. The issues helped guide the research and discussion, eventually culminating in the enclosed recommendations.

Trails and proposed trail projects to be included within the trails plan were nominated by various organizations, Borough staff and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Trails Committee. Organizations which were requested to submit trail project nominations are listed in the

appendix. The Trails Committee reviewed the nominations and prioritized the projects that were to be included within the trails plan.

Despite the efforts of the Trails Committee to enlist the involvement of other groups in the trails planning process, there was little initial response to the request for nominations. Various individuals and business owners were also contacted during the planning process and their expertise was extremely helpful in providing information.

A strawman trails plan was developed with the understanding that once various groups and individuals could see an example of the projects and policies set forth in the plan they would be more informed and able to propose recommended changes and additions to the plan. Response to the publication of this first draft of the trail plan was tremendous. Over 700 copies of the first draft were distributed to individuals requesting a copy. Some of the Borough's community councils had organized their own trails committee to address the issues raised by the trails plan and submit comments.

Numerous comments were received from individuals and organizations and the trails committee spent the following year reviewing and revising the trail plan. In March of 1998 the much revised MSB Recreational Trails Plan; Final Public Review Draft was released for a sixty day comment period. The trails committee spent the summer of 1998 reviewing the public comments and refining the plan prior to submitting it to the Planning Commission and Assembly for adoption.

### **Adoption and Amendments**

The MSB Recreational Trails Plan was adopted on March 21, 2000 by the Borough Assembly.

The plan has been amended with additional trails added in 2004, 2006 and 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2016.

In addition, policies regarding Trail Signing Standards and the Trail Care Program have been added to aid in implementing the plan.

## GOALS, POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

Trails goals, policies, and objectives describe what members of the community desire for a future trail system program. The following goals, policies, and objectives reflect the Borough's future trail system and plan for developing the system.

### **Overall Goal of Trails Plan**

The overall goal is the basis for the recommendations within this trails plan. It is an estimation of the desires of the borough residents based on public input throughout the planning process. All other goals are subservient to this primary goal.

*Within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough there exists awe inspiring landscapes and world class recreational opportunities. Many of these areas and recreational opportunities require trails for access and enhanced enjoyment. It is the desire of the borough to provide exciting, trail recreation opportunities for visitors and residents alike in conjunction with the desires of its populace.*

*The local desire and initiative for trail development and maintenance already exists and is producing significant results. It is not the Borough's desire to usurp these trail development efforts but rather to complement these efforts and provide local government support.*

*The Borough should work in cooperation with community councils, cities, the State of Alaska, businesses, property owners and trail advocacy groups to provide a system of trails throughout the Borough to enable the public to engage in outdoor recreation activities and to ensure future preservation of trails. The Borough should work to coordinate the numerous local trail development efforts into an effective and efficient recreational trail system and preserve the existing popular recreational trails. Trail facilities are to provide for the ever increasing outdoor recreation needs of the resident population and recreation industry.*

### **Primitive Trails**

This goal seeks to provide a network of recreational trails for the users of primitive non-urban trails. Primitive trails are trails which have an unpaved surface as differentiated from paved or otherwise hardened trail surfaces for bicyclists and pedestrians. Primitive trails are extensively established but largely undedicated throughout the Borough. A major focus of this plan is the development and dedication of primitive trail facilities.

Goal: Provide trail facilities for all varieties of primitive trail users, including: snowmachiners, dog mushers, skiers, hikers, alpine climbers, mountain bikers, equestrians and all terrain vehicle enthusiasts.

- Objective: Work with public and private landowners to obtain more dedicated trails.
- Goal: Promote the development of a regionally integrated network of trails, connecting communities as hubs of the trails system.
- Policy: Community hubs should be designed with extensive community input and the proposed designs should be reviewed by the respective community councils.
- Objective: Enable community residents to design community hubs that provide them with convenient access to the regional trail system.
- Objective: Rely on the local knowledge of residents, trail users, businesses and landowners to design community hubs that minimize potential conflicts.
- Policy: Design community hubs such that food, gas and lodging is conveniently available to recreationalists.
- Objective: Enable community businesses to economically benefit from the trail system.

### **Separated Paths**

This goal seeks to provide a network of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles that will provide alternate transportation between residential areas and activity centers; between communities within the Borough; and to provide connections between these and the recreational trail systems.

- Goal: Provide facilities for pedestrians and bicycles along all arterial roads within the Borough.
- Policy: Work with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT/PF) and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Capital Projects Department (MSB/CP) to include separated paths on all arterial and major road connector projects within the Borough.
- Objective: Develop a regionally coordinated network of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles which connect residential areas to activity centers such as schools and commercial sites.
- Objective: Develop a regionally coordinated network of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles which connect communities within the Borough.
- Objective: Where feasible, provide connection between primitive trails and separated paths.



## Legal Access

The legal access goals address the lack of clearly defined reservations for public access along commonly used trails within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB).

- Goal: Protect reasonable/practical public access to public lands and public recreational resources.
- Goal: Establish legal reservations of public access which protect recreational use for all recreational trails identified in the trail plan.
- Policy: Work with landowners to obtain legal protection of public trail access for regionally significant trails by pursuing voluntary dedication of trail easements, right-of-way permits, cooperative agreements or other forms of written permission.
- Objective: Maintain public access prior to the subdivision process while providing the landowner with a number of dedication options.
- Policy: When trails included in the trails plan lie on land undergoing the subdivision process, acquisition of public right-of-way for the trail shall be researched as part of the subdivision process. At the time of the initial subdivision design, trail alignment may be adjusted, if necessary, to coincide with property boundaries in order to minimize any negative effect on subdivision design and efficient use of the property. The proposed relocation must maintain the continuity, safety and utility of the trail.
- Objective: Obtain legal reservations for trail use cost-effectively and in a manner least intrusive to existing and future landowners.
- Objective: Incorporate a review of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Recreational Trail Plan into the Matanuska Susitna Borough Platting Division's review process.
- Policy: As grants and funding become available for purchasing trail easements from private landowners pursue such acquisitions on a prioritized basis following the trail priorities established by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Trails Committee for the regionally significant trails identified in this plan. Given the relatively little grant monies available for easement acquisition, those grants which can fund either trail easement acquisition or trail development should be used for trail easement acquisition.
- Objective: Acquire easements for the most important recreational trails in a manner which most increases the recreational opportunities in the near future.

Policy: Work with the Borough Division of Land Management, the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Lands Mining and Water (AKDNR/DLMW) to ensure that when trails which are included in the MSB Recreational Trail Plan lie on public land proposed for disposal, the trail will be retained in public ownership or an easement for trail use will be reserved.

Objective: Avoid difficult and expensive acquisition of private property for trail easements by preventing important trails from being sold.

Policy: Trailhead areas for parking, public service and trail access shall be pursued for acquisition and public dedication when a particular trail warrants the need. When practical, trailheads should be located adjacent to the road with the highest level of use in the vicinity of the trail to provide easier access for maintenance, greater visibility for non-local recreationalists and greater visibility for parked vehicular safety.

Objective: Work cooperatively with the ADOT/PF, other agencies and private landowners to acquire legal reservations for trailheads to suit public need.

Objective: Seek state assistance to develop and maintain adequate trailhead facilities along state roads and highways.

### **Effects on Private Property**

The following goals address the concerns expressed by some property owners over possible negative impacts of nearby trails. Some negative impacts specifically mentioned were: increased noise; loss of privacy; and increased crime and vandalism.

Goal: Minimize the negative effects of proposed trails to private property owners.

Policy: Select trails for inclusion in the trails plan that are located mostly on public lands and retain sufficiently large buffers of public land around trails if the public land will be sold.

Objective: Avoid private property as a means of avoiding conflicts with private property owners.

Policy: Consider intensity of development of private lands that are crossed by trails; more developed, small parcels of private land should generally be avoided.

Objective: Include an evaluation of the potential negative effects on private property and private development as a criteria when evaluating proposed trails and alternate routes.

- Policy: Motorized or multiple use trails should generally have a larger buffer and less dense adjacent private development than non-motorized trails.
- Objective: Consider trail use when evaluating effect on surrounding private lands. There is a higher tolerance for non-motorized trails because of fewer noise and safety concerns.
- Policy: Work with community councils and local groups to determine whether trail proposals are acceptable to the community.
- Objective: Ensure that those most knowledgeable of the trails and community sentiments are involved in trail planning and development.
- Policy: Provide signage and more intense management of trails in areas where trails cross private lands. This could include such things as posting speed limits, and designing and improving the trail in ways that reduce noise on adjacent parcels.
- Objective: Minimize negative effects on surrounding private property owners by modifying trail user behavior through signage and trail design.
- Policy: Encourage trail relocation whenever an equal or better alternate route is readily available on public lands.
- Objective: Avoid private property as a means of avoiding conflicts with private property owners.

### **Liability Related to Trails**

These goals address liability issues related to trails and injured trail users. The issues addressed include: possible private property owner liability related to trail easements; possible Borough or State liability related to trail easements; possible liability of organizations which accept responsibility for trail maintenance; and possible liability related to co-use easements (such as trail and utility easements).

- Goal: Work towards minimizing trail liability within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough trail system.
- Policy: Encourage trail user groups to sign maintenance agreements to perform routine maintenance and monitoring of trail conditions. The agreement should strongly emphasize careful wording to minimize liability to the Borough.
- Objective: The Borough must exercise certain care to ensure trails are maintained and are reasonably safe for their intended uses in order to minimize liability potential.

- Policy: Educational signage about trail hazards and trail etiquette should be installed at trailheads. Signage should include posted speed limits on motorized trails near populated areas.
- Objective: Increase public awareness of potential trail hazards or hazardous practices to minimize liability.
- Policy: Design of proposed trail improvements should be reviewed by Borough Parks and Recreation Staff to address safety.
- Objective: New trails and improvements to existing trails should be designed to avoid unnecessary hazards and minimize liability.
- Policy: Motorized trails should generally avoid roads and vehicular traffic and non-motorized trails, except when necessary for short distances and road crossings.
- Objective: Avoid potentially dangerous interactions of motorized trail vehicles and highway vehicles.

### **Management Recommendations**

As trail use increases a common occurrence is for conflicts between user groups to emerge and trail degradation to occur. This goal attempts to address this problem.

- Goal: Minimize conflicts between different types of trail users and avoid trail degradation due to improper use.
- Policy: Work with public and private landowners to obtain more dedicated trails.
- Objective: Develop sufficient recreational opportunities for all user groups so that groups need not rely on trails ill suited for their trail use.
- Policy: Develop and distribute a Trail Users 'Rules of the Trails' brochure to promote non-destructive use of trails and eliminate user conflicts.
- Policy: Install signage promoting 'rules of the trails' at trailheads and along trails.
- Objective: Promote responsible trail use by fostering peer pressure amongst user groups.
- Policy: Establish a complaint/trail user conflict 'hotline' to identify and resolve problems of trail degradation and/or conflicts between trail user groups on any given trail.
- Objective: Prevent degradation of trails and decreased enjoyment of trails that are more appropriately suited for a specific trail user group(s).

Policy: Establish trail opening and closing dates and a hotline for those trails that are subject to erosion from trail use during periods of inadequate snow cover, heavy rainfall or spring runoff.

Objective: Prevent trail degradation resulting from use of trails at inappropriate times.

### **Trail Information**

The following goals address the lack of information regarding location and legality of trails within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Goal: Increase public knowledge of legal public trails within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Policy: Provide more detailed trip planning information about trails within the borough, with maps, and guidebooks including accurate descriptions of all legally dedicated public recreation trails regardless of management authority (State, Borough or Federal government).

Objective: Promote legal alternatives to the numerous trespass trails within the Borough.

Objective: Promote recreational opportunities to residents and visitors.

Policy: Decrease the likelihood of recreationalists getting lost by providing adequate marking along popular routes and signage at junctions and intersections with other trails. Work with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation to develop uniform signage for trails.

Objective: Create a more ‘user friendly’ recreation experience for those without previous firsthand knowledge of the trail.

Objective: Reduce the likelihood of inadvertent trespass by installing signage near areas of private property directing people to stay on the trail.

Policy: Install signage promoting “rules of the trails’ at trailheads and along trails.

Objective: Promote responsible trail use by fostering peer pressure amongst user groups.

### **Evolution of Trails into Roadways**

The following goals address the potential evolution of recreational trails into vehicular roadways. This has been at times called a ‘natural’ evolution of the Borough’s transportation system. However, the original trail use is often usurped, since un-licensed motorized non-highway vehicles may not be allowed on a maintained roadway. Even trail uses that might have been allowed on a maintained roadway are often displaced as traffic volume increases to a level where

dual use is not safe or practical. Additionally, many communities are supportive of and willing to work towards the dedication of trails in locations and along routes where the community opposes the establishment of a road.

Goal: Prevent recreational trails from being replaced by roads.

Policy: If a public or private entity upgrades a recreational trail for highway vehicular travel, work to dedicate an easement of sufficient width to accommodate both uses along the same route or work to identify an alternative recreational trail route.

Objective: Provide for recreational trail access when apparent a route will be competing with necessary transportation uses.

Policy: Establish standard trail easement language to restrict trail use to travel modes supported by the community if the community clearly intends for an area to be roadless.

Objective: Ensure that the community's efforts to develop a recreational trail do not merely 'pave the way' for road development, thereby displacing those users whose efforts resulted in dedicating public access along a given route.

Objective: Ensure that communities, property owners, and other groups supportive of developing only recreational trail access to wilderness areas do not inadvertently ease the development of a road.

### **Trail Funding**

The following goals address funding for trail right-of-way acquisition, trail development, and trail maintenance. Funding for trail development addressed by this plan includes: primitive trails; trails that are mostly outside of existing right-of-ways; trails that access remote/primitive areas; and trails that allow motorized use. These types of trail development do not have any consistent source of funding. In order to adequately deal with this significant obstacle to trail development it is necessary to both minimize trail development and maintenance costs to the Borough and identify sources of funding for the unavoidable costs of trail development.

Goal: Minimize trail development and maintenance costs.

Policy: Use existing public and private recreation facilities as trailheads whenever feasible.

Objective: Avoid the expense of purchasing private lands for trailheads, and creating redundant parking areas and trail heads.

Policy: Promote an adopt-a-trail program.

- Objective: Encourage volunteer efforts for trail development and maintenance.
- Policy: Rely on acquisition of trail easements through the subdivision process as the least cost option for obtaining trail easements.
- Objective: Time easement acquisition so that the services of the surveyor, and title agency are already employed. Hence, the trail easement requires the least additional cost overall.
- Goal: Develop funding sources for unavoidable trail development costs without passing the burden directly on to the borough taxpayer.
- Policy: The Borough should actively pursue all applicable grant funding for trail easement acquisition, trail development, and maintenance on a prioritized basis.
- Objective: Acquire needed funding for trails without expending Borough revenues.
- Policy: Focus the Borough's initial trail development efforts on right-of-way acquisition/preservation.
- Objective: Obtain rights-of-way at the earliest, most feasible, and generally least expensive phase.
- Objective: Enlist borough staff where volunteers and public trail advocacy groups are most in need of assistance.
- Policy: Use the Land Management Fund on an as available basis, to finance trail development and easement acquisition.
- Objective: Use funding received from the sale of public lands to recoup some of the outdoor recreation opportunities lost with each sale of public land.
- Policy: Promote voluntary donations to the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation for trail maintenance and development through sales of "I \$UPPORT TRAILS" or "I LOVE TRAILS" auto stickers.
- Objective: Allow donors the opportunity to be recognized for their charitable contributions and encourage others to do so.
- Policy: Provide for funding for a Trails Coordinator position.
- Objective: Provide for active assistance in trail creation, trails plan implementation and trail management.

## BACKGROUND

### Topography

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is a region with spectacular scenery and an abundance of wildlife attracting visitors from around the world. The boundaries of the Borough were drawn in 1964 to roughly enclose the drainage of the Matanuska and Susitna Rivers. The Borough is slightly larger than the State of West Virginia. The mountainous topography has constrained the Borough's relatively young road system to the valleys of the Matanuska and Susitna Rivers. Similarly, these mountain ranges are impediments to trail development but also provide incredible scenery and challenging terrain desired by many trail users. Three major mountain ranges lie partly or entirely within the borough; the Alaska Range, the Talkeetna Mountains and the Chugach Mountains.

The Alaska Range is an extremely, mountainous and partially glaciated region which forms the northern and western geographic borders of the Borough. Within this range is Denali National Park and Preserve one of the states most well known and popular visitor attractions. Portions of the preserve lie within the Borough. Just north of the Borough boundary is Mount McKinley, at 20,320 feet the tallest mountain in North America. Near the southern end of the Alaska Range where the topography is less severe and more accommodating to winter trail use, the Iditarod Trail, a national historic trail and site of the annual Iditarod sled dog race crosses the mountains.

The Talkeetna Mountains encompass approximately 10,000 square miles and lie entirely within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The Talkeetna Mountain range is not as high as the Alaska Range; the highest peaks in the Talkeetnas are less than 9,000 feet. It is bordered on two sides by the Parks and Glenn Highways. For the most part trail recreation is limited to the lower portions of the Talkeetna range and the valleys. Few trails reach deep into the interior of the Talkeetna Mountains.

A portion of the Chugach Mountains lie along the southeast corner of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Just within the Borough boundary is Mount Marcus Baker, the highest of the Chugach Mountains at 13,076 feet. Even though the Chugach Range is not the tallest in the Borough, it contains substantial glaciation due to its position as a major geographic barrier to weather systems originating in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska. Precipitation deposited by these storms provides continual input to perpetuate glaciers. The Matanuska, Knik (just south of the Borough border) and Nelchina Glaciers are the area's largest, and the points of origin for the region's largest rivers. Most trail recreation in this range occurs near the Knik River, Lazy Mountain and the Bodenbug Butte areas because of the limited road access and difficulty of crossing the Matanuska River on the north side of the range.

Within these mountainous regions much of the existing trail development has been focused on the most feasible locations along a given route because of the severity of the topography.



In contrast the relatively low Susitna Basin west of the Talkeetna Mountains has different constraints to trail development. This area is characterized by flat or rolling topography and an abundance of wetlands. Few four-season trails exist in this region because of the wet if not swampy conditions in most areas. Yet, the Susitna Basin has an abundance of winter trails for the same reason. Flat, swampy land that is somewhat clear of forest is ideally suited for winter recreation once adequate time for freeze up has occurred.

The lower glacial valleys of the Matanuska and Susitna Rivers provide the locale for the greatest amount of settlement in the Borough, where about 80 percent of its population resides. The area around Palmer and Wasilla consists of a large amount of land that is neither steep nor wet or swampy and hence well suited to many different types of development including trails.

**Land Ownership**

The majority of land within the Borough is in state ownership, and as such is guided by the Susitna Area Plan, the Susitna Matanuska Area Plan, and the Southeast Susitna Area Plan. Percentages of land ownership within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough are listed below. This information was compiled by the Borough Division of Land and Resources Management in May 2016 from the Borough GIS data.

State and Federal	15,105,700	92%
Mental Health Trust	39,081	0.24%
University	25,101	0.15%
Borough	215,926	1%
Native Corporation	263,155	2%
Private	469,594	3%
other	316,753	2%

Upon incorporation, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough was granted by the State of Alaska some 355,000 acres under the State’s Municipal Entitlement Land Act which the Borough commonly refers to as “MEL” lands. Contrary to frequent perception, much of the highest valued land available during the Borough’s selection process was outside of the Valley’s core area, around the Cities of Palmer and Wasilla, as there was little state land left in the core in 1964.

The Borough maintains a five-year land sale and retention plan to transfer ownership of borough land suitable for private ownership and development as identified in the applicable state and borough plans. As of 2014, the Borough has conveyed interest in close to 20,000 acres of land into private ownership.

Currently, the majority of private land is located in and around the road accessible areas. Most development within the Borough has occurred in the valley near the cities of Palmer and Wasilla. This area, encompassing the two cities and adjacent area is almost entirely private land.

In the more rural areas the private lands generally lie alongside the road system and along the routes of many old trails. The topography necessary for a functional summer trail is similar to

that which makes land easily developed; well drained soils and flat or only moderately steep terrain. The trails were often the impetus for some of the land selections by providing easy access to the property. Also, the public and the private landholder were often drawn to the same recreational resource such as a river, stream, or lake. This property ownership pattern is an expected result of land disposals and selections occurring on the most easily and economically developed land.

This pattern of private property ownership creates problems for the development of legal trails that avoid trespassing on private lands. Often older trails which are in a given location because it is the only feasible route, are cut off by private land immediately adjacent to the road at the very start of the trail.

### **Population Size and Projections**

The Alaska Department of Labor 2014 population estimate for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough was 98,063, up from the 2010 federal census estimate of 88,995. The majority of the population and expected growth is around the cities of Palmer and Wasilla. The Department of Labor and the U.S. Census Bureau project the population of the Borough may be as high as 180,000 to 270,000 by 2040. This rate of annual projected growth varies from 2% to 3.9%. The borough has grown at roughly 2% each year. The population growth and increased development has had increasingly significant negative effects on the availability of recreational trails. Many of the trails relied upon currently cross private property. As the level of development on private parcels increases more of these trails will be blocked. The effect of this will be most pronounced in and around the core area of the Borough which is almost exclusively private land.

Many trails used for recreation and other purposes can be reached only by traditional but unprotected easements across private lands. Because they are not publicly owned, they exist at the discretion of private owners and might be closed when property changes hands.

### **Other Plans Pertinent to Trail Development**

The following is a partial listing of planning documents which include trail specific recommendations germane to trail development and management.

#### ***Susitna Matanuska Area Plan (SMAP) adopted 2011***

The Susitna Matanuska Area Plan guides land management practices for state lands. The region included under the Susitna Matanuska Area Plan encompasses the eastern and central area of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough excluding the area covered by the Southeast Susitna Area Plan and the Susitna Area Plan. Note that this plan does not include areas under the Hatcher Pass Management Plan or the Knik River Public Use Area. This plan's recommendations apply to the remaining areas of state-owned land within the planning area that make up about 6 million acres within ten regions, and 170 management units.

### **Southeast Susitna Area Plan (SSAP)**

The Southeast Susitna Area Plan also guides land management practices for state lands. The entire Willow Sub-Basin and the South Parks Highway Subregion are included under this plan. The SSAP establishes land use designations for 343,000 acres in three state game refuges and 17,000 acres in one state recreation river.

### ***Alaska's Outdoor Legacy, Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2009-2014, adopted 2009***

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), is a guide to recreation-related land acquisition, facility development, and policy for the State of Alaska. The SCORP is required for the state to maintain its eligibility in the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program. The SCORP attempts to identify current attitudes towards outdoor recreational facilities development.

The SCORP lists four overall issues and four goals. They are:

#### Issues

- Lack of Adequate Funding
- Tourism and the Economy
- Improved Access to Outdoor Recreation Resources
- Opportunities to Meet Recreation Needs in Communities

#### Strategies

- Support ongoing efforts for reform of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program. It is necessary for Alaska to receive a far higher share of the annual apportionment and have greater flexibility in its use of funding.
- Maintain and expand private-public nature-based tourism partnerships.
- Implement recreational trails program. Improve access to water-based recreation.
- Give some communities a higher priority for LWCF matching grants. Design facilities to reflect economic realities and sustainable practices.

### ***Alaska Recreational Trail Plan (2000)***

This document is intended to help trail supporters around Alaska meet the challenges of maintaining and improving Alaska's trails for use and enjoyment. This document should be used as a trail map to guide users and trail managers to existing trail funding sources; technical assistance on all aspects of trail acquisition, development maintenance, and safe and enjoyable trail use; nominating trails into the Alaska Trails System; and getting in touch with other trail users and managers to cooperate in improving and promoting Alaska's trails.

## ***Matanuska-Susitna Borough Comprehensive Plan***

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough comprehensive plan was originally adopted in 1970. This plan contains sections addressing Borough-wide as well as community-specific issues. Since 1970, the plan has been updated and amended through the adoption of community based plans, specific plans such as the Long Range Transportation Plan and this Recreational Trails Plan.

The Trails Plan of 1984, updated in 1987, identified thousands of miles of trails within the borough. This is a sub-element of the public facilities element of comprehensive plan. It did not seek to prioritize trail development based on those trails that are regionally or locally significant, but did establish a policy for reserving the public use of trails “just as roads are reserved during the platting process”. The Trails Element was the starting point, and source of much information, for the development of this Recreational Trail Plan.

Specific plans adopted under the Borough comprehensive plans pertaining to trails include the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, adopted in 2001.

Community based plans have been adopted under the umbrella of the Borough comprehensive plan. The following is a list of adopted community comprehensive plans that include trails:

- Big Lake
- Chase
- Chickaloon
- Glacier View
- South Knik River
- Knik-Fairview
- Lake Louise
- Lazy Mountain
- Meadow Lakes
- Point MacKenzie
- Sheep Mountain
- Susitna
- Sutton
- Talkeetna
- Willow

### ***Big Lake Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2009)***

The Big Lake Comprehensive Plan recommends the following in relation to trails:

- Improve pedestrian circulation. The town center needs safe, attractive sidewalks, as well as trail connections into the remainder of the community. This also could be done through an LID.
- Better access to Jordan Lake Park and to Big Lake itself. Improve park amenities; provide a walking trail to the lake.
- Trail Reservations on Private Land – To the greatest degree possible, reserve for public use all important existing community trails crossing private land when that private land is subdivided.
- In the community core area, there is a need for connecting trails including:
  - The Airport to Burma Road and “South Shore”
  - The “North shore” to the core area
  - The senior center, to the middle and high schools, to the Parks Highway
  - Hollywood Road to core area, parks to core area and to elementary school.
- Develop a trail south of Big Lake, connecting the “town square”/ East Lake Mall area to the western boundary of the community council area. To the east, establish a bike trail to connect with Hollywood, Vine and KGB roads. There is a bike trail established on the far side of Hollywood Road where the new school has been built.
- Start with dedicating trails where they cross public land to gain more leverage for getting private landowners to consider trails in any land sales, dedications, etc.

### ***Chase Comprehensive Plan (adopted 1993)***

The Chase Plan recognizes access trails, agricultural trails, mining trails, and recreational trails. The plan includes the following language pertaining to recreational trails:

- Research existing trails to determine if they have legal easements or rights-of-way; and if they do not and are in the trails plan, then easements/row should be acquired.
- Resolve the trail/private property conflict issue.
- Establish standards for trail development in accordance with the trails plan.
- Develop a safe year-round trail between the Talkeetna railroad bridge and McKenzie Creek (approximately Mile 244.5) in proximity to the railroad. This could consist first of cooperating with the Railroad in constructing an alternative route within the railroad right-of-way to a crossing just before the switch near Mile 232 and then paralleling the tracks on the east side to Mile 232. The second phase would be improvement of the Nodwell Trail" from Mile 232 to Chase at Mile 236.2. The final phase would be a trail designed in cooperation with the Railroad paralleling the railroad to McKenzie Creek.
- Establish trail heads and clearly mark Class III trails which shall be intended for recreationalists to use. This may discourage recreational use of trails more commonly used for local access.

### ***Chickaloon Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2008)***

The following documented trails are located in the planning area:

- Chickaloon Trail - part of the ChickaloonKnik-Nelchina Trail
- King River Trail- part of the ChickaloonKnik-Nelchina Trail
- Permanente Trail- also known as the Castle Mountain Trail
- Chickaloon River Trail
- Boulder Creek Trail- part of the ChickaloonKnik-Nelchina Trail
- Coal Creek Trail
- Castle Mountain Mine Trail
- Purinton Creek Trail

The following community recommendations are included in the plan:

- Develop new parks and trails for residents that provide diverse recreational opportunities and maintain the community's rural character.
- Support the reservation and development of trails that connect open areas and parks to the residential and commercial areas within the community.
- Build and maintain a trailhead facility at King River to protect the river and provide safe access for everyone.
- Relocate trails to avoid conflicts with private property.

### ***City of Houston Comprehensive Plan***

The 1987 City of Houston Comprehensive Plan recommends that four specifically mentioned trails be retained in public ownership. These include:

- The Willow Sled Trail from Houston to Willow/Hatcher Pass Road
- The Bench Lake Trail (see map 1) from Houston to Bench Lake
- The power line trail leading north west out of Houston at Hawk Lane
- The seismic trail leading north west out of Houston at Hawk Lane

### ***City of Palmer Comprehensive Plan***

The 2006 City of Palmer Comprehensive Plan includes the following trail language:

With the addition of key links to the existing trail network, Palmer would enjoy a well-connected network allowing reasonably comprehensive travel through town by foot or bicycle. Many of these trails are not in the City, requiring coordination with the Mat-Su Borough and Alaska DOT&PF. The Borough's adopted Trail Plan provides a valuable description of Mat-Su Borough plans for trails in the Core Area and the southcentral Borough generally. Recommended trails are listed below:

- Along the Alaska Railroad right-of-way from the Glenn Highway north past the Palmer depot to Moose Creek (initial phase), south to the Alaska State Fairgrounds and on to Sutton (second phase). This project was formally endorsed as part of the Palmer Urban Revitalization Plan.
- Along the Glenn Highway from E. Sienna Street to the Palmer-Wasilla Highway, constructed as part of the Glenn Highway upgrade.
- Connecting the Old Matanuska River Bridge trail to existing sidewalks along Arctic Ave.
- From the Old Matanuska River Bridge trail to an upgraded trail along the Matanuska River Park connecting to Swanson and Sherrod Elementary schools, and then to E. Eagle Avenue.
- South from the Old Matanuska River Bridge along or near the Matanuska River, past the golf course to E. Lepak Avenue (extended). More work is needed to determine if this trail is possible. A trail along the river in this area was proposed as part of the golf course development in 1989. Two options are currently being considered. Select one of two alternatives for a connection from the Old Matanuska River Bridge to the southern end of the golf course.
  - Option A would depart the Old Glenn Highway at the northeastern edge of the airport and then turn east at the north edge of the Palmer Golf Course and run along the river bluff of the golf course. A similar trail was proposed as part of the golf course development in 1989. Reconfiguration of several holes of the golf course would be necessary.
  - Option B would depart the Old Glenn Highway and head south on S. Airport Road to East Evergreen, to E. Fireweed, to S. Chugach, to E. Cope Industrial to E. Outer Springer.
- Along E. Lepak Avenue, E. Outer Springer Loop, N. Inner Springer Loop, and E. Moore Road to Hemmer Road extended. This separated path would include a grade-separated crossing of the Glenn Highway.
- From the end of the existing trail along Cope Industrial Way west to the Alaska Railroad right-of-way.
- Along the extension of Bogard Road from W. Arctic Avenue to Trunk Road or beyond.
- Along the full length of the proposed extension of Hemmer Road.
- Along the Inner and Outer Springer Road system.

***Core Area Comprehensive Plan(adopted 2007)***

The current plan for the Core Area references the Borough Long Range Transportation Plan recommendations for trail connections in or partly in the Core Area:

- Seldon/Bogard Road from Church Road to Trunk Road, 8.9 miles
- E. Bogard Road, from N. Peck Street to Seldon Road, 3.7 miles
- Trunk Road, from Bogard Road to the Parks Highway, 4.1 miles
- Seward Meridian, From Parks Highway to Seldon Road, 3.0 miles
- Wasilla-Fishhook Road, from E. Nelson Avenue to Seldon Road, 2.7 miles
- Fairview Loop, from the Parks Highway to Knik Goose Bay Road, 11.1 miles
- North Trunk Road, from Palmer-Fishhook Road to Seldon Road, 2.3 miles

- Palmer-Fishhook Road, from the Glenn Highway to Wasilla-Fishhook Road, 6.9 miles
- Wasilla-Fishhook Road, from Palmer-Fishhook Road to Seldon Road, 7.7 miles
- Church Road, from Seldon Road to Pittman Road, 1.0 miles
- Werner Road, from Arctic Avenue to Farm Loop, 3.0 miles
- Blunck Street, from the Glenn Highway to the Palmer-Wasilla Highway, 1.9 miles

***Glacier View Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2008)***

The Glacier View Comprehensive Plan makes the following recommendation in regard to trails:

1. Form a local trails group to address trail concerns and to stay involved in any updates to the RTP [Recreational Trails Plan].
2. The local trails group should:
  - Develop a local trails plan for the area including identification of need for easements/rights-of-way and acquisition of same.
  - Identify needed trailhead improvements combined with waysides or pull-outs as the opportunity is presented.
  - Work with the Borough land management office to identify grants and other funding for trail construction and/or maintenance.
  - Work with the Borough land management office to resolve trail trespass issues on private land.
  - Establish signage and an informational brochure/map to alert non-residents and users of established local trail heads, trail etiquette, and the need to respect private property.
  - Nominate other significant trails that should be included in the RTP.

***Knik-Fairview Comprehensive Plan (1997)***

This plan includes the following recommendations pertaining to trails.

- Sufficient legal trails need to be established and trail rights of ways need to be preserved to support dog mushing and other recreational uses.
- Subdividers should be encouraged to develop lots backing upon trails and dedicate trail rights of ways where appropriate.
- Separated paths or biking lanes should be created along Knik-Goose Bay Road and Fairview Loop Road.
- Separated paths should be constructed near schools providing safe access between the school site and more densely populated residential subdivisions.
- On roads the separated paths, motorized trail users should be encouraged to use the side or the road opposite the separated path.
- Existing mushing trails should be maintained in public ownership.
- The trails recommended in the plan are: Iditarod Trail, Big Lake to Knik Lake Loop Trail, Iditarod Trail Connector, and the Fish Creek Trail.

***Lake Louise Comprehensive Plan (adopted 1998)***

This plan includes the following trail-related recommendations:



Develop a network of trails for:

- a. snowmachines and ATV s
- b. hiking, biking and skiing.

***Meadow Lakes Comprehensive Plan(adopted 2005)***

This plan includes language about road-side trails as well as backcountry recreational trails. The recreational trail strategies are listed below:

- Reserve trail access into the Baldy Mountain area, following the route of the one section of state land that crosses the Little Susitna River
- If possible, establish trails along future greenbelt corridors, including the Little Susitna River, Lucille Creek, and the Upper Meadow Lakes Creek Watershed corridor.

***Point MacKenzie Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2011)***

Trail related recommendations in this plan include:

- Encourage public trail marking and trail maintenance to ensure trails remain usable and sustainable for all trail users.
- Encourage the state to develop and maintain a wayside including a dedicated trailhead, public restrooms, and trash receptacles at the Flathorn Lake Trailhead.

Pipeline Winter Trail

- Encourage the expansion of the parking area at the trailhead.
- Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

***Sheep Mountain Comprehensive Plan***

Squaw Creek Trail is identified in several MSB trails plans and would be a good candidate for high priority status to get the state to determine exactly where the trail is located on state lands and have it surveyed. Once that was completed, the state could reserve an easement along this trail and also establish a trailhead easement for parking. Installation of trail marking and signage would direct trail traffic onto the dedicated trail easement and away from private property.

Gunsight Trail should be nominated for inclusion into the MSB Trails Plan.

***South Knik River Comprehensive Plan (2014)***

Trails and Access Recommendations:

- Establish a recreation and trails committee in the community to examine trail maintenance and funding.
- Engage residents to take an active role in the maintenance of existing public trails.
- Update and inventory trails within the South Knik River Community. Consider a trails master plan.

- Inventory, maintain, and protect existing trail uses (both motorized and nonmotorized), public access points, and public facilities.
- Ensure sustainability of trails.
- Seek trail designation for a balance of motorized and non-motorized uses.
- Encourage coordination with borough, state, and federal entities to ensure that reclamation efforts include developing and dedicating trails on former mined lands.
- Ensure that reclamation efforts (re-vegetation and re-contouring) occur in a timely manner following mining activity to ensure safety of trail users, prevention of erosion, maintenance of high water quality, and restoration of habitats for wildlife.
- Trails should be rerouted off of private property whenever possible.
- The Borough and the South Knik River Community should negotiate with private landowners to obtain voluntary dedications of public access.
- The community should work with the Borough and Alaska DNR to identify funding opportunities to legalize trails and trail heads, maintain trails, and enforce appropriate trail use.
- The community and the Borough should work to identify financial incentives such as tax deductions or other measures that may encourage property owners to dedicate a trail.

***Susitna Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2005)***

A priority goal of this plan is to:

Identify and dedicate local backcountry trails, rural park locations.

Additional recreational trail-related goals and needs are listed below:

- Provide a north-south route linking the Susitna Community Council Area with Willow and communities to the south, and Talkeetna, and points south.
- Provide access into State lands in the Talkeetna Mountains, in particular, establish trail heads and access points that funnel users away from private property and unsafe areas. Examples of areas needing access include from Yoder Road and Caswell Lakes area.

***Sutton Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2000)***

Specific Trail Recommendations:

Kings River Trail – This is currently the only commonly used trail taking off from the Glenn Highway in the Sutton area that does not trespass across private lands. Additionally, the trail and trailhead receives very heavy use.

- Encourage the state to develop and maintain a wayside including trailhead and public restrooms at the Kings River.
- The community supports the designation of the ski trails at Kings River, which have been constructed and maintained for human powered uses (such as biking, hiking and skiing), as a non-motorized trails system.

Youngs Creek Trail/Chain Lakes Trail

- Motorized ATV use should be limited to the existing trail system in the Chain Lakes area. A map should be posted just beyond Ruby Lake on the trail leading to the meadow region depicting the existing trail system.

#### Moose Creek Trail

- Work with area residents and landowners to establish a route from the Moose Creek Recreation Site to the Jonesville/Buffalo Mine Trail.

### *Talkeetna Comprehensive Plan*

Surrounding the community are approximately 20 miles of cross country ski and hiking trails constructed by the Talkeetna Chamber of Commerce and maintained by the Denali Nordic Ski Club and other volunteer help. These trails have open shelter and foot bridges. Other trails extend out from Talkeetna into the Talkeetna Mountains. These trails provide access to hunting areas and remote sites.

#### Recommendations:

- Existing multiple-use trails, as shown on the existing land use map within the comprehensive plan, should be retained, surveyed, and designated as "multiple-use trails", i.e., restricted from use by highway vehicles.
- New trails and/or recreation areas should be identified, reserved, and established. These could be limited to specific and/or single seasonal uses such as: skiing, hiking, mushing, nature trails, sledding, snowmachining, ice skating, fishing, mountain biking, horseback riding, etc.
- Trails and recreation areas should have adequate lands reserved for anticipated facilities and staging areas (such as parking and sanitary facilities) to ensure the safety and health of the activity.
- Specific sites for recreational uses include, but are not limited to:
  - VOR Triangle: A trail system for cross-country skiing and hiking has been approved by the Borough and is being developed. The trails will be closed to all other uses. Location: West of Talkeetna Spur Road by the scenic overlook, north of the VOR access road and southeast of Twister Creek. The land is owned by the State.
  - Twister Creek: Retain as open space for wildlife habitat and winter multiple-use trails. No motorized vehicle use would be permitted in this area during the summer months. Location: The wetlands and low lying forest along Twister Creek from the Old Lake Road to the Susitna River.
  - Talkeetna Townsite Riverside Trail (see maps 5 and 7): Retain as a public right-of-way compatible with flood control purposes. Location: West end of Main Street along the river to the south end of the village airstrip.

- Government Lot #9: Retain as a natural vegetation greenbelt and retain the trail as listed in "c". Location: Wooded area west of the village airstrip to the river and south of the private land on the south side of Third Street.
- Old Talkeetna River Subdivision Road: Retain old roadbed as a trail and wildlife viewing area. Close the roadbed to vehicle use and camping. Location: Old roadbed on the northwest side of the Talkeetna River Subdivision road paralleling the slough.
- Develop a multi-use trail connecting downtown Talkeetna to the Parks Highway. This trail would begin at the railroad crossing to East Talkeetna and proceed south along the west side of the railroad track (behind the Latitude 62, Talkeetna Tesoro, and the library) crossing to the west side of the Talkeetna Spur Road at the railroad crossing. It would proceed south along the west side of the Spur Road connecting with the Ski Hill trails and continue south along the Spur Road to the Parks Highway.
- A ski trail should connect the Talkeetna Lakes park system with the public lands at North Fish Lakes, Number Lakes and Christiansen Lake. Route options include: 1) obtain trail easements from private property owners - especially CIRI, 2) use section line easements, and 3) use public access easements along lakes and streams.
- Bald Mountain: Retain the public alpine lands around Bald Mountain for winter multiple-use recreation. Off-road vehicle use in the tundra should be allowed only on existing easements and rights-of-way when there is not sufficient snow to protect the vegetation.
- Larson Lake: Retain as a recreation area with consideration to protect the large sockeye salmon run and scenic value of the area. There is private land along the lake. Fishing, boating, and multiple-use year-round recreation.

### ***Matanuska-Susitna Borough Tourism Infrastructure Needs Study (2008)***

In 2008 the Borough commissioned the services of several consulting firms to draft a tourism infrastructure needs study. The following list is roughly prioritized, based on current condition and estimated usage:

Point MacKenzie – Existing trailhead will eventually be consumed by port development. Relocate trailhead/parking area approximately one mile north on Point MacKenzie Road and install restrooms. Provides access to Figure Eight Lake, Flathorn Lake, Susitna River and beyond.

Ayrshire Road – Existing trailhead provides access to Figure Eight Lake, Flathorn Lake trail system, Susitna River and beyond. Restrooms need to be installed.

West Papoose Twins Road – Construct new trailhead during upgrade of road. Install restrooms. Provides access to Crooked Lake Trail, Iron Dog Trail, Susitna River and beyond.

North Crystal Lake Road – Expand existing trailhead. Install restrooms. Provides access to Willow area trails.

Willer Kash Road – Expand existing trailhead. Install restrooms. Provides access to Hatcher Pass trail system, Kashwitna area trails.

Parks Highway MP 105 – Expand existing trailhead/parking area (possibly relocate short distance to the north to get off the road). Install restrooms. Provides access to Trapper Lake-Amber Lake trail system, Trapper Creek trail system.

Petersville Road MP 4 – Construct new trailhead/parking area. Install restrooms. Provides access to Petersville-Trapper Creek trail system, Denali State Park trails.

Butte Pavilion Parking Area – Grade to level out. Install restrooms. Provides access to Jim Creek, Knik River and Knik Glacier.

Wendt Road – Expand existing parking area. Install restrooms. Provides access to Matanuska Moose Range trail system.

Sutton/Coyote Lake – Expand parking area. Replace damaged restroom. Provides access to Sutton area trails.

Kings River – Expand existing parking area. Install restrooms. Provides access to Kings River, Young Creek and Red Mountain.

Purinton Creek – Install restrooms. Provides access to Purinton Creek and Boulder Creek area trails.

France Road (CMT) – Develop future trailhead to coincide with trailhead move in case the CMT unit is not moveable. Install single restroom.

Matanuska Peak Trailhead – Install single restroom.

Pioneer Ridge Trailhead – Replace outhouse with single restroom.

Matanuska River Park – Install one restroom on back parking lot.

The study team estimated \$300,000 to \$500,000 in annual investment, which could wholly fund one to three trailheads each year or support an accelerated program with partners.

Development costs for trailheads and related improvements, complete with restrooms and other amenities, can range from \$150,000 to \$750,000 depending on the site, size, enhancements, and current condition. Ongoing maintenance can be \$10,000 to \$50,000 per location.

The Borough may wish to dedicate \$50,000 to \$150,000 for a grant program to support planning, construction, and maintenance efforts that enhance the trail system.

### **Existing Trails**

Local trail groups, the borough, and the state have been working for years to establish trail easements and re-route trails off of private property. The existing legally established trails are the starting point for the borough’s trail system. Dedication means that the trail has an existing legal right-of-way or formal (usually written and recorded) landowner permission allowing public access along its entire length. Many of the following trails listed below have been re-routed off privately owned land. The process to dedicate easements along the many of the trails is on-going. The trails are described in more detail later in the document.

- Alexander Creek
- Amber Lake
- Amundson Road
- Archangel
- Aspen Creek
- Baxter Mine
- Bear Ridge
- Beaver Lakes Loop-  
Houston Lake Loop-  
Muleshoe
- Beaver Lks / N Little Su  
River
- Bench Lake
- Bench-Treeline
- Big Lake T16
- Big Lake T5
- Big Lake Trails
- Big Swamp
- Black River
- Blueberry Hill
- Boulder Creek
- Butte Creek
- Byers Lake
- Cache Creek
- Camp Creek
- Canyon Creek
- Carle Wagon
- Cascade
- Caswell Area
- Central
- Chase Area
- Chickaloon River
- Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina
- Chulitna Bluff
- Clear Creek
- Clearwater Creek
- Collinsville
- Colony High Trails
- Connector Winter Trail  
(Proposed)
- Corral Hill
- Cottonwood Creek  
Wetlands
- Crevasse-Moraine
- Crooked Creek
- Crooked Lake
- Crooked Lake and Susitna  
River
- Crooked Lake Connector
- Crosswind Lake-Big Bay
- Dan Creek
- Deep Creek
- Deshka Crossover
- Deshka River Tractor
- Deshka-Su
- Donkey Creek Lake
- Dutch Hills
- E. Petersville (Proposed)
- East Fork
- East-West Express
- Elks Lake
- Envy
- Ermine Hill
- Eska Creek Falls Multi-  
Use Trail
- Eska Falls Hiking Route
- Eureka East
- Eureka West
- Fern Mine
- Fish Creek
- Flathorn Lake
- Flathorn Lake Connector
- Friday Creek
- Friday Creek Flats
- Funky Trail (Proposed)

- Glacier Creek
- Goober Lake
- Gopher Creek Loop
- GPRA - Bike
- GPRA - Hiking
- GPRA - Ski
- Grey's Creek
- Gunsight Mountain
- Gypsum Creek
- Haessler-Norris Connector
- Haessler-Norris Sled Dog
- Hatcher Pass
- Herning-Bench Lake (Proposed)
- Herning-Question Creek
- Hicks Creek
- Hiline Lake-Middle Talachulitna
- Houston Lake Loop
- Idaho Creek
- Iditarod (Historic)
- Iditarod (Race-Willow)
- Iditarod Checkpoint
- Iditarod Link
- Index Lake
- Indian River Portage Creek
- Iron Dog & Flat Lake Connector
- Iron Dog Connector
- Jackass Canyon
- Jan Lake Loop
- John Lake
- Kenny Creek
- Kesugi Ridge
- King River
- Klondike Inn / Call of the Wild
- Knik Glacier
- Knik Sled Dog
- Lake Creek
- Lake Lorraine Loop
- Lake Louise
- Lake Louise-McLaren (Proposed)
- Larson Lake
- Lazy Moose
- Lazy Mountain
- Lazy-Matanuska Peak Connector
- Leilla Lake
- Little Coal Creek
- Little Nelchina River
- Little Oshetna
- Little Su Loop
- Little Willow Creek
- Long Lake Interconnect
- Lower Troublesome Creek
- Luthman
- Mail Trail Connector
- Matanuska Greenbelt
- Matanuska Lakes
- Matanuska Peak
- Matanuska River Park-RR Link (Proposed)
- McDougall Landing
- McLaren River
- McRoberts Creek
- McWilliams Gold Creek
- Meadow Lakes Community
- Metal Creek
- Mint Glacier
- Mona Lakes
- Montana Creek / Goose Creek
- Montana Creek Dog Mushers
- Montana Creek Middle Fork
- Montana Creek Road
- Monument Mountain
- Moon Lake
- Moore Lake
- Moose Lick
- Morgan Horse
- Mud Lake
- Muddy Creek
- N. Fork Kashwitna Connector
- Nelchina River
- Nelchina Town
- Ninety-Eight
- Oil Well Road
- Oil Well Road Extended
- Old Cat Trail
- Old Hunter's
- Old Lake Road
- Old Man Creek
- Oshetna River
- Oswald
- Palmer High Trails
- Parker Lake
- Parker Lake-Neil Lake
- Peters Creek
- Peter's Hills
- Petersville Road
- Petersville Roadside
- Pioneer Ridge/Austin Helmers
- Pipeline
- Plumley-Maud
- Premier Mine
- Purches Creek
- Purches Creek Connector
- Purinton Creek
- Rabideux
- Rainbow Lake
- Red Mountain
- Reed Lakes
- Reflections Lake
- Rolly Creek
- Rolly Creek Link
- S. Fork Loop
- Safari Lake Back
- Schnieder Lake
- Scout Ridge Loop
- September Lake
- Sevenmile Creek

- Seventeen Mile Lake
- Sexton
- Shell Lake
- Shirley Lake
- Skyline
- Sleeping Lady
- Squaw Creek
- Sunset-Treeline
- Susitna River
- Susitna Station (Seismic)
- Susitna Valley HS Ski Trails
- Susitna West (A)
- Susitna West (C) (Proposed)
- Susitna-Neil Lake
- Swan Lake Canoe Route
- Swiftwater Creek
- Tahnetta Pass
- Talkeetna Elementary Trail
- Talkeetna Lakes Park
- Talkeetna Mail (Herning)
- Talkeetna Mail-Central Connector
- Talkeetna Spur Pedestrian
- Three Mile Lake
- Tokositna River
- Tolsona Lake
- Trail Lake
- Trail Lake Access
- Trapper Creek Community Center Ski Trails
- Trapper Creek Elementary Ski Trails
- Trapper Lake
- Trapper Lake Link
- Tyone Creek
- Unknown
- Upper S. Fork Montana Creek
- Upper Troublesome Creek
- Upper Willow Creek
- Valdez Creek
- Visnaw-Little Su
- Wasilla Creek Headwaters
- West Butte Access Trail
- West Gateway
- Wet Gulch
- Willow Mountain
- Willow Swamp Loop
- Willow Swamp Loop-Mud Lake Connector
- Windy Creek
- Wishbone Lake
- Wolverine Lake
- Woodcutter
- Yentna Cutover

Much more extensive research is necessary to determine what other trails are legally dedicated. There are numerous commonly used trails within the borough that are not dedicated. Some of these undedicated trails lie entirely on public lands. Yet without a right-of-way given by the land-owning agency or formal support in a management plan or other document it could not be considered dedicated. Unlike private lands, a trail that crosses public lands is usually not considered a trespassing trail, however, the managing agency could choose to sell interest in the land or otherwise take action effectively closing the trail. Unfortunately, it is beyond the capability of this planning process to ascertain all the trails that may have legal right-of-way along their full length. The above is merely a listing of some of the more commonly used trails known to be dedicated.

Many of the trails in the following chapters of this plan cross private land or public land outside of an easement or without written permission from the property owner. Generally there is no platted public easement or right-of-way. Without a clear legal public access these trails can be closed at the discretion of the landowner.



## **RELATIONSHIP OF TRAILS TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **Early Alaskans did not need improved roads**

Native Alaskans had an extensive system of overland trade trails in use before the first Euroamericans arrived in Alaska. When the Euroamericans came to Alaska they made use of the Native trails, but did little to create new ones. From 1741 to 1867, the Russians in Alaska built almost no new trails or roads. Relying on water transportation in summer and sled transportation in winter to move their cargoes of furs, supplies, and fur traders, they really had no need to build an extensive overland transportation system. The Americans, who came to Alaska immediately after the Russians, in 1867, also had no need of elaborate roads and trails. In Interior Alaska they continued the fur trading begun by the Russians and had similar requirements for freight and passenger movement. In Southeast Alaska, where the Americans did begin to mine gold and silver (at Sitka in the 1870s and Juneau in the 1880s) and thus needed better transportation, the mines were adjacent to water transportation.

### **New trails are needed in 1890s**

In 1898, the U.S. Army sent explorers to Alaska to look for potential overland routes from ice-free ports to the Yukon River. One group investigated the Susitna River valley, another group investigated the Matanuska River valley, and a third group investigated the Copper River valley. These explorers recommended military road construction to tie various mining camps together. The officer in charge of the first two groups concluded that while a railroad might later be built up the Matanuska valley to Interior Alaska, at the time such a project was premature. The officer in charge of the third group recommended that a military trail should be built north from Valdez, on Prince William Sound, to Eagle, on the Yukon River.

### **The army builds Alaska's first long road**

In 1903, a Senate "Committee On Territories Appointed to Investigate Conditions in Alaska" looked at Alaska transportation problems. At the beginning of 1904 the committee recommended that the federal government build a system of transportation routes in Alaska.

At this time there were less than a dozen miles of wagon road in all of Alaska. In 1904, Congress authorized 70 per cent of funds collected from licenses issued outside of towns in Alaska to be used by the War department to build roads and trails in Alaska. At the same time, each able-bodied male in Alaska living outside incorporated towns was to give two days labor or eight dollars cash toward road-building each year. A Board of Road Commissioners was established to oversee construction and maintenance of roads and trails. It consisted of three army officers appointed by the Secretary of War.

Between 1905 and 1906, the board of Road Commissioners flagged 247 miles of winter trails on the Seward Peninsula. This placed red flags 50 to 150 feet apart along the trails to make winter travel less hazardous. The Road Commissioners also built 40 miles of improved roads, upgraded 200 miles of existing trails, and cut 285 miles of new trails. By 1911, the road-building

organization, now known as the Alaska Road Commission, had flagged several hundred miles of winter trails, built 576 miles of pack trails, 507 miles of winter sled roads, and 759 miles of wagon roads. More than half the wagon road mileage, however, was on one route—the Valdez to Fairbanks road.

### **Territorial road-building begins**

After Alaska achieved territorial status in 1912, the Territorial Legislature repealed the 1904 road tax law and replaced it with a flat four dollar tax imposed on taxpayers no matter where they lived in Alaska. By this time, in 1913, the federally-operated Alaska Road Commission (ARC) had created 2,167 miles of trail, 617 miles of winter sled trail, and 862 miles of wagon road. From 1905 to 1932, the ARC had built 1,231 miles of roads, 74 miles of tram road, 1,495 miles of sled roads, 4,732 miles of trails, 329 miles of temporary flagged trails, 26 airfields, and 32 shelter cabins. The total cost had been over \$18 million, nearly \$12 million of which had come from the War Department.

By 1936, the Alaska Road Commission was beginning to abandon mileage because of a decline in mining activity and because increased air service made some trail routes obsolete. The changing nature of transportation in Alaska caused the ARC to abandon its shelter cabins, maintained on winter trails since 1917, in 1941.

### **World War II causes new highway construction in Alaska**

The Alaska Road Commission had built thousands of miles of trails throughout interior and Northern Alaska, and many short roads from communities to the nearest water transportation access. It had not—except for the Valdez to Fairbanks road—undertaken to link communities by overland routes. That came only with the military requirements of World War II.

One of the first of those requirements was for a highway connecting air bases at Fairbanks and Anchorage. To make this connection, in 1941 the Alaska Road Commission began a road from the Richardson Highway, near today's Glennallen, to Anchorage. When completed, it would be possible for the first time to drive from Anchorage to Fairbanks using a portion of the Richardson Highway and the newly-named Glenn Highway.

### **National defense needs upgrade Alaska roads**

World War II ended in 1945, but in 1947 the Secretary of Defense suggested that national defense required that the Alaska Highway, Richardson Highway, and Glenn Highway be upgraded to all-weather standards. The secretary also recommended completion of an Anchorage-to-Seward highway. As a result, in 1948 Congress passed a six-year Alaska road program to meet national defense needs. By this time the Alaska Road Commission had practically abandoned its old system of flagged winter trails, trails, and sled roads.

The Denali Highway, linking Mt. McKinley National Park to the Richardson Highway, was begun in 1950. In 1951, the Glenn Highway had been upgraded except for a 16-mile unpaved stretch in the Sheep Mountain vicinity.

### **The State of Alaska takes over road-building**

When Alaska obtained statehood in 1959, the state became responsible for much of Alaska's road system. The new state took over 1,800 miles of connecting roads and 1,300 miles of isolated roads. The Copper River Highway was not completed, but by the 1970s the state had added to the system a new Fairbanks to Anchorage route, the George Parks Highway, built through the Nenana and Susitna river valleys.

<http://www.akhistorycourse.org/articles/article.php?artID=175>

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough includes over 24,000 square miles and is defined by the Knik River, Matanuska River, and Susitna River drainages. The borough includes portions of three mountain ranges and substantial wetlands. The challenging terrain has resulted in there being fewer roads than in many small cities in the lower 48. Over 90 percent of the area within the borough is more than a mile distant from the road system. This has facilitated the development and maintenance of an alternative transportation network for ATVs, snowmachines, mountain bicycles, boats, airplanes, dog teams, hikers, and others that begins where the borough's limited road system ends.

The Iditarod Trail constructed by the federal government beginning in 1909, was a specific and very successful attempt to create a long-distance winter transportation network adapted to the off-road, off-rail needs of the vast territory. The Iditarod was well charted, consistently marked and maintained, and had a comprehensive infrastructure to support travelers who used it (specifically, the villages and roadhouses along the route). The Iditarod and other trails like it formed an efficient trunk system of winter trails linking different regions of the territory, with countless spurs and loops to reach mining camps, villages, homesteads and other settlements. This system, in turn, tied remote areas to the railroads, seaports, and minuscule road system (mainly the Richardson Highway from Valdez to Fairbanks) to form a comprehensive, territory-wide transportation surface network.

With the coming of the airplane in the 1920s, Alaska went directly from a reliance on steamboats, dogsleds and other pack animals to the aviation era. The long-distance trail system was allowed to lapse into disrepair, with only local or occasionally regional segments remaining in use. Alaska's massive World War II aviation construction program, as well as the accompanying road construction in the central parts of the territory, was the death knell for what remained of the old trail system. The only significant additions to the trail system after the advent of aviation were tractor trails constructed for access to mining and drilling properties, many of which did not serve to link settlements and thus were generally little used by the public.

By the 1950s, it was no longer possible to drive a dog team from the Susitna Valley to McGrath, much less to the Yukon or to Nome. In the Mat-Su Borough, the old summer and winter trails that had linked settlements such as Willow, Talkeetna, Skwentna, Nelchina, Petersburg, and Knik were abandoned because of the advent of highways and the vastly expanded availability of air transportation.

The development of snowmachines in the 1960s sparked a revival of winter travel. Within a decade a new network of trails appeared, sometimes using the old trail routings, often creating new ones. Over time dog-mushing re-emerged as a sporting activity and has included similar trail development efforts. Much of this new winter trail system is completely ad hoc and user-generated, is neither mapped, marked nor maintained, and often changes dramatically from year to year. Nonetheless, in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough these trails rapidly became a very real winter highway network, providing critical links from the railroad and the highways to remote lodges, cabins, camps, and recreation areas.

Similarly, four season and summer trail use declined with the development of the borough's minimal highway system, yet increased recreational use and development of superior lightweight back country gear and motorized off-road vehicles, as well as increasing number of outdoor recreationalists has dramatically increased four season and summer trail use. Many long forgotten trails are now being re-discovered and sought after by recreationalists.

### **Current Trails Movement**

There has been a revival of trail development efforts within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The number of local groups, businesses, nonprofit organizations, local governments, state agencies and community organizations that are promoting trail development has grown steadily over three decades. This renewed interest can be attributed to the recognized need to protect trails currently being used as well as a desire to develop new trails.

The City of Wasilla and the Community Councils of Willow, Talkeetna, Trapper Creek and Sunshine have established their own trails committee. Trail organizations such as the Mat-Su Trails Council and a handful of lodges including Sheep Mountain Lodge, Eureka Lodge, and others have been grooming and maintaining trails and working to protect and expand their trail development efforts.

User specific groups such as the Alaska Backcountry Horsemen, Big Lake Trails Incorporated, Aurora Dog Musers, Mat-Su Hiker and Bikers, various Nordic Ski Clubs and countless individuals have been working with State and Borough officials and have been active in developing and marking trails. The Mat-Su Trails Council, a non-user, borough-wide trail advocacy group has been very active and successful both in hands on trail development and information dissemination of grant offerings and other important issues.

The Alaska Department Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation developed a statewide trails plan. Similarly the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation has been working on developing snowmachine access to and through the Borough as part of the key to their winter tourism development efforts. Local trail groups have had success obtaining funding and developing trails. More and more lodge owners and businesses are participating in trail development and maintenance as they reap the economic rewards of recreation dollars.

Numerous high profile races and trail events occur within the Borough. They include:

- Aurora Dog Races, Sled Dog Races
- Gold Rush Classic, Snow Machine Race,
- Idita Sport, Bike, Ski or Snowshoe races,
- Iditarod Race,
- Iron Dog, Snowmachine Race,
- Junior Iditarod, Sled Dog Race,
- Klondike 300, Sled Dog Race,
- Klondike 400, Snow machine Race,
- Knik 200, Sled Dog Race,
- Knik/Tug 120, Sled Dog Race,
- Oosik Classic Ski Race,
- Matanuska Peak Challenge, and
- Montana Creek Sled Dog Races.

Other races and trail events also help bring international and Alaskan racers and recreationalists to the Mat-Su Borough.

### **Need and Desire for Trails Plan**

When undergoing any extensive effort to develop public amenities it is helpful to understand why such amenities are needed or desired. In the case of trails, there are at least three distinctive reasons for the Borough to promote a well-developed trails system: to provide healthy recreation desired by residents; to bolster economic development of the tourism and recreation industry; and to increase the appeal of the Borough to businesses and prospective residents by improving the quality of life.

#### ***Healthy Recreation Desired by Residents***

Trails facilitate healthy activities for Borough residents. Increasing the opportunities for trail use will likely also increase healthy trail activities among Borough residents. Benefits resulting from trail exercise include increased alertness, decreased levels of heart disease and other ailments.

This trails plan was initiated in response to public demand and support for trails. One of the most compelling reasons for the Borough to involve itself in the development of any public amenity is because it is desired by the citizens. Both the State of Alaska and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough have attempted to measure public desire for trails and trail development.

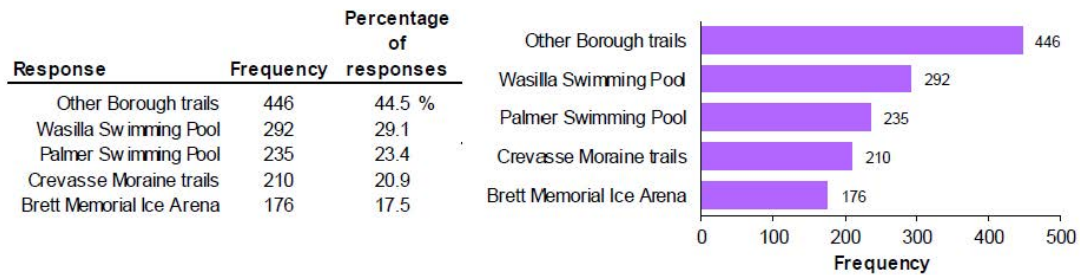
#### **Matanuska-Susitna Borough Community Survey and Trends 2009-2014**

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Community Survey (Mat-Su Survey) is a cooperative research effort between the Justice Center at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (Borough) and has been conducted annually since 2006. During the

winter and spring of 2014, the survey was distributed to 2,491 adult heads-of-household in the Mat-Su Borough who were selected in a simple random sample: 1,003 completed surveys were returned and are included in the analysis described in this report.<sup>1</sup> The Mat-Su Survey asks residents questions concerning satisfaction with Borough services, use of Borough facilities, feelings of community, perceptions about crime, and opinions about revenue and taxation. The following table and chart illustrate the 2014 resident survey responses to a question of which borough recreational facilities are used:

**Table 10a. Recreational Facilities Used, 2014**

*Question 10. Which (if any) of these Borough Recreational Facilities do you use?  
(Please check all that apply.)*



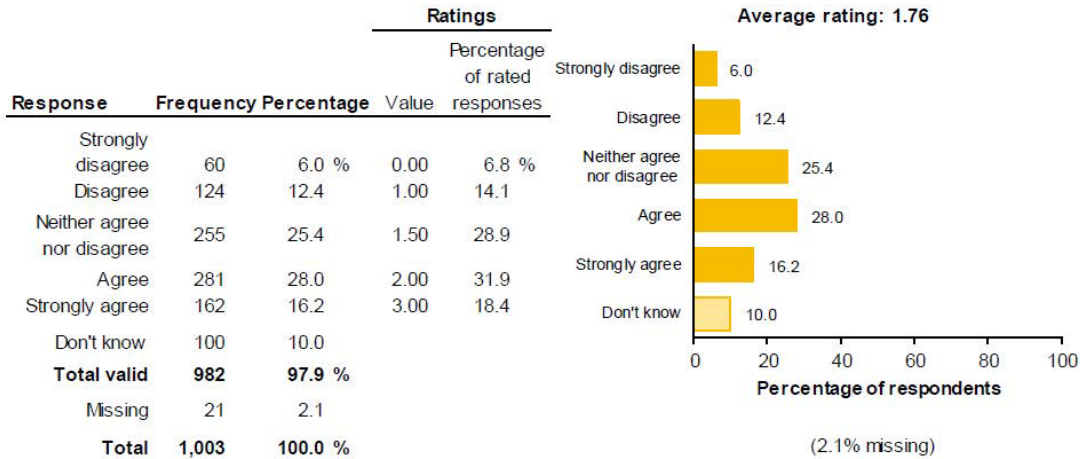
Reported use of other borough trails increased 10% between 2008 and 2014. Almost half the respondents to each annual survey indicate they use borough trails.

Seventy-four percent of respondents stated that they use Borough recreational areas, with the Wasilla and Palmer Pools and assorted Borough trails being the most popular. Reported use of Borough recreational facilities has varied since 2009. With respect to individual facilities, there have been decreases for use of the Wasilla and Palmer pools and the Crevasse Moraine trails, and increases in the use of “other Borough trails” and Brett Memorial Ice Arena. The following table and chart illustrate survey respondents’ belief that funds should be spent to preserve undeveloped land as open space.

More than a third of respondents felt that funding should be used to keep land from being developed. It is interesting to note that over a third of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the notion of using funding to preserve open space in the borough.

**Table 25.2a. Use of Funds to Support Open Spaces in the Borough, 2014**

Question 25.2. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:  
**Funds should be spent to preserve open spaces in the Borough.**



***Economic Development of Tourism and Recreation Industries***

Trail development can also provide significant positive economic impact. Many Anchorage residents use the Matanuska-Susitna Borough as their "backyard play ground" because of the greater resources available to snow machines, off-road vehicle enthusiasts, hunters and other outdoor sports enthusiasts. A well developed trail system designed to accommodate the users can spur recreational development in the many rural communities near the more popular recreation areas.

The tourism and recreation related industries have been the most consistently expanding industries in Alaska. Tourism is the state's second largest private sector employer, employing an annual average of 39,000 workers. Tourism brings in more than \$1.8 billion dollars annually; a number that increases to \$2.42 billion with the addition of labor income from visitor industry jobs is counted (Alaska Resource Development Center, 2013). Overall, tourism counts for 39,000 jobs. Tourism is also the third largest private industry by income in Alaska after oil and fishing. Within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, tourism has the most potential for growth of all its industries given the relatively small oil and gas or fisheries resources.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough has a greater advantage than other areas in the state since the Borough can market itself to the relatively large population of Anchorage immediately to the south. (The 2010 U.S. Census indicates the Municipality of Anchorage has a population of 291,826 persons, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's 1990 population is indicated as 88,995.)

The businesses that benefit from trail recreation and tourism are far more varied than gas, food, and lodging since trail recreation in Alaska is often a more rugged wilderness experience. Some people come to Alaska wishing to experience a "trip of a lifetime" and money is secondary to

having the kind of Alaskan experience they have sought. Some trail users start, end or supply their trip with the assistance of air charter services. The number of guiding services is increasing for activities where formerly, there were few or no services available; these include bicycling, backpacking, rafting as well as the more traditional or common hunting and fishing guiding services.

The economic benefit directly resulting from trail recreation is the primary reason that a number of the businesses, such as Sheep Mountain Lodge and Eureka Lodge have been involved in trail development and maintenance.

Businesses that benefit from trail recreation and trail development include:

Outdoor sporting goods stores:

- ATV repair/retail stores
- Hunting, taxidermy, gun and archery stores
- Fishing supply stores
- Bicycle shops
- Equestrian/dog mushing/pack animal supply stores
- Snowmachine repair/retail stores
- Backpacking/camping supply stores
- Ski/snowshoe winter recreation shops
- Photography supply stores
- Outdoor clothing stores and footwear shops

Guiding services including:

- Hunting
- Fishing
- Dogmushing
- River floating
- Hiking/backpacking
- Bicycling
- Skiing

Transportation services including:

- Aircraft charters and taxi services
- Backpacking shuttle services
- Gas stations
- Auto repair/parts businesses
- Tow vehicles

Accommodations:

- Bed and breakfasts
- Motels



- Hotels
- Lodges
- Cabin rentals
- RV parks and campgrounds

Eating establishments:

- Restaurants
- Grocery stores
- Fast food establishments

### *Quality of Life*

Although trails provide significant obvious impact on the economies of borough communities by providing tourism and recreation based incomes for many businesses there is also a more subtle secondary impact on the economy. As communities compete with each other by trying to attract businesses to their communities they have begun to realize the importance of recreational opportunities as a marketing asset for their communities. Business executives have been looking more closely at the issues of quality of life for their employees and themselves when considering locations for their place of business. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is competing with Anchorage, Fairbanks and other communities to attract businesses.

Many residents of the Mat-Su Borough were attracted to the area by its rural character: low-density population, salmon streams, opportunities for recreation and hunting in undeveloped areas, and food produced by local farmers. With rapid population growth, these characteristics have been changing, and they will likely continue to change without policies to maintain or restore them.

But residents can influence such change, by letting policymakers know what they value. What do Mat-Su residents want their area to look like in 2040? What value do they place on rural character and recreation opportunities? What would they be willing to pay to maintain or restore those characteristics?

As a step toward finding out how much residents value specific characteristics, the Institute for Social and Economic Research conducted a survey in 2014<sup>1</sup>, asking residents to choose among various hypothetical alternatives for future land use and development, with different costs for each alternative. The study analyzed resident responses with a statistical model, estimating what each household, and all borough households in total, would be willing to pay for given choices. Analysts call this a “stated preference technique.” It’s a good way to value non-market resources, like salmon in a stream, or access to hiking or snowmachine trails. The study found:

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<sup>1</sup> Schworer, Tobias, April 2014. *The Mat-Su Borough in 2040: What would residents like to see?*. Institute for Social and Economic Research.

- Mat-Su residents put a high value on things that attracted them to the borough in the first place, with their overall willingness to pay from \$20 million a year for protecting recreation access.

Recreation is important in the Mat-Su and Alaska for both residents and tourists. Participation in outdoor recreational activities among Alaskans is higher than in the rest of the country<sup>2</sup>, and has a tremendous impact on the economy. The Mat-Su Borough Economic Development Strategic Plan has also identified the need to continue expanding basic tourism infrastructure. According to a tourism infrastructure needs study, the tourism industry in the Mat-Su totals \$282 million in value annually, supports almost 4,000 jobs, and creates more than \$100 million in payroll<sup>3</sup>. Almost 780,000 visitors come to the Mat-Su Borough annually. Approximately 43% of these visitors were from out-of-state, while 57% were Alaskan residents. Realtors within the Matanuska Valley have long identified the importance of outdoor recreation to their Alaskan clientele, often dramatizing the recreational opportunities available “right out your (soon to be) back door.”

### **Public Concerns Regarding Trail**

Many trails used for recreation and other purposes can be reached only by traditional but unprotected easements across private lands. Because they are not publicly owned, they exist at the discretion of private owners—and might be closed when property changes hands.

While not readily evident among prior survey respondents, there is sometimes public concern from adjacent landowners about trail development proposals. Objections usually stem from these issues: possibility of increased crime or vandalism, noise, safety, loss of privacy, perceived reduction in property values, environmental degradation and increased liability. For borough residents to obtain maximum benefit from trails these issues need to be dealt with.

These perceptions are a result of the manner in which the trails system has developed in the borough. Some trails were constructed to provide access to private landholdings. As recreational use of these trails occurred and increased, inherent conflicts emerged as well. Most of the existing trails in the borough were informally established with little knowledge of surrounding land ownership. Usually little consideration was given to the trail or trailheads ability to meet increasing and changing recreational needs of a growing population. Most trails were not established with public agency support and are not maintained, lack needed improvements and were generally not designed to mitigate potential negative impacts. In order to develop a trail system that provides maximum benefits to the community it is necessary to first analyze these concerns and then identify methods to address them.

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2 Bowker, JM. 2001. Outdoor recreation by Alaskans: Projections for 2000 Through 2020.

3 McDowell Group, Inc. 2008. Matanuska-Susitna Borough Tourism Infrastructure Needs Study of the Borough. Anchorage, Alaska.

### ***Potential for Increased Crime and Vandalism***

In most areas of the Borough police protection is minimal. The state troopers generally have less than ten manned patrol cars for the entire Borough. For the most part the state troopers are relegated to the road system and do not patrol trails. The likelihood of an individual being apprehended by the troopers during a break-in in a remote area is minimal. In instances where second homes and cabins are visible from trails there is a perception that the homeowner is more susceptible to opportunistic thefts. This is more of a concern in areas with recreational cabins and second homes that are left unattended for most of the year.

### ***Increased Noise***

Noise is generally less of an issue with most non-motorized trail recreation; however snowmachines, four wheelers and other trail vehicles can create significant disruptions if there is insufficient buffer between the trail and an individual's otherwise tranquil home. Snowmachine's two cycle engines, more so than most other motorized uses, have a higher frequency and higher decibel level. Performance modifications to snowmachines, such as aftermarket exhaust systems, often do not conform to the existing industry standard maximum noise level.

### ***Safety Along Trails***

Both adjacent landowners and trail users have expressed concern over safety on trails. As the number of trail users increase there is an increase in the potential for accidents. Similar to noise, safety also can also be a greater concern when motorized trail vehicles are present since the potential for accidents increases with increases in speed and mass. This holds true of highway vehicles as well. Many of the most dangerous sections of trail are road crossings and sections alongside existing streets.

Some of those most vulnerable to lack of safe trail etiquette are those trail users with less maneuverability and immediate control, particularly dog mushers and equestrians. However, safety is an issue to all trail users and a concern amongst adjacent land owners which use or cross trails near their homes and cabins.

To ensure the safety of trail users along highly used trails, target shooting should be discouraged. When conflicts occur, signs should be placed at trailheads and along the trails to ensure the safety of the trail users from cross fire.

### ***Loss of Privacy***

Loss of privacy also occurs whenever an insufficient buffer exists between cabins or homes and the trail. In many instances home and cabin owners have selected their site because of the feeling of seclusion as well as security. Curious recreationalists and nearby trail users can easily violate a home or cabin owners sense of privacy by their mere presence.

### ***Reduction in Property Values***

Reduction in property values may occur any time the trail is viewed as a detriment rather than an amenity, usually this is a reflection of the previously mentioned issues. Since any negative effect on property values would be largely dependant on noise, privacy, crime and safety the same mitigation measures applicable to these other concerns would also apply to property values.

The opposite effect, an increase in property values, can also occur as a result of trail development. Developers in Anchorage and numerous other areas have integrated trails into their subdivision design to enhance the value of the properties. Furthermore, many people that have located within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough have done so for the recreational opportunities. Yet an un-managed, poorly designed trail can have detrimental effects on property values if there are negative impacts associated with the trail that outweigh the benefits.

### ***Environmental Degradation***

Public concern about trails and trail user's impacts on the environment pertain to several distinct areas; damage to wildlife, damage to the landscape and degradation of the trails.

The negative impacts on wildlife can include destruction of salmon spawning habitat, disturbance of nesting bird sites including those used by the threatened trumpeter swan, displacement of animals wary of humans such as brown bear, wolves, lynx and others. This problem is somewhat compounded by the fact that many of the most elusive and wary animals are often the most sought after for viewing.

Additionally, long term damage to fragile alpine tundra or wetlands and erosion of hillsides is common to trail use in Alaska due to soil, topography and climactic conditions. While many areas of Alaska are quick to recuperate if left untraveled, recreationalists in fragile environments, such as alpine meadows, tundra and wetlands, can easily and unknowingly create long lasting tracks during non-winter months and periods of thaw. Trails through these areas may eventually reach an equilibrium and not degrade further, however, exploring recreationalists going off-trail are likely to leave lasting marks criss-crossing otherwise valued pristine views.

### ***Degradation of Trails***

All types of trail uses can cause degradation of unmaintained and poorly designed or located trails. Often, summer use trails leading through wet or steep areas can quickly degrade to such a level that trail users must divert around the previous section of trail which has become difficult to use, resulting in wide devegetated areas of parallel trails, mud and erosion. Different methods of trail use can more easily negotiate poor sections of trail. This is sometimes reflected in different opinions amongst different trail user groups about what constitutes trail degradation. Four-wheelers and equestrians can more easily or comfortably accommodate wet and muddy areas than hikers and mountain bikers.

Winter trail surfaces are renewed annually, if not more often, with new snowfall. None the less, winter trails are subject to itinerant degradation of the trail if misused or over used. In the winter, snowmachines and four-wheeler can more comfortably travel washboard surfaces created in part by their suspension systems than their unsuspected counterparts; mushers and skiers. “Problem” areas for hikers, bikers, skiers and mushers may be no problem to negotiate for users of four-wheelers, snowmachines and horses. In areas where a diversity of trail uses occur, there is a heightened concern and lower level of tolerance for trail degradation amongst those members of the public recreating in ways less easily able to accommodate eroded slopes, mud or washboard surfaces.

### ***Increased Liability***

Another common concern among landowners is that of liability for trails which cross their property. Indeed this is a concern not just of the private property owners but of local, state and federal land managing agencies as well. Individuals can be held legally liable if an accident occurs as a result of their action such as placement of hazards within the trail. This concern is directly related to trail safety since the increased likelihood of accidents increases the likelihood of related lawsuits, but generally landowners are liable only if their own actions either directly or indirectly have created a hazardous situation.

In summary most residents of the Borough are supportive of trails but some are less supportive, or even oppose a proposed trail adjacent to their property. In order to develop a trail system that has a high level of community support it is necessary to minimize these negative impacts. The following chapter outlines general trail development guidelines to balance the desires of recreationalists and the public concerns.

Property owners who dedicate a conservation easement on their property that provides public access for recreational purposes are not liable for injury sustained by trail users within the easement. Alaska Statute 34.17.055 provides tort immunity from personal injuries or death arising out of the use of land subject to a conservation easement. The state form for easement dedication is at the end of this chapter.

### ***Methods for Addressing Public Concerns***

Numerous methods exist for dealing with these public concerns. The manner of development of the trails system within the borough and the changing recreational use patterns have created many of these problems. Generally the recreational trails system that has evolved was not planned, or envisioned for the existing recreational use, and is not routinely maintained or managed. This lack of oversight has in some cases, allowed conflicts to develop unhindered.

- In order for the Borough’s effort to preserve and expand the existing trails system to succeed, these public concerns must be addressed. Design, maintenance and management recommendations are included at the end of the following chapter, but briefly the methods being used to address public concerns are:

- Give preference to selecting trails that are located mostly on public property, when considering which trails to include in the trails plan.
- Work with local landowners and trail users to identify potential problems and minimize those problems through careful design and routing of the trail.
- Design trails in a manner that avoids hazardous situations and promote routine trail maintenance to include the identification and mitigation of new or developing hazards
- Promote courteous and safe use of the trail with trail brochures, signage and if necessary, management regulations restricting trail use.
- Preserve important access points throughout the borough to dissipate users so that a high volume of trail users are not funneled to only a few trails within a region.
- Establish trailheads as near as possible to well traveled areas to reduce impacts in quiet neighborhoods and reduce the potential for vandalism, partying and other inappropriate behavior.
- Establish well marked and signed trails that direct impacts away from private properties and decrease unintentional trespass in areas where recreational use is common amongst scattered parcels of private land.
- Exclude certain trails from promotional maps and literature until there is a track record of adequately managing the trailhead. Trailheads that are immediately adjacent to developed private lands on remote and sparsely traveled roads require more on-sight management to mitigate impacts. Little used trails with these characteristics should not be advertised until sufficient staffing is available to reasonably manage the site.
- Encourage trail groups, businesses, civic clubs and others to Adopt a Trail. The club's duties would include such things as reporting potential trail hazards, performing minor maintenance, trailhead monitoring and information dissemination regarding proper trail etiquette and management policies.
- Establish a trail complaint hotline to monitor emerging problems and the need for revising management regulations.
- Advertise websites that provide winter trail reports such as Cross Country Alaska and the Chugach State Park Avalanche Risk Report:
  - <http://www.crosscountryalaska.org>
  - <http://www.cnfaic.org/>
- Encourage large event sponsors and commercial users of trails (recreation related businesses) to perform trail maintenance and minimize impacts of group events, such commitments could be in the form of an Adopt a Trail agreement.
- Provide additional borough staff for oversight of trail management, maintenance, development, and assistance with trail implementation.
- Limit use of a trail in an environmentally sensitive area to types of uses and seasons or conditions when environmental damage will be minimalized
- Selectively choose which trails to include in the borough's trail development efforts based on the environmental factors affecting the areas ability to withstand the type of trail use proposed with minimal impact on fish, wildlife and landscape.
- Manage trails so as to provide the greatest recreational benefit to those types of recreational trail uses for which the trail is uniquely suited.



**Public Recreational Easement  
(AS 34.17.100)**

The grantor,

\_\_\_\_\_ /

(Name or names and place of residence)

hereby grants a public recreational use easement to the public under AS 34.17.100 in the following described real estate:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ /

located in the \_\_\_\_\_ Recording District, State of Alaska, for the purpose of making the described real estate available for public recreational activities.

This Easement is subject to the following restrictions, conditions, or reservations, if any (attach additional page if necessary):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

This easement is subject to the following terms, if any, addressing duration or termination of the Easement (it is not necessary to specify a duration or terms of termination):

This Easement is granted in perpetuity; or

This Easement is granted for a limited time (specify term): \_\_\_\_\_; or

This Easement terminates when the following events happen: \_\_\_\_\_; or

Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF ALASKA

This instrument was acknowledged before me on this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_, by

\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public in and for the State of Alaska

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Seal Here

After Recording Return To:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**RECORDER PLEASE NOTE:** THIS IS A NO CHARGE DOCUMENT UNDER AS 40.17.030(e).



## **RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM**

The following represents the sequence of actions necessary to develop a trail system. Essentially, the process is the same for the development of an entire trail system, or for each component trail or even portion of a trail.

1. Route Planning and Design
2. Acquisition of Public Access/Dedication of Trail(s)
3. Allocation of Maintenance Responsibilities
4. Construction of Trail and Trailhead Improvements
5. Ongoing Management and Maintenance of Trail(s) and Trailhead(s)

The actions are not exclusively sequential. This edition of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Trails Plan is only a part of an ongoing effort to develop the trails system. As further information, experience and community input is obtained, the borough's analysis of its capabilities are expected to evolve, and the first step, the trails plan, must be amended.

Left out of this sequence is any reference to advertising or production of promotional maps et cetera. The borough will not promote the use of a trail until legal public access, basic safety improvements, maintenance and reasonable trailhead accommodations are provided.

### **Borough's Role**

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is still at the beginning stages of development of an adequate trail system and it is intended that the borough's initial involvement in the development of a trails system will consist of the first two steps; planning and protection of public access. The steps following acquisition of public access must be dealt with on an as needed basis, however, unless there is legal public access the borough is unable to improve, maintain or manage a trail.

The borough's primary role regarding development of a trail system is thus also focused on those areas of the borough where the borough is likely to be the most effective and efficient participant. The borough's obligation to represent all constituent landowners and its access to property ownership information lend themselves towards the planning related aspect of trail development. Additionally, the borough is the only entity with legal authority to implement policies assisting the acquisition of public access. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough's Recreational Trails Program consist of the following four main elements:

- Maintaining the inventory of priority trails and trail projects from amongst the near limitless quantity of potential trails projects within the Borough, and updating this inventory;
- Establishing trail acquisition procedures to enable acquisition of rights-of-way as necessary for development of trails included in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Recreational Trail Program; and

- Coordinating an active volunteer program which allows trail user groups to assume certain responsibilities for specific trails in order to minimize maintenance and operation costs to the State and Borough.
- Establish the procedure for acceptance of a trail for Matanuska-Susitna Borough management and maintenance.

### **Relationship of Borough to Other Organizations' Roles**

The State and private organizations also have roles in which they are the most effective and efficient participant in the process of developing a trails system.

Recreation related businesses, local trail groups and individual recreationalists have been extensively involved in trail development and maintenance within the borough. These groups and individuals have proven very capable with the on-site responsibilities of developing and maintaining trails. In order for the recreational trail program to succeed, the borough and local communities, organized trail groups, recreation related businesses and users of borough trails must coordinate their actions. The borough's predominant role should be to aid these groups in identifying and dealing with issues pertaining to public access, property ownership, legal issues, and public concerns while easing them through bureaucratic processes. Coordination with the borough's planning process and recreational trail program can help assure these groups that their trail development and maintenance efforts are not lost or restricted due to lack of public access or ongoing public conflict.

The State of Alaska is by far the largest landholder in the borough, eclipsing the amount of land owned by private landholders, native corporations, the federal government and the Borough itself. The Department of Natural Resources, manages most undeveloped state lands. The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation manages State Park and State Recreation Areas with active on-site management and enforcement. Additionally, the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation allocates the vast majority of public funding available for outdoor recreation in the borough. Not clearly defined, is the management responsibility of the vast amount of state lands used for public recreation outside of designated state parks and state recreation areas. The state's involvement in the management of state lands is, although not clearly defined, clearly needed.

The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities constructs and maintains capital improvements associated with the road system including transportation enhancements such as roadside trails, waysides and trailheads.

The National Park Service has management authority over the portion of the borough located within Denali National Park. The Bureau of Land Management oversees most of the remaining federal lands in the borough.

For the Borough's Recreational Trail Program to succeed it must rely on support and coordination from the private sector, the State of Alaska and other public agencies.

## **Trail Priorities**

In order to more clearly define where the efforts for the Borough Trails Plan should be concentrated, three categories of trails should be identified. The categories include regionally significant trails, trails of local or community importance, and existing or proposed paved trails. These three categories are not intended to function as a trails inventory and identify all trails within the borough. These categories include those trails which are an identified priority for borough action. The first two categories, regionally and locally significant trails, usually consist of unpaved trails. Paved paths generally consist of existing or proposed paved paths often located adjacent to roads in or near communities or along highways. Paved trails are considered a separate category due to the different funding source, eligibility and involvement of the borough. These three categories are defined and further discussed below.

### ***Regionally Significant Trails***

Regionally significant trails are those unpaved trails that are considered to be the borough's highest priority for preservation or development of needed amenities. Since different characteristics ideally suit different types of trail recreationalists and because of the diversity amongst trail users within a single type of recreational activity, measurable characteristics were not used to define these priority trails. Relying on length or number of existing users would favor well known and well developed trails used for types of trail recreation that favor long distance travel.

Regionally significant trails are defined as existing or proposed trails requiring borough action that are likely to attract recreationalists due to the quality of the recreational opportunities the trail provides. By comparison Locally Significant Trails primarily serve local recreationalists. Funding and maintenance responsibilities will vary depending on management authority. Regionally significant trails may be managed by the State, Federal or Borough governments or a combination. Management authority depends on land ownership, proportion of users residing outside the Borough and willingness of various agencies to accept the responsibility.

The Borough's involvement in trails that may be managed by state or federal agencies will primarily be assistance towards obtaining legal access across the private property these trails cross. The Borough would actively work towards obtaining legal access and/or developing trails based on priorities established by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks, Recreation and Trails Board.

### ***Locally Significant Trails***

Locally significant trails include trails which may be heavily used by the local community, but which are not likely to attract significant interest from more distant recreationalists. This first edition of the trail plan does not identify locally significant trails which would be subject to the same policies regarding acquisition of public access as regionally significant trails. It is preferred that community councils, local trail groups and others nominate locally significant trails to assure there is local support for the application of these policies. The borough's involvement in locally significant trails will primarily consist of providing technical assistance, information on property

ownership or public access and implementation of associated borough policies regarding acquiring public access. Limited borough trail funding is likely to be allocated towards funding regionally significant trails as a priority followed by locally significant trails. The majority of needed funds for development and improvement of locally significant trails is expected to be raised by local trail supporters or the local community. This, of course, does not preclude local groups from applying for grants or seeking other public and private funding sources.

### ***Paved Trails Systems***

Currently, within the borough all the monies used to establish paved paths comes from a single source: federal highway dollars. Funding for trails is limited to trail projects which either provide alternative non-automotive access through or near communities or in some way enhance the road or highway by providing a wayside with associated trail head or a developed trail paralleling the roadway. Most regionally and locally significant trails in the borough lack the necessary characteristic and are unlikely to receive this funding, (although their associated trailheads are likely candidates for transportation enhancement funds).

The state chooses which transportation enhancement projects to fund and usually performs the design work. Due to the expense of paved trails and the borough's limited financial resources, the borough's only involvement in developing paved paths is to nominate specific projects and comment upon proposed designs. The borough's capital improvement program identifies those projects prioritized by the borough. The paved paths that are developed are usually located alongside roads to take advantage of existing right-of-ways, since their location within communities is limited by private lands.

### ***Other Trails***

In addition to the trails that are included in the boroughs recreational trail program, there are many other trails which are in existence. Trails included in previous community comprehensive plans were not automatically included within the trails plan because previous planning efforts did not always identify sufficient specific policies supported by the community when community comprehensive plans were developed. Some of these trails are a significant asset to the borough, although not formally recognized by the borough at this time as a regionally or locally significant trail. Regardless of a trails inclusion in the borough recreational trail program, trails identified in community comprehensive plans will continue to receive consideration and assistance from the borough.

In addition to trails identified in previous planning efforts, other trails also may at critical times, require borough intervention and assistance to assure their preservation or improve the recreational experience they are capable of providing. Any trail not included within the borough recreational trail program is not automatically excluded from receiving borough assistance when necessity or opportunity presents itself. However, those trails included within the program are generally expected to be a higher priority and receive the majority of staff time, assistance and funding.

In addition to providing assistance, the borough will avoid acting in ways that are detrimental to the preservation of trails by retaining commonly used or otherwise important trails in the form of easements or re-routing trails if necessary when borough lands are sold and avoiding if possible road reconstruction designs which will eliminate roadside trails.

## TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

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### REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT TRAILS

#### Defining Characteristics:

- Existing or proposed trail.
- Likely to attract recreationists from throughout the borough due to the high quality of the recreational experience or unique attributes of the trail.
- Borough action/involvement is needed to preserve, or enhance the recreational opportunity.
- Legal public access:
  - A) exists or
  - B) is likely to eventually be obtained or
  - C) it is practical to reroute trail and retain the quality attributes of the trail.

#### Borough involvement:

- Highest priority trails requiring direct borough involvement in preservation and development. Such involvement may include staff time and borough funds.
- Apply borough trail plan policies regarding acquisition of public access.
- The borough will retain a trail easement of adequate width or reroute trail if borough lands including a regionally significant trail are sold.

### LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT TRAILS

#### Defining Characteristics:

- Existing or proposed trail.
- Anticipated to primarily attract local recreationists and is a significant asset to the community.
- Nominated by trail group, community council, individual or other, or included in local community comprehensive plan subject to similar borough policies regarding public access.
- Legal public access:
  - A) exists or
  - B) is likely to eventually be obtained or
  - C) it is practical to reroute trail and retain the quality attributes of the trail.
    - Should have an identified local funding source if funds are needed.

Borough involvement:

- Apply Borough trail plan policies regarding acquisition of public access. If funds are necessary, there must be an identified funding source other than borough funds.
- Borough may provide limited financial assistance.
- The borough will retain a trail easement of adequate width or reroute trail if borough lands including a locally significant trail are sold.

## **Trail Acquisition**

Public access is one of the most confusing issues facing both public agencies and private organizations involved in trail development. Yet legal public access is both necessary and prudent prior to any expenditure on trail construction, maintenance or promotion. Legal public access can be in the form of a written statement from the landowner giving permission to use the trail. However, in the long term it will be necessary for the borough to acquire binding agreements in the form of a trail easement or right-of-way. The following is a description of the methods in which to obtain public access easements and rights-of-way.

## **Trail Access Through Public Property**

### **State Lands**

Construction of trails on state properties is allowed if the trail is constructed using hand tools and the cleared width of the trail is less than five feet. Additionally, many trails have established rights-of-ways on state lands and need only a letter of non-objection from the state for performing major improvements to the trail. Construction of new trails wider than five feet in width requires a permit from the state.

Prior to constructing a trail across state land that is wider than five feet or requires the use of power tools the state requires the trail developers to obtain a right-of-way (ROW) permit for the trail. The process used by the state is the same as that used for granting road ROWs.

The state is under no obligation to issue a permit for trail construction. In sensitive habitat areas the state may prefer limiting access by not allowing the creation or improvement of a trail. It is critical that the Borough work closely with the state when developing trails within the State Parks and other state managed and maintained recreation areas.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough will coordinate with the state of Alaska on state land sales or disposals to maintain or create trail easements for rights-of-way.

### **Borough Lands**

Land Management Policies and Procedures apply to borough owned land and acquisition of borough properties (including such property interests as trail easements and road rights-of-way). The Trail Dedication section is intended to set policy on trail easement acquisition as well as dedication of trails across Borough land.

A trail dedication procedure was written specifically for trail rather than road rights-of-way. Since adoption of this policy in 1994 only a few trails have been dedicated or accepted following this process. The process that has been more commonly used for trails is the one outlined in the Public Easements and Rights-of-Way section. Some of the criteria and policies included in the Trails Dedication section are:

- Trails shall be 10 to 60 foot wide rights-of-ways.
- All trails in non-remote areas require a registered land surveyor to identify the trail on a recorded subdivision plat or by metes and bounds description. (Non-remote areas are defined as those areas less than one mile from a road.
- Private landowners may donate the right-of-way for trails.
- The borough will not pursue prescriptive rights for trails across private lands, unless the trail falls within the guidelines of a federal RS 2477 grant.

The Public Easements and Rights-of-Way section has been relied upon in the past for dedication of trail rights-of-way. This is the same process used for dedicating road rights-of-way. Some of the criteria and policies included in this section are:

- A centerline survey by a Registered Land Surveyor is required unless waived by the Borough Manager,
- Insurance is required for all workers constructing the improvements within the right-of-way,
- Bonding may be required to insure the applicant complies with all terms of the agreement.

### Surveying Requirements for Dedications on Public Lands

One area that can add significantly to the expense of trail dedications on public lands is any need for a survey performed by a registered land surveyor (RLS). Both the borough and the state traditionally have relied on a RLS survey whenever dedicating easements across their lands. The cost of RLS surveys vary dramatically depending on the amount of monumentation in the area. For obtaining dedications of public use easements on public lands this can be the greatest expense. Although it is of utmost importance to assure that trails are not accidentally established in trespass across private lands, the expense of a RLS seems, at times, disproportionate to the need, especially when the survey is far from private lands and monumentation.

### *Surveying Recommendations*

In most instances, trails on public lands are unlikely to require the same level of accuracy as road dedications on private lands. Generally trails have less costly improvements and many trails could be rerouted for less than the cost of a RLS survey, if such a rerouting proved necessary. Especially in areas where lands are anticipated to be retained in public ownership the expense of a highly accurate survey burdens the trail developer and sometimes the land managing agencies with costs unnecessary for the level of accuracy needed. The borough and state should work to identify less costly surveying alternatives that meet an appropriate level of accuracy for dedication of trails.

## **Trail Access Through Private Property**

There are numerous methods that a municipality can use to acquire public access for trails across private lands. Local governments rely mostly on permanent dedications of public access to insure that public funds for trails and improvements are not wasted, whenever significant expenditures are required. A trail system and any improvements constructed based simply on the landowners permission would be at risk, since the landowner could revoke permission at will. Usually, public access that is granted in perpetuity is in the form of an easement or right-of-way.

For trails which are not critical for public access to a specific area and have negligible or minimal development costs, permanent dedications of public access may not be necessary. Short or long term leases or even written permission may be adequate under these situations. Winter trails more often meet these characteristics because of the lessened need for an improved surface or even a dry one. However, for an extensive winter trails system, the main or arterial trails should have a higher level of protection of public access than written permission or short term leases.

Obtaining easements or rights-of-way across private land can be expensive. Even if the landowner wishes to give a trail easement and expects no reimbursement, the surveying itself can cost thousands of dollars, yet is often a prudent expense.

Identifying cost effective mechanisms for obtaining public access is critical to the success of trail dedication efforts. Most local governments lack the financial resources to purchase all easements necessary to establish an adequate trails system.

The following methods are in use by local governments to obtain permanent dedications of public access. The borough is bound to abide by constitutional protections of private property and all of the methods included are conservatively designed to avoid any violation of these property rights. Each of these methods has significant disadvantages, usually cost, and a variety of different advantages. No single method is most effective in all situations.

- Negotiate with landowners to obtain voluntary dedication of trail easements or rights-of-ways.
- Identify a subdivision dedication process in which right-of-way for trails identified in the Borough Trails Plan can be acquired if and when the land upon which the identified trail lies is subdivided.
- Use the power of eminent domain to require a landowner to "sell" an easement or right-of-way for a trail at current fair market value established by an independent appraiser.
- Assert a public prescriptive easement for trails that are already in existence and have a documented history of use.



- Assert that trail construction constituted an RS 2477 Grant for trails that meet specific criteria concerning the development of a public road or trail while the land was in federal ownership.

Additionally, section line easements and unconstructed rights-of-way are available for public access. These existing easements are not regarded as one of the five methods of obtaining public access because they represent existing public access. Consideration needs to be given to the compatibility of the trail use with anticipated road related needs prior to relying extensively on this type of easement for trail use. However, use of such easements may be necessary and sufficient for recreational trails in many areas. It is difficult to research the existence of section line easements and other easements not already identified on borough tax maps. The borough should encourage the Division of Lands Mining and Water within the Alaska Department of Natural Resources to research and publish an easement atlas similar to those produced for the Copper Valley, Kenai Peninsula and Prince William Sound.

The following is a more detailed description of the five methods of obtaining public access across private property.

#### Negotiation with Landowner for Voluntary Dedication

The Borough can negotiate with landowners to obtain voluntary dedication of trail easements or rights-of-way. Some developers and landowners have voluntarily donated trail easements in order to promote a contiguous trail system or as a way to enhance the value of their subdivision. The advantage of this method is that it is not likely to be considered at all adversarial because it is entirely voluntary. The state form to dedicate an easement along a trail is included at the end of Chapter 4 of this plan.

There are several compelling reasons property owners may wish to consider dedicating a trail:

- Legal protection from liability resulting from public access (AS 34.17.055).
- Voluntary dedication allows the landowner to choose an appropriate route through their property.
- Reduction of income and/or property taxes.
- Once public access is obtained along the entire route the state and borough have authority to manage, maintain and improve the trail and trailhead. This authority is not applicable to private land and trails not open to public use.
- Enhanced property values and recreational opportunities resulting from immediate access to a publicly maintained trail.

#### *Negotiation Method Advantages and Disadvantages*

The primary benefit of this method is that it is not adversarial towards the landowner. The landowner is not being forced or coerced into unwanted action. Any success this method will result in will be through cooperative voluntary negotiation with property owners seeking to benefit from public trails and easy access to public recreation lands beyond the boundaries of his or her private lands.

One disadvantage of relying solely on voluntary dedications is that trail easements may never be granted in critical locations. A landowner may simply choose not to dedicate public access. The success of relying exclusively on this method is dependant upon the general perception amongst landowners of trails and their associated benefits and impacts. This method is generally more useful in developing trail connections not dependant on coordinated dedications of public access across numerous parcels of private property. The careful assistance of community members and local trail advocates can increase the likelihood of successful negotiation. Generally, landowners are more amenable to granting public access if they understand the dedication is a charitable contribution to a community supported cause rather than giving their land to the government. Local trail advocates and community members are better able to demonstrate community support and desire for the dedication simply by initiating the request themselves. Agency staff have less success explaining, rather than demonstrating, this community desire. Whenever negotiations are initiated by a third party, borough staff should carefully oversee these actions to insure the contact does not misrepresent the voluntary nature of these negotiations.

Another disadvantage of reliance on negotiation with landowners is that it is usually expensive to acquire trails in this manner. Financial incentives would likely increase the proportion of landowners dedicating trails and this expense is usually born directly by the local government. However, tax deductions and property tax exemptions can provide some financial incentives in the absence of monies for outright purchase of trail easements. A conservation easement is one type of easement that offers tax benefits to property owners. Conservation easements may allow landowners to deduct the value of the donated property from their taxable income and may exempt the easement from the portion of their taxable property. Conservation easements have not been commonly used by the borough and hence these advantages need to be further researched prior to their promotion and use.

A third disadvantage is the additional expense of a registered land surveyor. Most easements on private lands will require a survey to be performed by a registered land surveyor (RLS). However, an RLS survey may prevent later public access problems and should be considered an appropriate and unavoidable expenditure in most instances where a trail crosses private lands. When negotiating for easements with a private landowner it is unlikely the landowner would be willing to pay for the easement. Often, the surveying costs will need to be paid for by the borough or state.

### *Subdivision Dedication Process*

One of the most common methods local governments use to acquire trail easements is to require the dedication of public trail access as a condition of plat approval when undergoing the subdivision process. Legally, a municipality has limitations on the amount of property that can be required to be dedicated for a specific purpose when land is being subdivided. The amount of land which can be required to be dedicated (without compensation) must be somewhat related to the size of the subdivision and the need for public lands and amenities created by the subdivision. Two options for a subdivision dedication process are discussed below.

One potential funding source within the Borough is the Land Management Fund. This fund consists of money derived from the sale, lease, or use of real property to which the Borough has title, or which the Borough has selected; and from the sale of resources taken or extracted from such real property. Borough Code specifies the purposes for which the fund can be used. The development of trails is one of the many specified purposes.

#### Reservation of Easement with Full Reimbursement

A municipality can require the subdivider to reserve a proposed easement for a period of time, often one to two years, during which time the municipality must pay the subdivider an amount equal to the appraised value of the property dedicated (easement). The easement would not be dedicated, nor could it be used without the landowner's permission, until the municipality reimbursed the landowner for the dedication.

#### Reservation of Easement with Partial Reimbursement or Dedication without Reimbursement

A municipality can partially reimburse the subdivider for the trail dedication or require the dedication without any reimbursement. The municipality must have a systematic formula for deciding what proportion of the value of the easement would be reimbursed. This amount could be the value of the property (easement) dedicated minus some estimate of the cost of providing for the increased need for trails and other public recreational amenities resulting from the subdivision or some estimate of the increased benefit to the property owners. In instances where the value of the property dedicated is equal to the estimated increased cost or benefit of providing for trails, the subdivider would not receive any reimbursement.

For instance, based on the presumption that trails most benefit those located adjacent, or in close proximity, to a trail and the proposed subdivision itself will create sufficient need for the recreational opportunities provided by the trail, the Fairbanks North Star Borough requires dedication of trails during the subdivision process without reimbursement. It should be noted that many municipalities rely on the premise that, with few exceptions, the cost of providing recreational amenities or the benefit to present and future landowners is roughly equal to the value of the dedication, and is as necessary for the public's interest and benefit as are other required dedications for utilities and roads, for which no reimbursement is offered.

#### Subdivision Incentive Program

A related mechanism that local governments often use to develop both trails and maintain open space is to establish a point system allowing subdividers greater leeway on other development regulations if they dedicate open space or trail easements. For example a developer might be allowed to develop higher densities in exchange for a trail easement. This mechanism is favored by many developers since it gives them greater flexibility in developing their properties. However, in most areas of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough landowners are already granted the ability to subdivide to the highest density allowed by state law and the subdivision process does not have any further restrictions beyond developing (road) access to their properties. Hence, the Borough has little means of encouraging dedication of trail easements other than waiving the Borough's minimal subdivision fees.

## Large Lot Exactions

Many municipalities require dedication of a portion of the subdivided properties for certain municipal uses including parks and recreation purposes. The dedication is limited to parcels of sufficiently large size to allow a small but functional dedication to occur with minimal impact on the landowner's ability to develop the property. Many of the outlying areas adjacent to borough communities consist of large parcels owned by private organizations including native or quasi-public lands of 160 acres or more. A 1.5% parks and trails subdivision dedication requirement for lands this size and larger would enable trail connections to be established between the borough communities and more distant public lands.

## Subdivision Dedication Method Advantages and Disadvantages

One advantage of the various subdivision dedication processes is that it enables the local government to develop continuous trails if all private property owners along a route subdivide in accordance with the requirement. A number of subdivisions within the Borough have included recreational trail and pedestrian easements but because of lack of coordination with adjacent landowners to continue the trail, the public easement is usually very short and lacks a suitable origin and destination. Subdivision dedication requirements can help to maintain continuity of the trail as adjacent landowners subdivide.

Another advantage of this method is that the subdivider is able to situate lots in such a way as to minimize the trails impact on newly created lots. The subdivider would be able to prevent single lots from being bisected by a trail and, with cooperation between the landowner and the Borough Platting Division, have some flexibility over the location of the trail on the property to be subdivided.

Another advantage is the cost savings usually associated with this method. Although the borough is likely to still expend funds for at least partial reimbursement, the surveying costs of the trail are usually born by the subdivider as a part of his plat surveying requirements. In many instances, the cost of surveying is reduced since the subdivider already has a registered land surveyor on-site performing much of the needed work for the dedication.

An advantage of the subdivision dedication that is unlikely to be realized by the borough is the usually steady incremental expansion of a trails system. Property that has already been subdivided down to the smallest lot size likely to exist in the foreseeable future is scattered throughout the borough. Furthermore, existing regulations do not limit subdivision activity to incremental expansion of higher density, smaller lot size, areas. Hence, planning for and obtaining dedications of trails via the subdivision dedication process is unlikely to progress in steady incremental phases as it occurs in municipalities that have elected to manage their growth and development.

There are also disadvantages to this method, foremost of which is the extremely slow acquisition rate of recreational trail access. Since trail easements would be required at the time of

subdivision, acquisition of easements would only progress at the rate of subdivision activity along the length of the trail. If one parcel along the length of the proposed trail was not subdivided until the year 2098 then relying solely on the subdivision dedication process would not provide legal recreational trail access across the property until 2098.

Although neither an advantage nor a disadvantage, the subdivision process is often the last viable opportunity to acquire public access through critical tracts of private land. The newly created parcels of property are often sold soon after the subdivision process, usually to multiple different parties and often with development soon following. The difficulties of obtaining public access increase dramatically if trail dedications are not obtained before or during the subdivision process.

### Eminent Domain

Eminent domain is a process governments use to acquire properties for the benefit of the public. This process requires the landowner to relinquish the necessary property. Constitutionally, the Borough is required to provide just compensation (fair market value) to the landowner. A third party appraisal is usually required to substantiate the fair market value.

#### *Eminent Domain Advantages and Disadvantages*

An advantage of this method is that it can occur relatively quickly when compared to subdivision dedications. Since the process need not wait until a property owner wishes to subdivide, this method takes only as long as the procedural requirements dictate.

Some disadvantages of this process are that it can be considered very heavy handed and adversarial towards the landowner. It is indeed the most direct way local governments acquire private property for specific public needs. Although the property owner is compensated it is not a voluntary sale.

Another disadvantage is cost. The borough must not only compensate the landowner for the full market value of the interest in the property acquired, but will also have to pay for any surveying and other acquisition costs such as obtaining a title search and an independent third party appraisal.

### Public Prescriptive Easements

Establishing public access across private property through public use for an extended period of time is often cited as one way in which trails are “protected” from being blocked by the landowner. Indeed, the courts have upheld the right of a person or the public to use land based on the continuous and blatant use of another’s property over an extended period of time without permission and a number of other vaguely defined criteria. This is referred to as a public prescriptive easement. There is no adopted law on when or how public prescriptive easements are created, rather a “common law” was established based on numerous court cases throughout

the United States. However, state courts define the local precedent and there are few cases in Alaska clearly defining the necessary characteristics.

### *Prescriptive Easements Advantages and Disadvantages*

Until further court cases are decided by the Alaskan courts, it is difficult to estimate whether a trail might be considered to have a public prescriptive easement. The viability of asserting prescriptive rights must be estimated on a case by case basis due to the large number of individual characteristics that have been a consideration in such cases nationwide.

In situations where there seems to be a fairly clear cut case and the landowner acknowledges a public right to access, asserting a public prescriptive easement could be viewed as an inexpensive and nonaggressive method of acquiring an easement. However, if the landowner objects and a court battle ensues this method is likely to be expensive. Asserting a public prescriptive right may be less costly than purchasing the easement either voluntarily or through the condemnation process if the case seems to clearly favor the local government. If the situation is marginal, it may be less expensive to purchase the easement through voluntary negotiation than to incur potentially significant legal expenses.

In addition to the adversarial nature of this method of acquisition, there are additional disadvantages to the landowner. The easement, if successfully asserted, will exist along the alignment of the trail rather than a mutually agreeable alternative route. Additionally, both parties incur legal expenses. The legal expenses of the local government could just as easily have been available to the landowner, as an incentive for voluntary dedication.

Not all lands are subject to prescriptive easements. Some undeveloped native lands and public lands are exempt from prescriptive easements or any other form of adverse possession.

### Revised Statute 2477

Revised Statute 2477 (RS 2477) is a congressional grant (federal law) of the Lode Mining Act of 1866. Revised Statute 2477 granted broad rights-of-way over unappropriated federal lands wherever roads, trails, paths or other common routes existed. The law remained in effect until its repeal in 1976.

The law read:

*"The right of way for the construction of highways over public lands, not reserved for public uses, is hereby granted."*

In 1993 the State of Alaska initiated an effort to identify those trails with sufficient historical evidence of use to qualify as RS 2477 rights-of-way. This was done to allow the state to assert a number of trails as legal rights-of-way prior to the federal government revising the regulations as they would apply to federal lands.

The Alaska legislature has recognized over 600 of these rights-of-way-in statute. To date the state has identified 68 trails within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough that are recognized as RS 2477 rights-of-way. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Law have worked for many years to document and secure title to the state's R.S. 2477 rights-of-way. The 68 trails identified during the RS 2477 project are listed on the state webpage at: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/trails/rs2477/>.

### *Revised Statute 2477 Advantages and Disadvantages*

The advantages and disadvantages of asserting an RS 2477 are essentially the same as for prescriptive easements. Asserting an RS 2477 grant exists must be considered on a case by case basis and little precedent exists to clearly indicate the likelihood of success.

### Proposed Methods of Acquisition

Of the methods available to the borough for acquiring public access across private property, two methods are proposed. The borough is recommending public access be acquired by voluntary dedication through negotiation with landowners (for lands not undergoing subdivision) and the subdivision dedication process for lands larger than 160 acres and lands which have regionally or locally significant trails identified in this plan. The borough should amend the existing subdivision regulations to include appropriate acquisition procedures. Additionally the borough should further review and research the feasibility of such incentives as income tax deductions for land charitably dedicated to the public for trail recreation. These methods are proposed because they are the least adversarial approaches. The respective actions are either initiated by, or voluntarily agreed to, by the landowner. Although neither method assures necessary public access will ever be obtained these two methods are considered an appropriate first step towards legally preserving public access along the borough's informally established trails system.

Trails across private lands should generally be acquired in the form of a conservation easement, regardless of the method of acquisition, to allow property owners to take advantage of tax benefits. Furthermore, this method when reasonably applicable would reserve the easement for trail use only and prevent unintentional creation of secondary subdivision roads.

Use of eminent domain or asserting either public prescriptive rights or RS 2477 dedications is not proposed as a method to implement this plan. These alternative methods are still available at the discretion of the assembly, but may not be initiated without assembly directive.

It should be noted that the subdivision dedication requirement is the only trail development "tool" proposed in this plan that is unavailable to any organization or individual other than the borough. All other steps in the development of a single trail or an entire trail system are available to private individuals and organizations.

## **Volunteer Program**

The second major component in developing the Borough Recreational Trails Plan is to establish an active, coordinated volunteer program. Volunteer organizations such as the Mat-Su Trails Council, Aurora International, Mat-Su Motor Musers and others have been very successful at cost effectively developing, improving and maintaining trails within the Borough. A volunteer program is needed to coordinate these existing efforts and to encourage other organizations to help develop a trails system within the Borough.

### ***Adopt-a-Trail Program***

One such program is the Adopt-a-Trail Program. The Adopt-a-Trail Program would encourage trail user groups, service areas, homeowners associations or service organizations to enter into cooperative agreements with the State and Borough. The cooperative agreements would define the organizations and the State and Borough's responsibilities. In many instances this may merely be a formalization of an existing maintenance routine that private organizations and individuals are already involved in.

Cooperative agreements should be sought for those trails which are identified components of the Borough's Recreational Trails Program. They should normally be in place prior to the borough promoting the trail for public use. In some situations it may be necessary to develop cooperative agreements earlier in the process in order for the Borough to meet maintenance requirements of state or federal grants. They should be implemented in cooperation with the city or local community council within which the trail is located in order to avoid conflicting areas of responsibility.

Depending on the conditions and use of a particular trail, the agreements should provide for a level of care to ensure that the trail is in reasonably safe condition for its intended use. The agreements could range from minimal safety inspections of trail conditions to regular grooming and track setting which might be needed on competitive cross country ski trails. Aurora International has been involved in grooming snowmachine trails in the Big Lake area for several years now and has been reasonably successful in recouping a portion of their costs through voluntary donations and indirect benefits to those businesses sponsoring this maintenance. Several lodges around the Borough have also been actively maintaining winter recreation trails.

## **Design, Maintenance, and Management of Trails**

Recreational trail use will continue and is likely to increase throughout the Matanuska and Susitna valleys regardless of any involvement of the borough. This trails plan is an opportunity to address public concerns and alleviate the negative impacts which can be a byproduct of an unplanned and unmanaged trails system. Good design, careful planning and agency support can significantly decrease negative impacts. Borough landowners that currently are negatively impacted by trails will benefit from efforts to develop or improve a recreational trails system by altering the location and design of the existing system in ways that minimize this negative impact.



Poorly designed, located and managed trails threaten to reduce the overall recreational opportunities within the borough by compelling public land managers and private landholders to close lands to trail use. The need to negotiate with private landowners for public access on many within the borough dictate that trail users themselves will have significant impact on the long term recreation opportunities available by establishing the landowners attitude towards trails.

It is paramount that all levels of government, as well as recreational trail users, user groups and recreation related businesses, endorse policies that minimize negative impacts of trail use in order to assist the borough's efforts to preserve and expand the existing trails system and negotiate with landowners for voluntary dedication of public access along critical trail linkages.

One of the most important factors in minimizing trail impacts on private properties, is the careful selection of which trails to include within the borough's recreational trail program. These practices noted below, should be routinely implemented as much as individual situations allow.

### ***Route Selection Considerations***

In earlier years, routes within the borough were established following the 'path of least resistance.' Topography was the first, and for many years only, determining factor in developing a trail accessing a specific location. On summer or four-season trails, this sometimes included informal consideration of soil suitability in regards to avoiding wet, swampy conditions or steep terrain. Winter trails often were established relying on swamps, rivers or any other areas devoid of high brush and forests.

Topography is still the foremost constraint regarding route selection in mountainous, hilly and wet areas. However, property ownership has become a significant factor in the route selection process. These two criteria, property ownership and topography, often conflict. Many of the trails within the borough cross private lands somewhere along their length, generally not by choice, but because of topographical constraints. Often, unavoidable private land is limited to a few parcels located near the trailhead and road system where private land ownership is much more prevalent.

Reliance on voluntary dedications and the proposed subdivision reservation process will have limited effectiveness. The greater the number of parcels for which public access must be obtained, the less likely a trail will obtain public access along its entire length in the near future. The selection of routes for inclusion in the borough's trail plan must give consideration to the borough's ability to eventually, provide legal public access. Hence, property ownership has become a significant factor on route selection for inclusion in this trails plan. Yet selecting only trails which are distant from any private lands for inclusion within this trails plan would not provide a functional trail system that is integrated with any of the borough's communities. This trails plan has sought to select those routes that balance the recreational desires of the community's recreationalists against the difficulties of acquiring public access and property owners concerns regarding potential negative impacts associated with a trail.

Finally, certain species of wildlife are more sensitive to the presence of man and the additional impacts on sensitive wildlife must be a consideration. The negative impacts on wildlife can include destruction of salmon spawning habitat, disturbance of nesting bird sites including those used by the threatened trumpeter swan, and displacement of animals wary of humans such as brown bear, wolves, lynx and others. This problem is somewhat compounded by the fact that many of the most elusive and wary animals are often the most sought after for viewing. Coordination with the background information and recommendations in other plans such as the Denali State Park Master Plan and the Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan has helped prevent the inclusion of trails in sensitive wildlife areas.

### ***Rerouting to Minimize Impacts***

In addition to selecting routes that require obtaining little or no dedication of public access across private land, rerouting of trails may be done to minimize the negative impacts on adjacent private lands. Nearby public lands suitable for trail development may allow for the rerouting of a trail without loss of the qualities that made the trail desirable. When practical to do so, the trail should be rerouted to a distant sufficient to buffer private lands from the potential negative impacts of regionally significant trails. Buffer distances that are considered appropriate depend on a variety of conditions and the use of the trail. Greater separation should be pursued whenever possible to do so without increased expense or loss of desirable trail qualities.

In addition to the need to reroute trails to minimize impacts on private property, it may be desirable to reroute trails to locations that better accommodate the trail user. Soil conditions destine some trails to exist as a mud bog. It may be easier to reroute a four season trail to avoid unsuitable soils and topography than to improve the existing trail. Winter trail users can also benefit from rerouting to avoid less than ideal topography. Rivers and lakes, although an ideal trail surface once adequately frozen, limit the trail user to later in the season and create additional hazards that alternative overland routes avoid. Trail users seeking to reach the same areas served by routes reliant on frozen rivers and lakes are likely to try to search for alternative overland routes if sufficient snow exists prior to freeze up.

In order for rerouting of trails to be most successful the routes must be well marked and of sufficiently high quality to deter recreationalists from using the former trail. If the replacement trail is an inadequate substitute, the success of any effort to reroute traffic is likely to be marginal.

### ***Trailheads***

The level of improvements, management, and maintenance needed at trailheads is dependant upon a variety of conditions. Optimally all trailheads would be located near well traveled roads, away from private property and have all needed facilities including offloading ramps for vehicles, restrooms, signage and mapping. Although there is more federal transportation funding available for these kinds of improvements than in years past, realistically, both the state and the borough must prioritize their use of limited financial resources. The number of trailheads serving existing and proposed trails in this plan exceed the borough's current ability to provide a

full complement of trailhead facilities at every trailhead, nor is this the most cost effective manner to provide needed services. Additionally it should be noted that while the borough may work to secure sufficient land for a trailhead, trailhead improvements and construction should not occur until a legal route of public access is established along the trail which is served by the trailhead.

The location of a trailhead can significantly influence the level of ongoing maintenance and management necessary to provide a safe and clean trailhead with minimal impact on adjacent private property owners. Most of the trails included in this plan are commonly used existing trails which have either dedicated and improved, or informally established, trailheads. In most instances the existing trailhead is in an accepted location. Moving the trailhead will introduce any associated impacts to a new area. Relocation of an existing trailhead should only be done if a clearly superior alternative is available, or if the trail currently receives very minimal level of use and does not have an area commonly used as an informal trailhead.

If the informally established trailhead is currently located on private property an alternative location may need to be chosen prior to establishing a developed trailhead. Additionally, new trails and trails that do not have a clearly established location for the trailhead offer the opportunity to choose a location that will minimize potential negative effects, minimize maintenance costs and maximize benefits to recreationalists and businesses. Topography and property ownership usually limit where a trailhead may be located, but there are definitive preferences when options exist.

### Trailhead Location Considerations

Trailheads are more accessible, easier for visitors to find, and easier to be monitored and maintained if they are located near well traveled roads. Due to the noise, headlights and other minor intrusions commonly associated with arterial highways and collector streets, the impacts of nearby trailheads would be less noticeable than in areas consisting of quieter, less traveled residential streets. Additionally, most arterial and collector level roads are state owned and maintained and, given past funding patterns; appear more likely to receive federal transportation enhancement funds. Transportation enhancement funds are the largest single source of monies available for trailhead improvements.

Increased visibility or, 'informal public surveillance' tends to deter vandalism, partying and other inappropriate behavior. Trailheads which are used throughout the year, may have sufficient use to deter inappropriate behavior because of the prevalence of other people at the trailhead. However, most trailheads should be somewhat visible from the highest level of use road in the area to be able to observe activities occurring during nighttime and other times/seasons less likely to have trail users.

If other options exist the borough should avoid establishing trailheads in low traffic volume areas. Preferably trailheads should be sufficiently visible from a road right-of-way to observe partying and other inappropriate behavior.

One way to dramatically reduce both positive and negative impacts on adjacent private properties is to separate trailheads from nearby private lands. Virtually all impacts on property are mitigated by distance. Trailheads for trails that receive the majority of use by non-local trail users, (regionally significant trails), should be located away from private lands whenever it is practical to do so without detracting from the trails functionality to all likely user groups and without incurring excessive trail realignment costs. Where practical a distance of 1/4 mile between private property and the trailhead is suggested for regionally significant trails when trees and other forms of sound buffering are unavailable.

For trails which primarily serve the recreational needs of nearby residents, moving trailheads far from the local population reduces the benefit and use of the trail.

Some private landowners and developers clearly benefit from well designed, managed and maintained trailheads adjacent to their property. Recreation related businesses in particular market themselves specifically to trail users and some lodges and inns provide and maintain their own trailheads accessing trails on adjacent public lands.

An additional method of mitigating the negative impacts of a trailhead is with additional on-site management and maintenance which can be encouraged by coordinating land uses. The State and Borough may wish to coordinate provision of trailhead facilities and maintenance of the trail with those lodges and recreation related businesses relying upon and promoting trail use. Most lodges already function as a private trailhead so that lodge owners can benefit from the patronage of trail users. In instances where such an opportunity presents itself the existing business often creates many of the same impacts as a trailhead. Increased maintenance at a coordinated business/trailhead may offset the additional impact of a trailhead closer to private property more than distance if the increased maintenance must be sacrificed for distance. Lodges and businesses must maintain their parking lots and provide on-site maintenance of their restroom facilities. Increased maintenance may be more easily facilitated by coordinating with businesses. Publicly maintained trailheads require separate additional facilities be maintained usually with off-site staff that must be compensated for travel time to various facilities and maintenance shops.

The cost and inefficiency of providing a separate publicly maintained trailhead is more significant during the winter. Maintaining access to a trailhead requires additional snowplowing if necessary to access the trailhead and snow removal at the trailhead itself. Economical pit toilets which lack heat and running water, are commonly relied upon by the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, but are inadequate for extensive winter use and cannot be efficiently cleaned. The cleanliness of these restroom facilities gradually deteriorate as frozen human waste and effluent build up. Often these unsanitary conditions remain until spring thaw, the first feasible opportunity to adequately clean the unheated facility. Trailhead users are often compelled to use alternative sites when restrooms deteriorate to these conditions. The construction of heated restroom facilities with running water, and associated maintenance including snowplowing and cleaning is often cost prohibitive for trails in use only during winter months. A cost effective solution to winter restroom facilities is a regularly maintained port-a-potty.

Businesses served by the trails should be encouraged to enter into cooperative agreements with the state or the borough to provide at least a portion of these amenities to the public as well as their paying customers. Practicality considerations such as the amount of land available for additional public parking and increased demand on facilities dictate that such agreements be worked out on a case by case basis.

### Trailhead Improvements and Design Considerations

Safety related improvements are the highest priority and, if needed, should be performed as soon as it is evident there is a right of public access along a contiguous length of trail that is receiving either a relatively high or increasing number of visits/trips. Increasing use implies that new users, unfamiliar with the trail, are being drawn to the trail for whatever reason. Safety related improvements at the trailhead would mostly consist of information about hazardous situations particular to that trail. Where pertinent this would include warnings about summer or winter river crossings, bear encounters, avalanche and landslide dangers or otherwise steep, difficult to negotiate and potentially hazardous sections of the trail. By posting warnings at the trailhead, trail users would be able to evaluate their preparedness for the hazard and take appropriate action before venturing out.

Additionally, trailhead parking can be a significant safety issue if insufficient parking is available. Cars parked in unsafe proximity to the traveled highway or road, blocking sight distances and blocking access to driveways and side streets are a significant hazard. Trailheads serving motorized trails must allow for ample parking of tailored vehicles.

Information kiosks should be installed to allow for dissemination of a variety of trail related information. Such kiosks should provide individuals with up to date information about trails, destinations, and hazards. Additionally these kiosks should include signs and information promoting safe and courteous trail etiquette. A secured complaint/suggestion/donation box should be installed and the phone number of state and borough managing agencies should be clearly visible to allow for more immediate public attention on urgent issues.

Gates and limitations on the hours of operation may be appropriate for areas which are not in visible areas in order to discourage inappropriate use. This will be limited to those trails that are primarily day use trails not commonly relied on for overnight trips.

Gates may also be needed to close winter trails and trailheads to summer motorized recreational use (although in some situations it may be necessary to provide summer access to property owners in a region through distribution of a gate key to property owners).

### ***Management of Trails***

As technology advances the proportion of trail users continues to increase. Additionally, the population (and consequently, the number of recreationalists) within the borough is currently growing at a rate faster than other regions within the state. Trail conflicts between separate user

groups are likely to increase as trail use increases. It is important for the borough to take some pro-active steps to insure that these conflicts are minimized.

Trails should be managed so as to provide the greatest recreational benefit to those types of recreational trail uses for which the trail is uniquely suited. If due to certain characteristics the trail is an ideal snowmachine trail and dog teams are difficult to negotiate on the trail and pose a potential hazard then it may be necessary to restrict dog teams. Conversely, if the trail consists of uniquely interesting topography accessible within a distance most suited to non-motorized travel and motorized use is likely to create sufficient erosion to deteriorate the trail, then it may be necessary to limit motorized uses.

Additionally, some trails may be designated only winter trails to limit the amount of erosion or environmental impact on fish and wildlife.

The borough will monitor developing conditions and comments received from the suggestion/complaint boxes at the trailheads and other forms of public input. When it appears that certain problems are endemic that may be resolved with management the management regulations may be initiated by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board.

In addition to the nomination process for adding trails to the trails plan a nomination process should be established to identify areas to be retained as primitive trail-less areas or seasonally limit uses. By allowing nominations to occur to identify both new trails and areas to be retained as primitive the borough may be able to better balance the sometimes competing interests of its property owners. Similar to the definition and criteria identifying locally or regionally significant trails the Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board should identify clearly understood criteria for evaluating nominated regulations.

Certain trails are topographically constrained to less than ideal locations to minimize impacts on adjacent property owners. It is suggested that trails in difficult to manage areas be excluded from promotional maps and literature until there is a track record of adequately managing the trailhead. Trailheads that are immediately adjacent to developed private lands on remote and sparsely traveled roads require more on-sight management to mitigate impacts. Little used trails with these characteristics should not be advertised until sufficient staffing is available to adequately handle the increased use.

### ***Policy Recommendations for Other Public and Private Organizations***

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is only one participant in the development and management of trails within the Matanuska and Susitna Valleys. In addition to the policies which the borough will implement as a part of its own recreational trail program, borough staff will work with other groups and agencies that may be able to more effectively and efficiently address specific issues. Because of increased trail recreation, increased trail funding and increased number of trail related recreation oriented businesses the issue of how to best manage, maintain and develop trails is being evaluated by numerous public and private organizations. The state's ongoing trails

planning effort and those of the borough's cities and several private organizations make this an ideal time to coordinate actions and identify specific agency roles in the development, management and funding of trail programs. The borough wishes to encourage adoption of the following policies by other organizations involved in trail management, use and dedication in order to minimize potential negative impacts of trail recreation and provide sufficient resources for development of a well managed trail system:

- Encourage the state and federal government, in addition to the borough government to provide more on-sight management of their respective public lands. The majority of trail use in the borough is associated with the 59% of the borough that is owned by the State of Alaska rather than the 2% of land that is owned by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The states on-sight management of outdoor recreation in the borough is focused almost exclusively at either the few state parks/recreation areas or management of fish and game resources rather than trails. The borough needs to strongly encourage the state to more actively manage the recreational trail use that has emerged on state lands, but left un-managed, can have negative spillover effects on private properties.
- Encourage the state to adopt a state-wide recreational equipment tax which would specifically allocate funds to the development, management and maintenance of trails. Statewide taxation would benefit the borough far more than local taxation, since it would not unfavorably impact local businesses and much of the outdoor gear used in the borough is purchased elsewhere. To ensure that adequate funding for trails within the borough is obtained from the state, the borough should encourage the state to adopt the policy of allocating trail funds based on where trail recreation occurs, rather than other measures such as population or sales volume.
- Promote the idea of peer policing to promote a higher level of trail ethics amongst user groups. The negative impacts of trail use, even perceived impacts, can dramatically reduce and eliminate public support for trails and trail funding.
- Encourage recreation related businesses and trail user groups to initiate educational campaigns to minimize the impacts of trail use.
- Encourage recreation related businesses and trail user groups to provide trail maintenance management and grooming.
- Encourage the state to require and aggressively enforce statewide registration of snowmachines and four-wheelers. Annual registration fees of at least \$50 should be directed towards trail maintenance and management. Fines for non-compliance should be substantial enough to cover the trooper/ranger cost of enforcement of the registration requirement. This policy is being promoted by several snowmachine user groups and government agencies as a method to increase trail funding. However, this policy could also be designed to promote more accountability amongst the few trail users that create the greatest concern and public opposition to trail dedication and development by making them more easily identifiable. Some of the vehicle identification methods that should be considered include requiring placement of large reflective identification numbers in a highly visible location, or three dimensional numbers on the track of a snowmachine to leave an identifiable impression in the snow wherever the snowmachine travels. For either of these identification methods to work the state must aggressively enforce such registration

requirements. Even if this policy only manages to increase the trail users perception of being identifiable and accountable, it will succeed in discouraging negative behavior.

- Work with the state, motorized user groups and retail businesses selling motorized trail vehicles to develop policies regarding noise reduction. Consider banning the use of aftermarket exhaust systems and other products which increase noise above that of a 'stock' vehicle if that vehicle exceeds a specified decibel level.
- Encourage the state to make trail maintenance and grooming a requirement for entities promoting large group trail events.
- Encourage the state to develop an easement atlas for the Borough similar to its development of the Copper Valley Easement Atlas and other easement atlases developed for different regions throughout the state.
- Encourage the State to provide surveying staff support to trail dedication projects.
- Encourage The Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau to allocate a portion of the borough's 5% bed tax toward trail maintenance, development and preservation. Currently the borough's visitor industry reaps significant economic benefits from trail users and its promotion of, in many cases, undedicated trails. The allocation of a portion of the bed tax to developing a legally established trails system would ensure the preservation of this economic benefit by taxing visiting recreationalists rather than borough residents and property owners.



## **REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT TRAILS AND TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section includes a listing of trails approved for inclusion in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Recreational Trails Plan, plus any amendments approved subsequent to these dates. The trails listed here are considered “regionally significant” (*described below*) and are considered a starting point for the development of a more integrated trail system.

It is a goal of this plan to promote the development of a network of trails, which requires additional input from communities on how to best connect existing routes to improve recreational opportunities and community hubs.

Community hubs should be designed so that food, gas and lodging are available to trail users allowing community businesses to economically benefit from the trails and ensuring a greater level of safety and convenience for trail users. Proposed designs for community hubs should be reviewed by the respective community councils. Community hubs that are designed with the input of local residents, businesses and landowners are more likely to better serve the community’s needs and address local concerns.

Although, the vast remoteness and topography of the borough has led to the development of winter trails suitable for snowmachining, the desire of the Borough is to provide and preserve sufficient trails to meet the needs of all user groups. In order to do so, additional input is still needed from all user groups. There are many aspects to consider when implementing the plan, but the first step in implementation is to secure public access along these trails, and then encourage active management.

### Locally significant trails

Locally significant trails have not been identified within this plan since it is intended that local groups and community councils would be responsible for identifying locally significant trails in the respective community comprehensive plans.

### Separated paths

Separated paths are included in the Borough’s Transportation Improvement Program as enhancement projects and funded with federal highway dollars and state transportation funds. Separated paths have these two sources of funding which are unavailable to most primitive non-urban trails. The nomination process for separated paths is a part of the Borough’s annual Capital Improvement Process. Existing and proposed separated paths are also identified in the Borough’s Recreation and Open Space Plan.

### Regionally Significant Trails

The following trails are considered regionally significant. They provide significant recreational opportunities to people outside the area they are located within (often they are destinations in themselves) and therefore deserve higher priority when it comes to funding for maintenance and management.

The information provided for each trail and the mapping included in the plan is what is known at this time. Further research detailing trail alignments, trail conditions, public rights of way, and property ownership will occur as the implementation of this plan is accomplished.

1.     Crevasse-Moraine

A non-motorized year round trail system maintained by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough for hiking, running, Nordic skiing, mountain biking, horse back riding and snowshoeing. A user fee is collected at the trailhead south of Palmer-Wasilla Highway. Some of the trails are located on land designated for landfill purposes and may be lost when new landfill cells are developed. Plans include re-establishing trailhead and trails east of the current location.

*Shown on Map 5. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*

Recommendation: Create a trail replacement plan that includes development and management goals for the borough-owned lands reserved for public recreation east and south of Crevasse Moraine area.

2.     Matanuska Lakes

A pedestrian year round trail system located within the Matanuska Lakes State Recreation Area and maintained by Alaska State Parks for hiking and lake access. A State Park use fee is collected at the park entrance north of Glenn Highway.

*Shown on Map 5. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*

Recommendation: Coordinate with the Alaska State Parks and the University of Alaska to relocate and improve the trail connections between Crevasse-Moraine and Matanuska Lakes and enhance recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

3.     Long Lake Connector (Palmer Area)

A non-motorized year round trail located between Matanuska Lakes State Recreation Area to the Crevasse Moraine Trail System. The trail provides an important link between these larger trail systems. The land it crosses is primarily owned by the University of Alaska.

*Shown on Map 5. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*

Recommendations: Acquire a public recreation trail easement across University land so public use is reserved in perpetuity, or obtain a renewable land use permit to insure public use of the trail from year to year.

4. **Lazy Mountain**  
A pedestrian year round trail maintained by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough for hiking. MSB fees collected for parking at trailhead south of Huntley Road. The trail has been surveyed and a public easement acquired.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, trail marking and trailhead development.
5. **Matanuska Peak**  
A pedestrian year round trail maintained by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. MSB fees collected for parking at trailhead located at the east end of Smith Road. The trail has been surveyed and a public easement acquired.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.
6. **Plumley-Maude**  
A multi-use year round trail maintained by the Matanuska Susitna Borough, with trailhead parking north of Plumley Road, or off road parking at the east end of Maud Road. The trail crosses Borough-owned land and is reserved for recreation.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.
7. **Rippy Trail**  
A multi-use year round trail located in the newly established Knik River Public Use Area, which is under State management. There is limited parking near Jim Lake and Mud Lake. Use of the trail may be restricted when the Management Plan is adopted by the State.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Coordinate with DNR/Division of Mining Land and Water to improve trail and trailhead.
8. **Burnt Butte Trail**  
A multi-use year round trail that provides a connection between the Rippy Trail and the Plumley-Maud Trail. This trail crosses Eklutna Native Corporation lands and has a 17b public use easement, which is 25' wide and restricted to non-motorized uses.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development. Coordinate any improvements with Eklutna Native Corporation.

9. **Swan Lake Canoe (aka Jim-Mud Lake Canoe)**  
 A water route for canoes and kayaks located in the newly established Knik River Public Use Area under State management. There is a put-in and small parking area near Mud Lake, just south of the Maud Road Extension (Rippy Trail).  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
 Recommendation: Coordinate with DNR/Division of Mining Land and Water for funding to improve portages and launch sites, and interpretive signage.
  
10. **Sexton**  
 A multi-use year round trail located in the newly established Knik River Public Use Area, and under State management. The trail provides access to the Jim Creek and Knik River areas. There is trailhead parking south of Sullivan Road near the corner of Caudill Road. A portion of this trail is located on Borough-owned land reserved for recreation.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
 Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.
  
11. **West Bodenbug Butte**  
 A pedestrian year round trail maintained by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough for hiking. MSB fees collected for parking at a trailhead off Mothershead Lane (just south of Bodenbug Loop Road). This trail was built by the Borough in 2002 to replace the privately owned trail on the southeast side of the butte.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
 Recommendation: Create a plan for the trail and recreation land that includes development, expansion and management goals.
  
12. **Wolverine Creek**  
 A multi-use year round primitive trail with limited roadside parking off Clark Wolverine Road. It follows the creek on the northeast side of the drainage to the headwaters.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
 Recommendations: Survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement.
  
13. **Carpenter Creek (Bartko Homestead)**  
 A multi-use year round primitive trail east of Clark Wolverine Road heading east above the Matanuska River. A portion of this trail crosses land owned by Moose Creek-Chickaloon Native Corporation and has a 17b easement reserved for public use.  
*Shown on Maps 1, 2 and 5. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
 Recommendations: Survey location and document public right of way, or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary.

14. **Wasilla Creek Headwaters**  
A multi-use year round trail with a small trailhead at the east end of Wendt Road. Located in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range, some of the area is managed by Division of Forestry. Access is also available from Murphy Road, just west of Buffalo Mine Road. *Shown on Maps 1, 2 and 5. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.* This trail has been surveyed and an application for a public recreation trail easement has been submitted to the State of Alaska.  
Recommendations: Acquire public recreation trail easement. Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Forestry to improve trails and recreation opportunities.
15. **Moose Creek Branch RR**  
A trail atop the old rail corridor owned by the Alaska RR and permitted to the Borough for use as a pedestrian trail. Vegetation obscures much of the old route, but it can be hiked. Access is from the parking lot at the Moose Creek State Wayside. *Shown on Maps 1, 2 and 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trails Plan.*  
Recommendations: Locate RR right of way Survey and re-establish RR route for pedestrian trail use.
16. **Wishbone Strip Mine**  
A multi-use winter trail accessible from Buffalo Mine Road and Jonesville Road, it is located in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range. *Shown on Maps 1, 2 and 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan*  
Recommendations: Survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary. Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Mining, Land and Water to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.
17. **Baxter Mine**  
Multi-use year round trail located in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range and accessible from Buffalo Mine Road or Jonesville Road. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement requested from the State of Alaska  
*Shown on Maps 1, 2 and 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan*  
Recommendations: Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Mining, Land and Water to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.
18. **Premier Mine**  
Multi-use year round trail located in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range and accessible from Buffalo Mine Road or Jonesville Road. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement requested from the State of Alaska.  
*Shown on Maps 1, 2 and 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan*  
Recommendations: Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Mining, Land and Water to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.

19. 17 Mile Lake  
Multi-use year round trail located in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range and accessible from Buffalo Mine Road or Jonesville Road. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement requested from the State of Alaska  
*N Shown on Maps 1, 2 and 5. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans*  
Recommendations: Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Mining, Land and Water to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.
20. Wishbone Hill  
Multi-use year round trail located in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range and accessible from Buffalo Mine Road or Jonesville Road. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement requested from the State of Alaska.  
*Shown on Maps 1 and 2. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trails Plan*  
Recommendations: Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Mining, Land and Water to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.
21. Knob Creek (Knob Hill)  
Multi-use year round trail located in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range and accessible from Jonesville Road.  
*Shown on Map 2. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trails Plan*  
Recommendations: Survey location and document public right of way, or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary. Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Mining, Land and Water to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.
22. Eska Creek Falls  
Pedestrian year round trail located north of Sutton and accessible from the old Eska Mine Road. The trail has been surveyed and a public easement acquired.  
*Shown on Map 2. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development. Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Mining, Land and Water to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.
23. King River  
A multi-use year round trail located in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range east of Sutton. This trail is part (or a branch of) the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail and has a RS 2477 designation. It heads east across the King River toward the old town of Chickaloon. The trail has been surveyed and a public easement acquired for the portion west of the King River.  
*Shown on Map 2. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development. Coordinate

with the DNR/Division of Mining, Land and Water to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.

24. **Young Creek**  
A multi-use year round trail located in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range and accessible from the King River Trail. It has been surveyed.  
*Shown on Map 2. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Acquire a public recreation trail easement. Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Mining, Land and Water to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.
25. **Permanente (aka Castle Mountain)**  
A multi-use year round trail with limited roadside parking off the Glenn Highway. A portion of the trail has an Alaska Division of Land public right of way for access to private lands adjacent to trail. Located in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range.  
*Shown on Map 2. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Survey location and acquire public use easement where necessary. Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Mining, Land and Water to improve trail and recreation opportunities in this area.
26. **Palmer-Sutton RR (aka Matanuska Branch RR)**  
Pedestrian year round trail that follows an abandoned rail corridor from Palmer to Sutton, and which is permitted to the MSB for pedestrian trail use. Roadside parking off Eagle Street in Palmer and at Moose Creek State Wayside. Several rock slides make the trail difficult and sometimes dangerous to follow between Palmer and Moose Creek. Much of the rail corridor is overgrown with vegetation or eroded away upriver of Moose Creek.  
*Shown on Maps 1, 2 and 5. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Work with communities to determine an alternate route.
27. **Mint Glacier (Little Susitna River)**  
Pedestrian year round trail managed by Alaska State Parks for hiking and backcountry access. Within the Hatcher Pass Management Area. State park use fee collected at trailhead off of Hatcher Pass Road.  
*Shown on Maps 1 and 2. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans; and Hatcher Pass Management Area Plan.*  
Recommendation: Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Parks to improve trails and recreation opportunities.
28. **Archangel**  
Use varies - year round trail managed by Alaska State Parks for backcountry access. Used for access to Reed Lake Trail and Fern Mine Trail.  
*Shown on Maps 1 and 2. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan; and Hatcher Pass Management Area Plan.*

Recommendation: Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Parks to improve trails and recreation opportunities.

29. Reed Lake – Snowbird Mine

Pedestrian year round trail within the Hatcher Pass Management area. Maintained by Alaska State Parks for hiking and backcountry access. Trailhead parking off Archangel Road. Trailhead parking needs work.

*Shown on Maps 1 and 2. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan; and Hatcher Pass Management Area Plan.*

Recommendation: Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Parks to improve trails and recreation opportunities.

30. Glacier Creek (Snowbird Mine / Snowbird Hut)

Pedestrian year round trail within the Hatcher Pass Management area, it provides backcountry access to Talkeetna Mountains (by way of the Reed Lake Trail). Trailhead parking off Archangel Road.

*Shown on Maps 1 and 2. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan; and Hatcher Pass Management Area Plan.*

Recommendation: Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Parks to improve trails and recreation opportunities.

31. Fern Mine

Pedestrian year round trail within the Hatcher Pass Management area. Maintained by Alaska State Parks for backcountry access to Talkeetna Mountains.

*Shown on Maps 1 and 2. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan; and Hatcher Pass Management Area Plan.*

Recommendation: Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Parks to improve trails and recreation opportunities.

32. Upper Willow Creek

Use varies - year round trail within the Hatcher Pass Management area. Un-maintained trail with roadside parking off Hatcher Pass Road.

*Shown on Map 1. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan; and Hatcher Pass Management Area Plan.*

Recommendation: Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Parks to improve trails and recreation opportunities.

33. Craigie Creek Trail

Use varies – year round trail within the Hatcher Pass Management area. Un-maintained trail with roadside parking off Hatcher Pass Road.

*Shown on Map 1. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan; and Hatcher Pass Management Area Plan.*

Recommendation: Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Parks to improve trails and recreation opportunities.



34. 7 Mile Canoe Trail  
Non-motorized over-water summer route connecting Wasilla, Cottonwood, Mud and Finger Lakes. Portages maintained by Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks Division. Put-in and parking available at Finger Lake State Recreation Area and Wasilla Lake Park. State park use fee collected at Finger Lake and city fee at Wasilla Lake. A recent development displaced one of the portages.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan; and Hatcher Pass Management Area Plan.*  
Recommendation: Survey overland portage locations and document public right of way, or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary. Work with developer to reduce grade over portage. Re-establish portage trail and access docks within section line easement.
35. Willow Sled  
Multi-use year round trail, some of which falls within the Hatcher Pass Management area. Roadside parking off Hatcher Pass Road.  
RS2477 designation.  
*Shown on Maps 1 and 10. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plan; and Hatcher Pass Management Area Plan.*  
Recommendation: Survey location and document the RS2477 route, and coordinate with the DNR/Division of Parks to improve the trail and increase recreational opportunities.
36. Wet Gulch (Baldy Mountain)  
Multi-use year round trail, a portion falls within the Hatcher Pass Management area. Roadside parking off Hatcher Pass Road.  
*Shown on Map 1. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan; and Hatcher Pass Management Area Plan.*  
Recommendation: Survey location and document public right of way, or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary; and coordinate with the DNR/Division of Parks to improve the trail and increase recreational opportunities.
37. Purches Creek  
Multi-use year round trail, a portion falls within the Hatcher Pass Management area. Roadside parking off Hatcher Pass Road.  
*Shown on Map 1. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan; and Hatcher Pass Management Area Plan.*  
Recommendation: Survey location and document public right of way, or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary; and coordinate with the DNR/Division of Parks to improve the trail and increase recreational opportunities.
38. Canyon Creek

Multi-use year round trail, a portion falls within the Hatcher Pass Management area. Roadside parking off Hatcher Pass Road.

*Shown on Map 1. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan; and Hatcher Pass Management Area Plan.*

Recommendation: Survey location and document public right of way, or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary; and coordinate with the DNR/Division of Parks to improve the trail and increase recreational opportunities.

39. Central

Multi-use year round trail within the Kashwitna Management Plan Area. Roadside parking off Hatcher Pass Road. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved. The trail provides access to Willow Mountain and Mail Trail. Trailhead parking available at Willer-Kash Road.

*Shown on Maps 1 and 7. Noted in the Kashwitna Management Area Plan.*

Recommendation: Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Forestry to improve the trail and increase recreational opportunities.

40. Mail (Herning) (Tank)

Multi-use year round trail within the Kashwitna Management Plan Area, most of which is classified for forestry and managed by Division of Forestry. Trailhead parking available at Willer-Kash Road. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.

*Shown on Map 1 and 7. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan and Kashwitna Management Area Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development; and coordinate with the DNR/Division of Forestry to improve the trail and increase recreational opportunities.

41. Willow Mountain

Multi-use year round trail, portions are within the Kashwitna Management Plan Area, most of which is classified for forestry and managed by Division of Forestry. This is an unmaintained trail with trailhead parking available at Willer-Kash Road.

*Shown on Maps 1 and 7. Noted in the Kashwitna Management Area Plan.*

Recommendation: Survey location and document public right of way, or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary; and coordinate with the DNR/Division of Forestry to improve the trail and increase recreational opportunities.

42. Mail Trail Connector

Multi-use year-round trail that connects the Mail Trail with the Central Trail. Within the Kashwitna Management Plan Area, most of which is classified for forestry management and managed by the Division of Forestry. This is an unmaintained trail with trailhead parking at Willer-Kash Road. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.

*Shown on Maps 1 and 7. Noted in the Kashwitna Management Area Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development; and coordinate with the DNR/Division of Forestry to improve the trail and increase recreational opportunities.

43. Iditarod (Historic)

Multi-use winter trail, portions of the route are surveyed, most is not used. Portions that cross Matanuska Susitna Borough-owned land have been reserved. This is a RS 2477 designated route and it managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

*Shown on Maps 6 and 8. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 Trail Plans.*

Recommendation: Coordinate with the BLM to establish trail management guidelines and priorities.

44. Iditarod (Race)

Multi-use winter trail which is maintained by volunteers of the Iditarod Trailblazers.

*Shown on Maps 6, 8 and 9. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 Trail Plans.*

Recommendation: The race route varies from year to year, so establishing a public easement is not prudent. No action is recommended.

45. Aurora Sled Dog

Non-motorized winter trail system for dog sled racing and training. Maintained and managed by volunteers of the Aurora Dog Musers Club. Trailhead parking south of Big Lake Road on Aurora lease site. The trail system has been surveyed, and a management agreement between the club, the State and Borough has been entered into for the maintenance and management of the trails and area surrounding them.

*Shown on Map 6. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 Trail Plans.*

Recommendation: Coordinate with State and Aurora club to determine need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

46. Crooked Lake

Multi-use winter trail with limited roadside parking off of West Papoose Twins Road; or it can also be reached from the Iron Dog Trail, with parking on Big Lake when frozen. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved. This trail serves as an alternative route for the Iron Dog, which it connects with just east of Susitna Station.

*Shown on Map 6. Noted in the Big Lake Community Comprehensive Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development. Look into the feasibility of building a trailhead facility south of West Papoose Twins Lake Road for better access to this trail.

47. Iron Dog

Multi-use winter trail is legally accessed by crossing Big Lake and Flat Lake and following Flathorn Lake Connector northwest. Usually groomed by the Big Lake community, with parking and access available in several locations on Big Lake when frozen. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved from Big Lake to the Susitna River.

*Shown on Map 6. Noted in the 2000 Trail Plan and Big Lake Community Comprehensive Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development

48. Flathorn Lake Connector

Multi-use winter trail that is used to access the Iron Dog to the north. It has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved. It serves as access to the Iron Dog and other trails to the north.

*Shown on Map 6. Noted Big Lake Community Comprehensive Plan*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

49. Houston Lake Loop

Multi-use winter trail that goes north from Big Lake to Houston Lake and loops back. It has been surveyed and the borough is negotiating with the Mental Health Trust Land Office for an easement across Trust lands.

*Shown on Maps 1, 6 and 7. Noted in the Big Lake Community Comprehensive Plan.*

Recommendation: Once an easement is secured, conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

50. Butterfly Lake

Non-motorized over water route from the Little Susitna River to Butterfly Lake. This is part of the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area trail system and managed by State Parks.

*Shown on Maps 6 and 7. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Parks to improve trails and recreation opportunities.

51. Mud Lake (Nancy Lake)

Multi-use winter trail accessible from Willow West Gateway Trailhead or Nancy Lake State Recreation Area. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.

*Shown on Map 7. Amendment to the 2000 Trail Plan adopted in 2007.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development

52. Rolly Creek

Multi-use winter trail southwest of Willow and accessible from Willow West Gateway Trailhead or Nancy Lake State Recreation Area. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.

*Shown on Map 7. Amendment to the 2000 Trail Plan adopted in 2007.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

53. Big Swamp

Multi-use winter trail west of Willow and accessible from Willow West Gateway Trailhead or Nancy Lake State Recreation Area. The northern portion of this trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.

*Shown on Maps 6 and 7. Amendment to the 2000 Trail Plan adopted in 2007.*

Recommendation: Survey entire trail to Susitna Station and acquire public easement.

54. Woodcutter

Multi-use winter trail southwest of Willow accessible from Willow West Gateway Trailhead or Nancy Lake State Recreation Area. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.

*Shown on Map 7. Amendment to the 2000 Trail Plan adopted in 2007.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development

55. Corral Hill

Multi-use winter trail west of Willow accessible from Willow West Gateway Trailhead or Nancy Lake State Recreation Area. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.

*Shown on Map 7. Amendment to the 2000 Trail Plan adopted in 2007.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

56. Trapper Lake Link (aka MCDMA 300 Mile Race)

Multi-use winter trail that provides access to the main route of the Trapper Lake Trail. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.

*Shown on Map 9. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

57. Trapper Lake (aka MCDMA 300 Mile Race)

Multi-use winter trail accessible from the Susitna Landing (a privately managed site on the Susitna River) that crosses the Susitna River when frozen to Trapper Lake. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved

*Shown on Maps 7 and 9. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development

58. Lazy Mountain Southside (Lazy Moose)  
A pedestrian trail traversing the southwest flank of Lazy Mountain, provides an easier route up Lazy Mountain than the original trail.  
*Shown on Map 5. Included in the 2008 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Encourage regular maintenance.
59. Parker Lake – Neil Lake  
Multi-use winter trail that provides access to Neil Lake from the Parker Lake Trail. It is accessible from the Susitna Landing a privately run parking area on the Susitna River.  
*Shown on Map 9. Included in the 2007 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary.
60. Montana Creek Dog Musers  
Non-motorized winter trail for dog sled races and training. It is maintained and managed by the Montana Creek Dog Musers Association. There is trailhead parking at the Montana Creek Dog Musers Club and race staging area. Portions are designated a RS2477 route.  
*Shown on Maps 9 and 10. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Coordinate with Montana Creek Dog Musers to determine need for trail repairs and improvements.
61. Knik Glacier (aka Jim Creek)  
Multi-use year round trail following the north side of Knik River to Knik Glacier. Located in the newly established Knik River Public Use Area, under State management. This is a RS2477 designated route.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Coordinate with DNR/Division of Mining Land and Water for funding to improve trail and trailhead and provide maintenance and management.
62. Friday Creek  
Multi-use year round trail accessible from the Knik Glacier Trail, with off-road parking near Sullivan Road. Located in the newly established Knik River Public Use Area, under State management. This trail has a RS2477 designation.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Coordinate with DNR/Division of Mining Land and Water for funding to improve trail and trailhead and provide maintenance and management.

63. **Metal Creek**  
Multi-use year round trail accessible from the Knik Glacier Trail, with off-road parking near Sullivan Road. Located in the newly established Knik River Public Use Area and under State management. This trail has a RS2477 designation.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Coordinate with DNR/Division of Mining Land and Water for funding to improve trail and trailhead and provide maintenance and management.
64. **Amber Lake Trail**  
Multi-use winter trail that heads west from the Parks Highway to Amber Lake. It connects with Oilwell Road and other winter trails in the area. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.  
*Shown on Maps 9 and 12. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development
65. **Petersville Road/Trail**  
Multi-use year round trail which is actually along the unmaintained portion (Mile 19 and beyond) of Petersville Road. It is often groomed in winter by volunteers of the snowmachine clubs in the area. This is a RS2477 designated route.  
*Shown on Map 12. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Coordinate with Alaska Department of Transportation and DNR/Division of Lands to increase recreational opportunities along this route.
66. **Oilwell Road/Trail**  
Multi-use year round trail that follows Oilwell Road starting south of Amber Lake. This trail is within a forest management area of the Matanuska Susitna Borough and the trail is often used by logging trucks.  
*Shown on Maps 9 and 12. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Coordinate with the MSB Land and Resource Division to increase recreational opportunities along this route whenever possible.
67. **Black Creek (Collinsville)**  
Multi-use year round trail that leaves the Petersville Road near the Forks Roadhouse and travels west toward the mining district. There is limited parking near the Forks Roadhouse and Peters Creek. The trail has been surveyed and the RS2477 route documented. It is still used as a freight trail for mining operations west of Peters Creek.  
*Shown on Map 12. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Promote as a winter trail only due to the use of this trail by mining interests during the summer months.
68. **Cache Creek**  
Multi-use year round trail that connects Black Creek Trail to the Peters Hills and Cache Creek mining areas. The trail has been surveyed and the RS2477 route documented.

*Shown on Map 12. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*

Recommendation: Promote as a winter trail only due to the use of this trail by mining interests during the summer months.

69. Dutch Hills (aka Peters Creek or Dutch Creek)  
Multi-use year round trail that follows old mining roads to the Dutch Hills area. The trail has been surveyed and the RS2477 route documented.  
*Shown on Map 12. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Promote as a winter trail only due to the use of this trail by mining interests during the summer months.
70. Collinsville  
Multi-use year round trail that starts west of Black Creek and heads south west to the old mining town of Collinsville and circles around north toward Chelatna Lake and back along the Kahiltna River. The trail has been surveyed and the RS2477 route documented.  
*Shown on Map 12. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Promote as a winter trail only due to the use of this trail by mining interests.
71. McDougall Seismic (aka Lake Creek-Kahiltna)  
Multi-use winter trail that connects the Parker Lake Trail to the old town of McDougall and the Yentna River area.  
*Shown on Maps 8 and 9. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan, and in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan as the Lake Creek-Kahiltna Trail.*  
Recommendation: Survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary.
72. Iditarod Checkpoint (aka Skwentna Cutoff)  
Multi-use winter trail running south from the town of Skwentna to the Historic Iditarod Trail.  
*Shown on Map 8. Noted in the 1884 MSB Trail Plan*  
Recommendation: Survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary.
73. Elks Lake  
Multi-use year round trail from the Glenn Highway to Elks Lake Camp. Located in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range.  
*Shown on Maps 1, 2 and 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan*  
Recommendations: Survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary. Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Mining, Land and Water to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.
74. Peters Hills



- Multi-use winter trail that runs northeast from Petersville Road up and over Peters Hills. There is off-road parking near the Forks Roadhouse and Peters Creek in summer and Kroto Creek Trailhead on Petersville Road in winter.  
*Shown on Map 12. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location and trail use. If appropriate, survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement.
75. S. Fork Montana Creek  
Multi-use winter trail that follows the South Fork of Montana Creek from Yoder Road to the small lake near the headwaters of the creek.  
*Shown on Map 10. Amendment to the 2000 Trail Plan adopted in 2004.*  
Recommendation: Survey location and acquire public recreation trail easement.
76. Chulitna Bluff  
Multi-use winter trail that begins on E. Susitna River Road. A trailhead at Mile 122 of the Parks Highway provides parking and access to the trail. Plans include extending the trail south from the trailhead to connect with Rabideux area. The trail has been surveyed and a recreation trail easement reserved over MSB land, and an application has been filed with the state for a trail easement over state-owned land.  
*Shown on Map 11 and 12. Noted in 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Survey location and acquire public recreation trail easement.
77. Emil Lake  
Multi-use winter trail used by the Montana Creek Dog Musers Association (MCDMA) for their longer races. There is trailhead parking at the Montana Creek Dog Musers race staging area.  
*Shown on Map 10. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location and trail use. If appropriate, survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement.
78. Upper S. Fork Montana Creek  
Multi-use winter trail that heads northeast from South Fork Montana Creek Trail up the smaller drainage of the Upper South Fork.  
*Shown on Map 10. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location and trail use. If appropriate, survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement.
79. Luthman (aka Montana Falls)  
Multi-use year round trail that follows the Middle Fork of Montana Creek from Yoder Road and provides access to the 80 foot waterfall.  
*Shown on Map 10. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan as the Montana Falls Trail.*  
Recommendation: Determine location and trail use. If appropriate, survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement.

80. Montana Creek Falls (aka MCDMA 50 Mile Race)  
Multi-use year round trail that ascends a ridge from the South Fork Montana Creek Trail to a ridge overlooking Montana Creek Falls and the Middle Fork of Montana Creek.  
*Shown on Map 10. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan, and shown as part of the MCDMA 50 Mile Race Trail.*  
Recommendation: Determine location and trail use. If appropriate, survey location and document public right of way, or acquire public recreation trail easement.
81. South Fork Loop (aka MCDMA 50 Mile Race)  
Multi-use year round trail primarily used in winter by dog mushers for training.  
*Shown on Map 10. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location and trail use. If appropriate, survey location and document public right of way, or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary.
82. Wolverine Canyon  
Multi-use year round trail used to access the Wolverine Creek Trail. It begins where the creek crosses Clark-Wolverine Lake Road and follows the creek on the north side for approximately 3 miles where it meets the Wolverine Creek Trail.  
*Shown on Maps 1 and 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location and trail use. If appropriate, survey location and document public right of way, or acquire public recreation trail easement.
83. Pioneer Ridge/Austin Helmers  
Pedestrian year round trail up the northeast flank of Pioneer Peak. Named for Austin Helmers who located and helped develop this route to the summit. It is minimally maintained by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough for hiking. MSB fees collected for parking at trailhead just south of Knik River Road.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.
84. E. Petersville Roadside (proposed)  
A proposed winter trail that would be located alongside the road from the Parks Highway to the Susitna River.  
*Shown on Maps 11 and 12. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Fund the design and construction.
85. Kroto (proposed)  
A proposed winter trail that would connect trails north of Petersville Road to the Schneider Lake and Oilwell Road area.  
*Shown on Maps 9 and 12. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Fund the design and construction.

86. **Safari Lake**  
 Multi-use winter only trail that begins at the Kroto Creek trailhead on Petersville Road and heads north to connect with the East-West Express Trail and others north of Safari Lake. It is usually groomed and maintained by volunteers. MSB fees are collected for parking at the Kroto Creek trailhead. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.  
*Shown on Map 12. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
 Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development
87. **East-West Express**  
 Multi-use winter only trail that runs from a trailhead on the Parks Highway to the Deep Creek Trail. It intersects several trails to the south. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved. It is usually groomed by volunteers from the local snowmachine club.  
*Shown on Maps 11 and 12. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
 Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development
88. **Susitna West (proposed)**  
 A proposed winter trail that would connect trails south of Petersville Road to the winter trail system north of Petersville Road.  
*Shown on Maps 9 and 12. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
 Recommendation: Fund the acquisition, design and construction.
89. **Funky (proposed)**  
 A proposed winter trail that would begin on Petersville Road near Mile 12 and head southeast toward Amber Lake.  
*Shown on Maps 9 and 12. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
 Recommendation: Fund the acquisition, design and construction.
91. **Schneider Lake (proposed)**  
 A proposed trail that would connect to the Kroto Trail to Oilwell Road. Much of it follows a seismic line.  
*Shown on Map 9. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
 Recommendation: Fund the acquisition, design and construction.
92. **Petersville Roadside (proposed)**  
 A proposed trail that would be located alongside the road from the Parks Highway to the Forks Roadhouse near Peters Creek.  
*Shown on Maps 11 and 12. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
 Recommendation: Fund the acquisition, design and construction.

93. Grey's Creek  
A short pedestrian trail which begins on the Parks Highway and is used almost exclusively for fishing along Grey's Creek.  
*Shown on Map 7. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Consider removing this trail from the plan.
94. Willow West Gateway  
Multi-use winter only trail that is the primary route from a trailhead on Crystal Lake Road that leads west to a system of winter trails near the Susitna River. The trail has been surveyed and easement acquired. The trail is groomed and maintained by volunteers.  
*Shown on Map 7. Included in the 2006 amendment to the 2000 Trail.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development
95. Clearwater Creek  
Multi-use year round trail that connects the Denali Highway with Valdez Creek Trail and McLaren River Trail. The area and trails are managed by BLM.  
*Shown on Map 13. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Coordinate with BLM to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.
96. McLaren River  
Multi-use year round trail that runs north-south along the west side of the McLaren River then heads west toward the Clearwater Mountains. The area and trail are managed by BLM.  
*Shown on Map 13. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Coordinate with BLM to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.
97. Valdez Creek  
Multi-use year round trail that begins at the end of Valdez Creek mining road heading east toward Clearwater Creek Trail and Clearwater Mountains. The trail and area are managed by BLM.  
*Shown on Map 13. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Coordinate with BLM to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.
98. Windy Creek  
Multi-use year round trail that starts just east of the Susitna River crossing on the Denali Highway and runs east along the Windy Creek drainage, eventually connecting to Valdez Creek Trail. It has a RS2477 trail designation. The trail and area are managed by BLM.  
*Shown on Map 13. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Coordinate with BLM to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.

99. Butte Creek

Multi-use year round trail that starts west of the Susitna River Bridge on the Denali Highway and heads southwest toward the headwaters of Butte Creek. The trail and area are managed by BLM.

*Shown on Map 13. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Coordinate with BLM to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.

100. Chickaloon

Multi-use primitive trail that runs east-west between King River and Chickaloon River, it is part of the historic Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail and has a RS2477 designation. This trail begins and ends on private land, with no trailhead.

*Shown on Map 2. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*

Recommendation: Determine historic location, survey and document RS2477 route if need is established. Consider pursuing national historic designation of this and the remainder of the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail.

101. Chickaloon River

Multi-use year round primitive trail that follows the Chickaloon River along the west side from the old town site of Chickaloon to the headwaters. It is a very primitive route, but it is possible to travel over the pass at the headwaters and drop down to the headwaters of the Talkeetna River. This trail has a RS2477 designation.

*Shown on Map 2. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*

Recommendation: Determine historic location, survey and document RS2477 route if need is established.

102. Purinton Creek

Multi-use year round trail that heads north from the Glenn Highway then west to Boulder Creek where it connects to the Boulder Creek Trail. It has a RS2477 designation.

*Shown on Maps 2 and 3. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*

Recommendation: Determine historic location, survey and document RS2477 route if need is established.

103. Boulder Creek

Multi-use year round trail is accessible from the Purinton Creek Trail and trailhead. It is part of the historic Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail, it has a RS2477 designation.

*Shown on Maps 2 and 3. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*

Recommendation: Determine historic location, survey and document RS2477 route if need is established.

104. Hicks Creek (aka Pinochle)  
Multi-use year round trail that begins on the Glenn Highway (a few miles east of Hicks Creek crossing) and heads north toward the headwaters of Hicks Creek. It provides access to the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail. It has a RS2477 trail designation.  
*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Determine historic location, survey and document RS2477 route if need is established.
105. Caribou Creek  
Multi-use year round trail that begins near the bridge crossing on the Glenn Highway and heads north alongside the river to the headwaters and Chitina Pass, where it connects with Boulder Creek Trail. Part of the historic Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail, it has a RS2477 designation.  
*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Determine historic location, survey and document RS2477 route if need is established.
106. Squaw Creek  
Multi-use year round trail is accessible from the Caribou Creek Trail and Gunsight Mountain Trail. Part of the historic Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail, it has a RS2477 designation.  
*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Determine historic location, survey and document RS2477 route if need is established.
107. Gunsight Mountain (Squaw Creek)  
Multi-use year round trail that begins south of Gunsight Mountain from a new trailhead facility on the Glenn Highway and heads north along the base of the mountain toward the Squaw Creek where it eventually connects to the Squaw Creek Trail (part of the Chickaloon-Nelchina-Trail).  
*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Survey location and document public right of way, or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary.
108. Startup Lakes  
Multi-use year round trail that runs east from Belanger Pass Trail to the Start Up Lakes and east to the Eureka area. It has a RS2477 trail designation.  
*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Survey location and document public right of way, or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary

109. Belanger Pass  
Multi-use year round trail that provides access to a residential area and mining claims in the Talkeetna Mountains then continues on to the old mining area along Alfred Creek. It designated as a RS2477 trail.  
*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine historic location, survey and document RS2477 route if need is established.
110. Alfred Creek  
Multi-use year round trail that is accessible from Belanger Pass Trail and Caribou Creek Trail. Alfred Creek Trail is considered part of the historic Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail and has a RS2477 designation.  
*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Determine historic location, survey and document RS2477 route if need is established.
111. Blueberry Hill  
Multi-use year round trail is actually a road maintained by a private communications company to access equipment located on a hill south of the Glenn Highway. This road is used as a trail year round for hunting and fishing; and provides access to the Goober Lake Trail and the Nelchina River Trail.  
*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Consider removing from plan.
112. Crooked Creek  
Multi-use year round trail located north of Eureka and accessible from Monument Trail and Belanger Pass Trail. Part of the historic Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail, it has a RS2477 designation.  
*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Determine historic location, survey and document RS2477 route if need is established.
113. East Fork (of the Matanuska River)  
Multi-use winter trail accessible from Goober Lake Trail up the East Fork Matanuska River. *Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location and trail use. If appropriate, survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement.
114. Nelchina River (Eureka-Nelchina-Barnette)  
Multi-use year round trail located south of the Glenn Highway and used to access the Nelchina River and Glacier. It has a RS2477 trail designation.  
*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine historic location, survey and document RS2477 route if need is established.

115. Old Man Creek  
Multi-use year round trail that provides access to Monument and Nelchina Town Trails. This trail is a well establish, heavily used trail and is part of the historic mining routes connecting to the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail. It has a RS2477 trail designation. *Shown on Maps 3 and 4. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Determine historic location, survey and document RS2477 route if need is established.
116. Nelchina Town  
Multi-use year round trail is accessible from the Old Man Creek Trail and also connects to Monument. It is part of the historic Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail. *Shown on Maps 3 and 4. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine historic location, survey and document RS2477 route if need is established.
117. Monument  
Multi-use year round trail that begins where Crooked Creek and Alfred Creek Trails merge, then eventually turns into the Nelchina Town Trail. *Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location and trail use. If appropriate, survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement.
118. Little Nelchina River  
Multi-use year round trail that is accessible from the Nelchina Town Trail. It is a primitive route that follows the Little Nelchina River west from the Nelchina Town Trail toward the headwaters of the Little Nelchina River. *Shown on Maps 3 and 4. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Consider removing from plan.
119. Tyone Creek  
Multi-use year round trail that is accessible from the Nelchina Town Trail. It is a primitive route that follows Tyone Creek west from the Nelchina Town Trail toward the headwaters of Tyone Creek. *Shown on Map 4. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Consider removing from plan.
120. Eureka West  
Multi-use winter trail which is part of a large system of trails connecting Eureka with Lake Louise. It is groomed by volunteers from Lake Louise and Eureka and well marked for winter travel. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved. *Shown on Maps 3 and 4. Included in the 2007 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*



Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

121. Moore Lake

Multi-use winter trail which is part of a large system of trails connecting Eureka with Lake Louise. It is groomed by volunteers from Lake Louise and Eureka, and is well marked for winter travel. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.

*Shown on Map 4. Included in the 2007 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

122. Ninety-Eight

A primitive trail that traverses the front of Puddingstone Hill from Chickaloon River to Boulder Creek. This is a historic route, the current use is unknown. Access to the trail is via the Purinton Creek and Boulder Creek Trails.

*Shown on Map 2. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine use and need for public right of way. If a need is established, survey location and acquire public use easement.

123. Crosswind Lake

Multi-use winter trail which is part of a large system of trails that start in Lake Louise and connect to a system of winter trails to the east toward Glennallen. It is groomed and marked every winter by volunteers from Lake Louise.

*Shown on Map 4. Included in the 2007 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

124. Red Shirt-Nancy Lake

Uses vary seasonally. Most of the trail is located within the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area and maintained as access for fishing at Red Shirt Lake. It is accessible from the east via the Nancy Lake Parkway, from the north via the Willow West Gateway trail system, and from south via the Cow Lake and Iron Dog Trails. The portion of the trail that lies within the state recreation area is managed and maintained by Alaska State Parks for non-motorized recreation in summer.

*Shown on Maps 6 and 7. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement where necessary; and coordinate with the DNR/Division of Parks to improve the trail and increase recreational opportunities.

125. Mat River Park – RR Link (proposed)

Proposed pedestrian trail from the Matanuska River Bridge on the Old Glenn Highway through the Mat River Park to Eagle Street and the Matanuska Branch RR Trail.

*Shown on Map 5. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

126. Morgan Horse Trail  
A non-motorized year round trail that follows a section line south from the Lazy Mountain Trailhead to Smith Road and then to Maud Road. It connects the Lazy Mountain area with the Knik River area.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.
127. Oswald  
Multi-use year round trail that is accessible from the Knik Glacier Trail which is primarily used for hunting. It is a steep primitive trail which follows a ridge along the west side of Friday Creek.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location and trail use. If appropriate, survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement.
128. Envy  
Multi-use year round trail that runs alongside Caudill Road and is primarily used by Butte residents to access the Jim Creek area.  
*Shown on Map 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement.
129. 3 Mile Lake  
Multi-use year round trail that begins just west of Knik Lake. It is believed to be part of the Herning Trail (Knik-Talkeetna Mail Trail) that started in Knik and headed north toward Big Lake and the Willow-Hatcher Pass area.  
*Shown on Map 6. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine trail use and historic significance. If appropriate survey trail location and acquire a public recreation trail easement if a need is established.
130. Bench Lake  
Multi-use year round trail which accesses Bench Lake from the town of Houston or from the old landfill road northeast of the Parks Highway.  
*Shown on Map 1. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Determine trail use and if appropriate survey trail location and acquire a public recreation trail easement.
131. Bald Mountain  
Multi-use year round trail, some of which lies within the Hatcher Pass Management area.  
*Shown on Map 1. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plan; and Hatcher Pass Management Area Plan.*

Recommendation: Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Parks to improve the trail and increase recreational opportunities.

132. Weiner Lake-Meadow Creek

A year round hiking trail just north of the Glenn Highway and Weiner Lake. It is a primitive, steep trail that heads directly north from the highway to Meadow Creek and Lake. It is overgrown and use is rare.

*Shown on Map 2. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Consider removing this trail from plan.

133. Dan Creek

Multi-use year round trail that is used to access the area west of Caribou Creek.

*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine trail use and if appropriate survey trail location and acquire a public recreation trail easement.

134. Camp Creek

A year round hiking trail that leads south from the Glenn Highway to the canyon walls above the Matanuska River. A small wayside on the southside of the highway provides off highway parking.

*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine trail use and if appropriate survey trail location and acquire a public recreation trail easement.

135. Jackass Canyon

A year round hiking trail alongside Jackass Creek from Glenn Highway to Matanuska River. No parking or trailhead. This trail is difficult to access and at time dangerous.

*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Consider removing from plan.

136. Goober Lake

Multi-use year round trail, primarily used in winter to access Nelchina River area from the Glenn Highway. Access is from the communications tower road (Blueberry Hill) near MP 118 south of the highway.

*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine trail use and if appropriate survey trail location and acquire a public recreation trail easement.

137. Trail Lakes (Eureka area)

Multi-use year round trail that provides access to small lakes south of the Glenn Highway near MP 118.

*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine trail use and if appropriate survey trail location and acquire a public recreation trail easement.

138. Oshetna River  
A winter route (not an established trail) that follows the Oshetna River drainage from its junction with the Little Oshetna to Black River. Accessible from the Glenn Highway trailhead for Old Man Creek Trail and Nelchina Town Trail.  
*Not mapped. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine trail use and if appropriate survey trail location and acquire a public recreation trail easement.
139. Iron Creek  
A historic route (not an established trail) that follows the Iron Creek drainage from the Chickaloon River to the Talkeetna River. It is very remote with access from the upper reaches of both the Talkeetna and Chickaloon rivers. It has a RS2477 designation.  
*Not mapped. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine historic location, survey and document RS2477 route if a need is established.
140. Aspen Creek  
A historic route (not an established trail) that follows the Aspen Creek drainage from Black River to the Talkeetna River. It is very remote with access from the upper reaches of both the Talkeetna and Oshetna rivers  
*Not mapped. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location, survey route if a need is established.
141. Black River  
A primitive route (not an established trail) along the Black River from the Oshetna River to Aspen Creek used primarily in winter. In a remote area that maybe accessed from the Old Man Creek Trail and Little Oshetna River Trail.  
*Not mapped . Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location, survey route if a need is established.
142. Little Oshetna River  
A primitive route along the Little Oshetna River from the Little Nelchina to the Oshetna River. Remote, with from the Glenn Highway via the Old Man Creek Trail and Little Nelchina River Trail.  
*Not mapped. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location, survey route if a need is established.
143. Idaho Creek  
Primitive route that follows Idaho Creek from the Little Nelchina River northeast to Tyone Creek. Accessible from the Glenn Highway via the Old Man Creek Trail and Little Nelchina River Trail.  
*Shown on Map 4 . Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine location, survey route if a need is established.

144. Eureka East

A multi-use winter trail that is part of a large system of trails connecting Eureka with Lake Louise. Groomed by volunteers from Lake Louise and Eureka. The trail has been surveyed and an easement reserved for public use.

*Shown on Map 4 . Included in the 2007 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

145 Jan Lake Loop

A multi-use winter trail that is part of a large system of trails east of Lake Louise. The trail has been surveyed and an easement reserved for public use.

*Shown on Map 4. Included in the 2007 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

146. Moorehouse

A hiking trail that follows a bench along the west side of Lazy Mountain, from Clark Road to Wolverine Creek.

*Shown on Maps 1 and 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if a need is established.

147. Parker Lake

A multi-use winter trail accessible from the Susitna Landing a privately run parking–staging area on the Susitna River. The trail has been surveyed and an easement reserved for public use.

*Shown on Maps 7, 9 and 10. Noted in 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

148. Sunshine

A historic route used primarily in winter. Montana Creek Dog Musers Association (MCDMA) use portions of the trail for their longer races. There is trailhead parking at the Montana Creek Dog Musers Club and race staging area.

*Shown on Maps 9 and 10. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if a need is established.

149. MCDMA 300 Mile Race

Multi-use winter trail used by the Montana Creek Dog Musers Association (MCDMA) for their longer races. Accessible from the Montana Creek Dog Musers Club and race staging area.

*Shown on Maps 9 and 10. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if a need is established.

150. Susitna River (aka Susitna-McLaren)  
Multi-use year round trail accessible from the Denali Highway. Area and trail managed by BLM.  
*Shown on Map 13. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Recommendation: Coordinate with BLM to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.
151. Hatchet Lake  
A multi-use year round trail accessible from the Denali Highway.  
*Shown on Map 13. Noted in the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans.*  
Area and trail managed by BLM.  
Recommendation: Coordinate with BLM to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.
152. Rainbow Lake  
A primitive, remote route, used mostly in winter, that follows the North Fork of the Kashwitna River, north toward Sheep River and on to Rainbow Lake.  
*Shown on Map 10. Noted in 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine amount of use and location; survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if a need is established.
153. N. Fork Kashwitna (Drew's Knob)  
A primitive route accessible via the Montana Creek Dog Musers Trail System or Sheep Creek drainage.  
*Shown on Map 10. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine amount of use and location; survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if a need is established.
154. Montana Creek 50 Mile  
A multi-use winter trail used by the Montana Creek Dog Musers Association (MCDMA) for their longer races. Accessible from the Montana Creek Dog Musers Club and race staging area.  
*Shown on Map 10. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine use and location; survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if a need is established.
155. Haessler-Norris Sled Dog  
An extensive system of dog sled trails maintained by mushers in the Willow area. No established trailhead, but some off road parking near Four Mile Road south of Hatcher Pass Road.

*Shown on Map 2. Included in the 2004 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine use and location; survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement.

156. Flathorn Lake

A multi-use winter trail from the Point MacKenzie area to the Susitna River. This trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved. MSB fees collected for parking at maintained trailhead north of Ayshire Road.

*Shown on Map 6. Noted in the 2000 Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

158. Latitude 62 (Proposed)

A proposed multi-use winter trail that would connect the existing winter trail system west of Trapper Lake to the existing trails in the Skwentna area.

*Shown on Maps 8 and 9. Included in the 2004 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct research to establish if trail is needed and route is feasible.

159. Pipeline

A multi-use winter trail that follows a large gas pipeline corridor toward the lower Susitna River Basin from Point MacKenzie area. The trail has been surveyed and an easement reserved to the Susitna River. The MSB collects fees for parking at maintained trailhead north of Ayshire Road that provides access to this trail.

*Shown on Map 6. Noted in the 2000 Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

160. Figure 8 Lake Loop

A multi-use winter trail system west of the Point Mackenzie area. MSB fees collected for parking at maintained trailhead north of Point MacKenzie Road.

*Shown on Map 6. Included in the 2004 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Survey location and acquire public recreation trail easement.

161. Jonesville Mine

A multi-use year round trail located west of Sutton in the Matanuska Valley Moose Range. It connects with a larger system of trails in around the old coal mines.

*Shown on Maps 1 and 2. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan*

Recommendations: Survey location and document or acquire public recreation trail easement if necessary. Coordinate with the DNR/Division of Mining, Land and Water to improve trails and recreation opportunities in this area.

162. Skyline

A steep hiking and horseback riding trail used primarily in summer that leads to lower Arkose Ridge from the Buffalo Mine Road area.

*Shown on Maps 1 and 2. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if need is established.

163. Bear Ridge

A steep hiking and horseback riding trail used primarily in summer that leads to lower Arkose Ridge from the Buffalo Mine Road area.

*Shown on Maps 1 and 2. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if need is established.

164. Lucky Shot

A multi-use winter trail just south of Willow Creek, it is part of a large system of winter trails accessed from Willow West Gateway Trailhead, or Willow Community Center.

Most of the trail falls within the boundaries of the Willow Creek State Recreation Area.

*Shown on Map 7. Included in the 2006 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Survey location and acquire recreation trail easement. Work with Alaska State Parks to reserve use of the trail through the state recreation area.

165. East Twin Peaks

A steep, primitive hiking trail reaching the pass between East Peak and West Peak. Unmaintained, roadside parking near old power plant housing area.

*Shown on Map 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.

166. Hunter Creek

A primitive hiking trail that follows the Hunter Creek drainage south from Knik River Road. There is a small parking area east of the bridge that crosses Hunter Creek.

*Shown on Map 1. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan*

Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established

167. Lake George

A primitive and remote route that follows the south side of the Knik River then the Lake Fork to Lake George. No parking or trailhead.

*Shown on Map 5. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine use and pursue public use easement if a need is established.

168. Knik-Fairview (proposed)

A proposed trail connecting the Fairview Loop Road area to the Knik Lake area. The Borough acquired easements over private land on portions of the trail, but key sections of the proposed route are through subdivisions.

*Shown on Maps 5 and 6. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*



Recommendation: Conduct research to determine if this proposed trail is still viable.

169. McDougall Landing  
A primitive route allowing winter travel between the old McDougall town site to the Kahiltna River area.  
*Not mapped. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Conduct research to determine location and use. If appropriate, survey location and document public right of way, or acquire public recreation trail easement.
170. Gopher Creek Loop  
A multi-use year round trail located north of Petersville area accessible from the Petersville Road (Trail).  
*Shown on Map 12. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.
171. Sleeping Lady  
A multi-use winter trail connecting the Yentna River area to Susitna Mountain (Sleeping Lady) area.  
*Shown on Map 8. Included in the 2004 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.
172. Yentna Cutover  
A multi-use winter trail accessed from the Iditarod trail near the Yentna River.  
*Shown on Map 8. Included in the 2004 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan*  
Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established
173. Trail Lake Access (Yentna)  
A multi-use winter trail that provides access to Trail Lake from the Iditarod trail near the Yentna River.  
*Shown on Map 8. Included in the 2004 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established
174. KML (aka Donkey Creek Lake)  
A multi-use winter trail, accessed from the Collinsville Trail, it heads south toward the Kahiltna and a private lodge.  
*Shown on Map 12. Included in the 2006 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan; and noted in the 1984 Trails Plan as Donkey Creek Lake Trail).*  
Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.

175. **Old Hunters**  
Part of a large multi-use winter trail system accessible from the Willow West Gateway Trailhead or Nancy Lake State Recreation Area, and groomed by volunteers from Willow.  
*Shown on Map 7. Included in the 2006 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.
176. **Willow Swamp**  
Part of a large multi-use winter trail system accessible from the Willow West Gateway Trailhead or Nancy Lake State Recreation Area. This trail has been surveyed and a public use recreation trail easement reserved.  
*Shown on Map 7. Included in the 2006 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.
177. **North-South Seismic**  
A multi-use winter trail which is part of a large system of trails starting at Lake Louise. Groomed by volunteers from Lake Louise, it connects to a system of winter trails to the east toward Glennallen. This trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.  
*Shown on Map 4. Included in the 2007 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.
178. **Windsock**  
A multi-use winter trail accessed from Willow West Gateway Trailhead, or Willow Community Center.  
*Shown on Map 7. Included in the 2006 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.
179. **Almond Lake**  
A multi-use winter trail accessed from Willow West Gateway Trailhead, or Willow Community Center.  
*Shown on Map 7. Included in the 2006 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.
180. **John Lake**  
A multi-use winter trail accessed from Willow West Gateway Trailhead, or Willow Community Center.  
*Shown on Map 7. Included in the 2006 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.

181. Boot Lake

A multi-use winter trail accessible from Willow West Gateway Trailhead or Willow Community Center.

*Shown on Map 7. Included in the 2006 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.

182. Long Lake Interconnect (Willow Area)

A short trail within a road right of way between Long Lake and Willow Community Center. Part of a large multi-use winter trail system accessible from the Willow Community Center and West Gateway Trailhead.

*Not mapped. Included in the 2006 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Survey route, map and mark location.

183. Emil J. Stanec Dog Sled

An extensive system of dog sled trails north of Willow Hatcher Pass Road and maintained by mushers in the Willow area. The trails are accessible from the Talkeetna Mail Trail and the East Gateway Trailhead off Shirley Towne Road, just north of Hatcher Pass Road.

*Shown on Maps 1 and 7. Included in the 2006 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Determine location, survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.

184. Caswell Area (proposed)

A proposed system of winter trails near the community of Caswell Lakes that would connect the existing trails south of the Kashwitna River to the trails near Sheep Creek.

*Shown on Maps 7 and 10. Included in the 2006 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct research to establish if trail is needed and route is feasible.

185. Hiline Lake – Middle Talachulitna

A multi-use winter trail that connects Skwentna to Hiline Lake and Talachulitna River areas.

*Shown on Map 8. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct research to determine location and current use. Survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.

186. Fish Lake (Yentna area)

A multi-use winter trail that connects Skwentna to the area near Fish Creek and Lake Creek.

*Shown on Maps 8 and 9. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct research to determine location and current use. Survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.

187. Shell Lake

A multi-use winter trail that connects Skwentna to the area near Shell Lake.

*Shown on Map 8. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct research to determine location and current use. Survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.

188. Sorenson's Boulevard

A multi-use winter trail that runs between Skwentna and Donkey Creek Lake along sloughs up the Yentna River.

*Shown on Maps 8 and 12. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct research to determine location and current use. Survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.

189. Whiskey Lake

A multi-use winter trail that connects Skwentna to the area near Whiskey Lake and Hewitt Lake.

*Shown on Map 8. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct research to determine location and current use. Survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.

190. West Line

A multi-use winter trail. An un-maintained trail that runs east of the Skwentna River from Skwentna to the area near Finger Lake and Hayes River.

*Shown on Map 8. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct research to determine location and current use. Survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.

191. Susitna Station

A multi-use winter trail that follows a seismic line clearing from Skwentna to the confluence of the Yentna and Susitna Rivers at Susitna Station.

*Shown on Maps 6 and 8. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct research to determine location and current use. Survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.

192. Muddy Creek-Tatondan

Multi-use winter trail that crosses the frozen Matanuska River (near Muddy Creek) to Tatondan Lake. It has a RS2477 trail designation.

*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct research to determine location and current use. Survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.

193. Index Lake  
Hiking trail north of the Glenn Highway to Index Lake, near Victory. It has a RS2477 trail designation.  
*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Conduct research to determine location and current use. Survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.
194. Tahnetta Pass  
Multi-use trail that accommodates year round use with trailhead parking on the Glenn Highway. The trail provides access to the Squaw Creek Trail, just east of Gunsight Mountain. It has a RS2477 trail designation.  
*Shown on Map 3. Noted in the 1984 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.
195. Shirley Lake  
A multi-use winter trail just south of Willow Creek, it is part of a large system of winter trails accessed from Willow West Gateway Trailhead, or Willow Community Center.  
*Shown on Map 7. Included in the 2006 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.
196. Lake Louise-McLaren (proposed)  
A proposed multi-use winter trail that would connect the existing winter trail system near Lake Louise to the Denali Highway at McLaren River.  
*Shown on Maps 4 and 13. Included in the 2007 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Conduct research to establish if trail easement is needed and route is feasible.
197. Tolsona  
A multi-use winter trail that is part of a large system of trails starting at Lake Louise. Groomed by volunteers from Lake Louise. It also connects to a system of winter trails to the east toward Glennallen. The trail has been surveyed and a request for a recreation trail easement submitted to Alaska DNR.  
*Shown on Map 4. Included in the 2007 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Acquire public recreation trail easement.
198. Lake Louise - Mendeltna  
A multi-use winter trail that is part of a large system of trails starting at Lake Louise. Groomed by volunteers from Lake Louise. It heads south from Lake Louise to the Mendeltna area on the Glenn Highway.  
*Shown on Map 4. Included in the 2007 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Conduct research to determine location and current use. Survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.

199. John Lake (Eureka area)  
A multi-use winter trail that is part of a large system of trails starting at Lake Louise. Groomed by volunteers from Lake Louise. It heads south from Lake Louise to John Lake and onto Eureka and the Glenn Highway. The trail has been surveyed and work is underway to acquire a public easement.  
*Shown on Maps 3 and 4. Included in the 2007 amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Conduct research to determine location and current use. Survey route and acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.
200. Old RCA  
A multi-use trail with year round use just north of Christiansen Lake near Talkeetna. The trail connects to the Ridge Trail and Old Lake Trail, creating a loop. The trail can be accessed from Comsat Road and Rubberneck. This trail has been surveyed and work is underway to acquire a public easement.  
Shown on Map 11. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.  
Recommendation: Acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.
201. Old Lake (aka Old Town Road)  
A multi-use trail with year round use located which provides access between Christiansen Lake Road and Beaver Road just east of Talkeetna. This trail has been surveyed and work is underway to acquire a public easement.  
*Shown on Map 11. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Acquire public recreation trail easement if the need for one is established.
203. Bluff Trail  
A multi-use trail with year round use that follows the bluff along the south bank of Twister Creek. The trail can be accessed from Rubberneck at the end of Christiansen Lake road. The trail is proposed to extend to the Spur Road. The trail connects to downtown Talkeetna in winter, but dead-ends in summer.  
Shown on Map 11. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.  
Recommendation: Acquire public recreation trail easement. .
- 204A. Ridge Trail  
A multi-use trail with year round use that connects to several trails east of Talkeetna. The trail can be accessed from Beaver Road or Comsat Road. Efforts are underway to develop a recreation management plan for Borough owned lands that underlie the trail and reclassify those lands as public recreation.  
Shown on Map 11. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.  
Recommendation: Move forward with developing a Trail Development plan for the area.

- 204B. Talkeetna River Trail  
A multi-use trail with year round use that runs along the Talkeetna River Slough from the corner of F-street and Beaver Road upriver to the start of the Ridge Trail.  
Shown on Map 11. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.  
Recommendation: Extend the trail to downtown Talkeetna and acquire the necessary public recreation trail easements.
205. Talkeetna Lakes  
A trail system for skiing, hiking and mountain biking located within the Talkeetna Lakes Park. A 5k loop around X Lake is currently under construction and should be completed in 2008. Construction of a trailhead facility at the park entrance was completed in 2007.  
*Shown on Map 11. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Acquire funding for design, layout and construction for more trails within the park.
206. Ski Hill  
A Nordic ski trail system just west of the Talkeetna Spur Road. The trail system has been surveyed and a recreational trail easement has been obtained. The trail system is managed and maintained by volunteers from the Denali Nordic Ski Club.  
Shown on Map 11. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.  
Recommendation: Assist the ski club with maintenance and management needs.
207. McWilliams Gold Creek  
A multi-use trail with year round use, it is approximately 16 miles long and accessible from the Alaska Railroad (mile 263) just north of the old town of Curry. This trail is designated as a RS2477 route.  
*Not mapped. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Conduct research to determine location and current uses. If a need is established, acquire funding for survey and public recreational trail reservation.
208. Rabideux (proposed)  
A proposed multi-use winter trail that will connect trails in the Trapper Creek – Petersville area with the Chulitna Bluff Trail and East-West Express Trail. Located east of the Parks Highway, it generally follows the Rabideux Creek drainage.  
*Shown on Map 11. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Acquire funding for acquisition, design and construction.
209. Deep Creek  
A multi-use winter trail just east of Petersville Road, it is accessible from the winter trailhead near Kroto Creek. This trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.

*Shown on Map 12. Noted in the 2004 Amendment to the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

210. Bartlett Hills Trail (proposed)

A proposed non-motorized winter trail located southeast of Talkeetna that would connect the Old RCA Trail with the Talkeetna Lakes area.

Shown on Map 12. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.

Recommendation: Acquire funding for route research, acquisition, survey, design, layout and construction.

211. Twister Creek Winter Trail

A multi-use winter trail just south of the Talkeetna Airport that connects the Old Lake to the Ski Hill area. The trail traverses lands owned by a Native corporation, the State of Alaska and the Alaska University.

Shown on Map 11. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.

Recommendation: Acquire funding for acquisition of public use easement.

212. Chase

A multi-use trail located adjacent to the Alaska Railroad line north of Talkeetna that provides an access route for Chase residents. It is also used by recreationalists. *Shown on Map 11. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: None, this trail is within RR right of way and funded by service district.

213. Talkeetna Mail-Central Connector

Multi-use year-round trail that connects the Mail Trail with the Central Trail. Within the Kashwitna Management Plan Area, most of which is classified for forestry management and managed by the Division of Forestry. This is an unmaintained trail with trailhead parking at Willer-Kash Road. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.

*Shown on Maps 1 and 7. Noted in the Kashwitna Management Area Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

214. Mail Trail Re-Route

Multi-use winter trail just south of Hidden Hills Road in the Kashwitna River area. The trail was put in by residents of the Caswell Lakes area to provide a connection to the old Talkeetna Mail Trail (aka Tank Trail and aka Herning Trail). The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.

*Shown on Map 7 and 10. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, trail marking and trailhead development.



215. Tokositna River  
Multi-use winter trail that begins at north end of the Safari Lake Trail in the Petersville area and ends at the Tokositna River. It is accessible from the Kroto Creek trailhead on Petersville Road. Once on the Tokositna River snowmachiners and other users travel the frozen river up or down stream. The trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.  
*Shown on Map 12. Noted in the 2000 MSB Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Work with Alaska State Parks to establish a loop through Denali State Park to connect with north end of Chulitna Bluffs Trail.
216. Old Government Peak (Fishhook Creek)  
Pedestrian year round trail, overgrown from lack of use, barely discernable on the ground. The trail was once a road leading to the mining areas east of Government Peak.  
*Shown on Map 1. Noted in both the 1984 and 2000 MSB Trail Plans; and Hatcher Pass Management Area Plan.*  
Recommendation: Rehabilitate trail and extend to connect the Government Peak Chalet to the Alpine Ski Area parking lot at mile 10.6 Hatcher's Pass Road.
217. Iditarod Link  
A primitive winter route that follows a seismic line that connects the Pipeline Trail to the Iditarod Trail and Flathorn Lake Trail. This trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved. MSB collects fees for parking at maintained trailhead north of Ayshire Road.  
*Shown on Map 6. Noted in the 2000 Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.
218. Iditarod-Pipeline  
A multi-use winter trail that follows a seismic line connecting the Iditarod Trail and Flathorn Lake Trail. This trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved. MSB fees collect for parking at maintained trailhead north of Ayshire Road.  
*Shown on Map 6. Noted in the 2000 Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.
219. Fish Creek  
A multi-use winter trail that follows the drainage of Fish Creek and provides a route between the Flathorn Lake Trail and the Pipeline Trail. This trail has been surveyed and a public recreation trail easement reserved.  
*Shown on Map 6. Noted in the 2000 Trail Plan.*  
Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive trail assessment to determine trail condition and need for trail repairs, re-routing, trail marking and trailhead development.

220. **Majestic Valley Ski Trails**  
Year-round multi-use, non-motorized trails crossing state and private land located on the south side of the Glenn Hwy at about Mile 115. These trails receive light to moderate use by skiers and snowshoers in the winter months and by hikers in the summer months. One loop of ski trails mapped.  
Recommendation: Update information on the trails.
221. **Moose Lick – Government Peak Trail**  
Trail extends north from N. Moose Lick Circle up the southern side of Government Peak within the southeastern area of the Hatcher Pass Management Area. The lower portion of the trail receives year-round use, from hikers and equestrians in the summer and skiers and snowshoers in the winter. The upper portion of the trail is primarily summer use only by hikers. This trail will provide an alternate means of access to the Government Peak Recreation Area Nordic ski area.
222. **Sunset Trail**  
A year-round, multi-use trail that runs west from Knik-Goose Bay Road along section line easements and connects to the 3-mile Lake Trail. This trail is used year-round by hikers, ATVs, and equestrians in the summer and by dog mushers and snowmachiners in the winter. The route provides an important connection from the Knik-Goose Bay separated pathway to the 3-mile Lake Trail, Herning Trail, and the Iditarod Trail.
223. **Susitna – Neil Lake Trail**  
Susitna – Neil Lake Trail is a heavily used, primarily winter trail used by skiers, dog mushers, and snowmachiners. The western portion between Neil Lake and the Deshka River is upgraded to a drivable road surface and is used in the summer by hikers and ATVs. The trail provides recreational opportunities as well as access to private properties on Neil Lake.
224. **Susitna River Route Trail**  
This trail is an old overgrown logging skid road northeast of Trapper Creek and runs east-west between the Chulitna Bluff Trail on the west and the Susitna River on the east. The proposal is to extend the trail south of East Susitna River Road, along the west side of the Susitna River, down to the Rabideaux area to connect up with the Trapper Lake-Amber Lake Trails System.
225. **Meadow Lakes Community Trails**  
Trail routes are primarily along existing roads and section line easements that provide recreational opportunities within the community and connectivity with and access to broader trail systems in the Hatcher Pass Management Area and the Willow area. These year-round multi-use trails are used by hikers, equestrians, and ATVs in the summer and by skiers, dog mushers, and snowmachiners in the winter.

226. **Big Lake Trail #1 – Klondike Inn and Call of the Wild Tract**  
This trail is a well-established trail along seismic lines on the north side of Big Lake and loops up around the Horseshoe Lake area. This year-round trail is used primarily in the winter by snowmobilers, dog mushers, skiers and snowshoers, with portions of the trail seeing summer time use by ATVs and hikers. The portions of trail located private lands will require a public use easement
227. **Big Lake Trail #2 – Beaver Lakes and North Little Su Trail**  
Big Lake Trail #2 is a well-established trail on the north side of Big Lake and runs through the Beaver Lakes area. This year-round trail is used primarily in the winter by snowmobilers, dog mushers, skiers and snowshoers, with portions of the trail seeing summer time use by ATVs and hikers.
228. **Big Lake Trail #3 – Beaver Lakes Loop Trail**  
Big Lake Trail #3 is a well-established trail located north of Big Lake and south of the Little Susitna River. This year-round trail is used primarily in the winter by snowmobilers, dog mushers, skiers and snowshoers, with portions of the trail seeing summer time use by ATVs and hikers.
229. **Big Lake #5 – Iron Dog Connector**  
Big Lake Trail #5 is a well-established trail along a seismic line located north of Flat Lake. This year-round trail is used primarily in the winter by snowmobilers, dog mushers, skiers and snowshoers, with portions of the trail seeing summer time use by ATVs and hikers.
230. **Big Lake Trail #7 – Herning Big Lake and Knik Lake Trail**  
Big Lake Trail is a well established trail that travels between Knik and the Big Lake airport. This year-round trail is used primarily in the winter by snowmobilers, dog mushers, skiers and snowshoers, with portions of the trail seeing summer time use by ATVs and hikers. A segment of the trail exists along the Iditarod Trail easement. A portion of the trail may have RS 2477 status. Much of the trail is located on private lands with some on University and Mental Health Trust lands. Acquiring public use easements along the entire length may be difficult. A public access easement exists along portions of the Iditarod Trail under ADL 222930.
231. **Big Lake Trail #8 Papoose Lakes Connector Trail**  
Big Lake Trail #8 is a well-established trail along a seismic line south of Papoose Twin Lakes. This year-round trail is used primarily in the winter by snowmobilers, dog mushers, skiers and snowshoers, with portions of the trail seeing summer time use by ATVs and hikers. Much of the trail is located on private lands. Acquiring public use easements along the entire length may be difficult.

232. **Big Lake Trail #9 – Cow Lake and Red Shirt Lake Connector Trail**  
Big Lake Trail #9 is a well-established trail located along a seismic line between the Iron Dog Trail and Red Shirt Lake. This year-round trail is used primarily in the winter by snowmobilers, dog mushers, skiers and snowshoers, with portions of the trail seeing summer time use by ATVs and hikers. That segment of the trail across Knik Atnu lands may have a 17(b) easement. Trail segments near Cow Lake and Red Shirt Lake are located on private lands. Acquiring public use easements along the entire length may be difficult.
233. **Big Lake Trail #10 – Cow Lake and Nancy Lakes Trail**  
Big Lake Trail #10 is a well-established trail located along a seismic line between Cow Lake and Manta Lake to the northeast. This year-round trail is used primarily in the winter by snowmobilers, dog mushers, skiers and snowshoers, with portions of the trail seeing summer time use by ATVs and hikers. This trail is located entirely on Mental Health Trust lands. Acquiring public use easements along the entire length may be difficult.
234. **Big Lake Trail #12 – Knik Power Line and Tugs Trail**  
Big Lake Trail #12 is a well-established trail located along seismic lines and power lines to the southwest of Knik. This year-round trail is used primarily in the winter by snowmobilers, dog mushers, skiers and snowshoers, with portions of the trail seeing summer time use by ATVs and hikers. Much of the trail is located on University and private lands and overlaps a utility easement. Acquiring public use easements along the entire length may be difficult. Public access easement exists along portions of this 16-mile trail under ADL 229108.
235. **Big Lake Trail #13 – Knik Connector Trail**  
Big Lake Trail #13 is a well-established trail along a seismic line running from Point Mackenzie Road northwest to Susitna Parkway south of Flat Lake. This year-round trail is used primarily in the winter by snowmobilers, dog mushers, skiers and snowshoers, with portions of the trail seeing summer time use by ATVs and hikers. Much of the trail is located on borough lands with some private property in the Seven Mile Lake area.
236. **Big Lake Trail #14 – Purinton Junction and Susitna River Loop Trail**  
Big Lake Trail #14 is a well-established trail located along seismic lines from Susitna Parkway southwest to Flathorn Lake and then northwest to the Susitna River. This year-round trail is used primarily in the winter by snowmobilers, dog mushers, skiers and snowshoers, with portions of the trail seeing summer time use by ATVs and hikers. Segments of the trail in the Flathorn Lake area have public use easements on state and borough lands (ADL 229108).
237. **Big Lake Trail #15 – Marion Lake Trail**  
Big Lake Trail #15 is a well-established trail located along seismic lines south of Marion Lake. This year-round trail is used primarily in the winter by snowmobilers, dog mushers,

skiers and snowshoers, with portions of the trail seeing summer time use by ATVs and hikers. A portion of the trail exists on the 16 Mile trail easement. This trail is located primarily on state and borough lands. A public access easement exists along portions of this trail on state and borough land under ADL 222930.

238. Mona Lakes Trail

Mona Lakes Trail is located primarily along seismic lines west of the Susitna River and travels from the Deshka River northwest to Oilwell Road. The trail is located almost entirely on state lands, including the subdivided lands around the Mona Lakes. This trail system is currently being groomed by various individuals who reside along the trail route and is used in the winter by snowmobilers and dog mushers.

239. Deshka Crossover Trail

This is a multi-use, winter trail that crosses state and borough, with a trailhead at Deshka Landing in Willow. Part of the State's Susitna Corridor Trail from Big Lake to Denali State Park overlaps this trail.

240. Fish Creek Trail

This is a multi-use, winter trail that crosses state and borough land with no nearby trailhead. Part of the State's Susitna Corridor Trail from Big Lake to Denali State Park overlaps this trail. Fish Creek Trail is located between the Iron Dog Trail and Big Swamp Trail southwest of Red Shirt Lake. The winter-use trail is located entirely on state and borough lands and is used by snowmobilers and dog mushers. This trail will be an important connecting link in Alaska State Parks' Susitna Corridor Trail.

241. Visnaw / Little Su Trail

This is a multi-use, winter trail that crosses state, borough and private land with no nearby trailhead. Visnaw/Little Su Trail provides a connection between Visnaw Lakes and state lands south of the Little Susitna River in the Meadow Lakes area. This is a proposed multiple-use, year-round trail route located entirely within section line easements. The route currently has some snowmobile use and provides important access to state lands and the Bald Mountain area but requires brushing and clearing to widen the trail. A trailhead could be developed on state land.

242. Deshka Su Trail

This is a multi-use, winter trail that crosses state and borough land with a trailhead at Deshka Landing and Susitna Landing. Part of the State Parks Susitna Corridor Trail from Big Lake to Denali State Park overlaps this trail. It is a winter-use trail located entirely on state lands, is groomed and marked and is used by snowmobilers and dog mushers.

243. Sheep Mountain Trail System

Sheep Mountain Trail System is a well-established trail system along the Glenn Highway on the south side of Sheep Mountain. This year-round trail is used by diverse groups including hikers, berry pickers, mountain bikers and hunters in the summer months

and by dog mushers, skiers and snowshoers in the winter months. The Sheep Mountain 150 dog mushing race uses a portion of this trail system. Much of the trail system is located on state lands.

244. **Flat Horn Lake Connector Trail**  
Flat Horn lake Connector Trail is a well-established trail that runs between the Little Susitna Public Use Site and Flat Horn Lake. This trail is used primarily in the winter by snowmobilers, dog mushers, skiers and snowshoers. The trail runs along seismic lines and is located on state lands.
245. **Iditarod Common Use Reroute**  
Iditarod Common Use Reroute Trail Is a proposed reroute of a well-established trail to move it off private property and on to public (borough) lands. The trail is used by winter recreationists including dog mushers, skiers, snowshoers, snowmobilers and mountain bicyclists. The route is used in the Excursion 120, Knik 200, Klondike 300, Junior Iditarod and Nome Sign 40 dog mushing races. The trail runs along seismic lines and through swamps.
246. **Reflections Lake Trail**  
Reflections Lake Trail is located south of Palmer just off the west side of the Glenn Highway on the north side of the Knik River. This year-round trail is used in the winter by hikers, skiers and snowshoers, and in the summer/fall by hikers, hunters and fishermen.
247. **Scout Ridge Loop Trail**  
Scout Ridge Loop Trail is a well-established trail located off Hayfield Road in the Knik-Fairview area. This year-round trail is used in the winter by hikers, skiers and snowshoers, and in the summer by hikers.
248. **Cottonwood Creek Wetlands Trail**  
Cottonwood Creek Wetlands Trail is located off Hayfield Road in the Knik-Fairview area. This trail is used in the winter by hikers, skiers, snowshoers and snowmobilers, and in the summer/fall by hikers, hunters and ATVs. Motorized use subject to seasonal conditions set forth by Alaska Department of Fish & Game.
249. **Matanuska Moose Range Trails**  
Matanuska Moose Range Trails are located between Palmer-Fishhook Road and Sutton. Portion of this trail system is documented as part of the original easement application (AOL 229485) for Sutton area trails on state lands. This trail system is currently being groomed and is used in the winter by snowmobilers, skiers, dog mushers, snowshoers and mountain bikers. The trails are used in the summer by hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, ATVs and OHVs.

250. 16-Mile – Peak 4068 – Government Peak Route  
From Upper 16-Mile Parking Area, take “line of least resistance” down across Fishhook Creek. Head towards top of Peak 4068. Follow ridgeline to Government Peak. Portions of this route are distinguishable as a footpath.
251. Government Peak Recreation Area Trails  
There are 4 miles (6.5 km) of Nordic skiing/hiking trails built for all skill levels. There is an additional 4 miles of bike trails intertwining with the skiing/hiking trails. Below the Chalet there is a sledding hill for all ages. The ski trails area maintained by the Mat-Su Ski Club for both summer and winter use. Mountain bike trails are maintained by the Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers.
252. Matanuska Greenbelt / Crevasse Moraine / Single Track: Moose, Bear, and Fox Trails  
Single-track, non-motorized bicycle trails connecting to both the Matanuska Greenbelt and Crevasse Moraine trail systems. The Fox Trail is about 1.2 miles and the Bear Trail is about 0.9 miles long.
253. Dorothy Jones Trail / Su Valley Ski Trail  
Trail system consists of a series of loops built on rolling hills between the Su Valley High School and Montana Lake. There are varying levels of difficulty from novice to expert. One short loop circles a small pond for winter use.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

By adoption of this Trails Plan the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly accepts the trails as MSB Recreational Trails and directs the administration to implement the plan. The following procedures will be used to legalize the public's right to use these trails and the means to maintain them.

### **Establishing Rights-of-Way**

Borough's first and main emphasis will be establishing legal rights-of-way for trails identified in this plan as regionally significant. Trail routes identified in this plan as regionally or locally significant shall be reserved in public use in new State, Borough and private subdivisions, just as roads are reserved during the platting process. The exact alignment of a trail can be shifted so long as it does not adversely affect the usefulness of the trail route.

Other means of establishing the legal rights-of-way for public recreation use of these trails will be done by the Land Management Division under the direction of the Community Development Director. Priority will be given to trails that are being threatened by development; however, the MSB Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board will be asked to aid in the prioritization of these projects on a year to year basis.

MSB Land Management policies and procedures will be followed in acquisition of public use easement for rights-of-way and trail dedications not acquired during the subdivision process. The attached flow chart shows the necessary steps involved. Each trail right-of-way established by the borough will be dedicated with the trail name, exact location, width, and use defined. The trail dedication documents will be recorded.

Once the legal right-of-way for a trail has been established and documented, a record of the trail will be maintained in the Land Management Division's permanent land files. In addition, it will become part of the borough's geographical information system.

### **Trail Maintenance and Construction**

The MSB Parks and Outdoor Recreation Division, under the direction of the Community Development Director, will be responsible for construction or maintenance within public use easements specifically dedicated for recreational use. Construction or maintenance of dedicated trails that lie within other types of easements, such as section line easements, utility easements, or roads, will be coordinated through the appropriate managing agency.

Every effort will be made to encourage maintenance of trails by user groups, community and civic organizations, cities, schools, or other organized groups.

To ensure that funding for trail maintenance is used efficiently, the MSB Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board will review an annual budget, and identify which trails will be maintained



and constructed by the borough, and at what level. Other trails will have to be maintained by volunteers and civic groups.

### **Additions to the Trail Plan**

It will be necessary to revisit the Trails Plan on a regular basis to ensure that the inventory of trails is up to date and appropriate for the current uses. This will be coordinated by the Land Management Division, Recreational Services Division, and the MSB Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board who will consider nominations for additional trails on a regular basis. User groups or other community organizations wanting a trail to be dedicated and/or reserved as part of the borough inventory will be asked to complete a nomination which will then be reviewed and prioritized by the board.

### **Funding for Trails**

Acquisition, surveying, mapping and platting, maintenance and construction of trails will require a consistent funding source. Bed tax, Land Management fund, users' fees, and grants are all possible sources that will be considered as a means to fund trails.

## TRAIL MAP NUMBER INDEX

	<b>TRAIL NAME</b>	<b>MAP NUMBER</b>
1.	Crevasse-Moraine	5
2.	Kepler-Bradley	5
3.	Long Lake Connector	5
4.	Lazy Mountain	5
5.	Matanuska Peak	5
6.	Plumley-Maude	5
7.	Rippy	5
8.	Burnt Butte	5
9.	Swan Lake Canoe Route	5
10.	Sexton (aka River Road)	5
11.	(West) Bodenbug Butte	5
12.	Wolverine Creek	2, 5
13.	Carpenter Creek	1,2,5
14.	Wasilla Creek Headwaters	1,2,5
15.	Moose Creek Branch RR	1,2,5
16.	Wishbone Strip Mine	1,2,5
17.	Baxter Mine	1,2,5
18.	Premier Mine	1,2,5
19.	17 Mile Lake	1,2,5
20.	Wishbone Hill	1,2
21.	Knob Creek	2
22.	Eska Creek Falls	2
23.	King River (aka Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina)	2
24.	Young Creek	2
25.	Permanente (aka Castle Mountain)	2
26.	Palmer-Sutton RR (aka Matanuska Branch RR)	2
27.	Mint Glacier	1,2,5
28.	Archangel	1,2
29.	Reed Lake – Snowbird Mine	1,2
30.	Glacier Creek	1,2
31.	Fern Mine	1,2
32.	Upper Willow	1
33.	Craigie Creek	1
34.	7 Mile Canoe Route	5
35.	Willow Sled	1,10
36.	Wet Gulch/Baldy Mountain	1
37.	Purches Creek	1
38.	Canyon Creek	1
39.	Central	1,7
40.	Mail (aka Herning) (aka Tank)	1,7

## TRAIL MAP NUMBER INDEX

	<b>TRAIL NAME</b>	<b>MAP NUMBER</b>
41.	Willow Mountain	1,7
42.	Mail Trail Connector	1,7
43.	Iditarod (National Historic Route)	6,8
44.	Iditarod (Race)	6,8,9
45.	Aurora Sled Dog System	6
46.	Crooked Lake	6
47.	Iron Dog	6
48.	Flat Lake Connector	6
49.	Houston Lake Loop (aka Muleshoe Lake)	1,6,7
50.	Butterfly Lake (aka Cow Lake)	6,7
51.	Mud Lake (Nancy Lakes area)	7
52.	Rolly Creek	7
53.	Big Swamp	6,7
54.	Wood Cutter	7
55.	Corral Hill	7
56.	Trapper Lake Link (aka MCDMA 300 Mile Race)	9
57.	Trapper Lake (aka MCDMA 300 Mile Race)	7,9
58.	Lazy Mountain Southside – Lazy Moose	5
59.	Parker Lake – Neil Lake	9
60.	Montana Creek Dog Sled System	9,10
61.	Knik Glacier (aka Jim Creek)	5
62.	Friday Creek	5
63.	Metal Creek	5
64.	Amber Lake	9,12
65.	Petersville Road	12
66.	Oilwell Road	9,12
67.	Black Creek	12
68.	Cache Creek	12
69.	Dutch Hills (aka Peters Creek)	12
70.	Collinsville	12
71.	McDougall Seismic	8,9
72.	Iditarod Checkpoint	8
73.	Elks Lake	1,2,5
74.	Peters Hills	12
75.	S. Fork Montana Creek	10
76.	Chulitna Bluff (Proposed)	11,12
77.	Emil Lake	10
78.	Upper South Fork Montana Creek	10
79.	Luthman	10
80.	Montana Creek Falls (aka MCDMA 50 Mile Race)	10

## TRAIL MAP NUMBER INDEX

	<b>TRAIL NAME</b>	<b>MAP NUMBER</b>
81.	S. Fork Loop (aka MCDMA 50 mile Race)	10
82.	Wolverine Canyon	1,5
83.	Pioneer Ridge/Austin Helmers	5
84.	E. Petersville Road	11,12
85.	Kroto (proposed)	9,12
86.	Safari Lake	12
87.	East-West Express	11,12
88.	Susitna West (proposed)	9,12
89.	Funky (proposed)	9,12
91.	Schneider Lake (proposed)	9
92.	Petersville Roadside (proposed)	11,12
93.	Grey's Creek	7
94.	West Gateway	7
95.	Clearwater Creek	13
96.	McClaren River	13
97.	Valdez Creek	13
98.	Windy Creek	13
99.	Butte Creek	13
100.	Chickaloon	2
101.	Chickaloon River	2
102.	Purinton Creek	2,3
103.	Boulder Creek	2,3
104.	Hicks Creek (aka Pinochle)	3
105.	Caribou Creek	3
106.	Squaw Creek	3
107.	Gunsight Mountain	3
108.	Startup Lakes	3
109.	Belanger Pass	3
110.	Alfred Creek	3
111.	Blueberry Hill	3
112.	Crooked Creek	3
113.	East Fork	3
114.	Nelchina River (aka Eureka-Nelchina-Barnette)	3
115.	Old Man Creek	3,4
116.	Nelchina Town	3,4
117.	Monument	3
118.	Little Nelchina River	3,4
119.	Tyone Creek	4
120.	Eureka West	3,4

## TRAIL MAP NUMBER INDEX

	<b>TRAIL NAME</b>	<b>MAP NUMBER</b>
121.	Moore Lake	4
122.	Ninety-Eight	2
123.	Crosswind Lake	4
124.	Red Shirt-Nancy Lake	6,7
125.	Mat River Park- RR Link (proposed)	5
126.	Morgan Horse	5
127.	Oswald	5
128.	Envy	5
129.	3 Mile Lake	6
130.	Bench Lake	1
131.	Bald Mountain	1
132.	Weiner Lake-Meadow Creek	2
133.	Dan Creek	3
134.	Camp Creek	3
135.	Jackass Canyon	3
136.	Goober Lake	3
137.	Trail Lakes	3
138.	Oshetna River	Not mapped
139.	Iron Creek	Not mapped
140.	Aspen Creek	Not mapped
141.	Black River	Not mapped
142.	Little Oshetna	Not mapped
143.	Idaho Creek	4
144.	Eureka Trail East	4
145.	Jan Lake Loop	4
146.	Moorehouse	1,5
147.	Parker Lake	7,9,10
148.	Sunshine	9,10
149.	MCDMA 300 Mile Race	9,10
150.	Susitna River	13
151.	Hatchet Lake	13
152.	Rainbow Lake	10
153.	N. Fork Kashwitna	10
154.	Montana Creek 50 Mile	10
155.	Haessler-Norris Sled Dog	1,7
156.	Flathorn Lake	6
158.	Latitude 62 (proposed)	8,9
159.	Pipeline	6
160.	Figure 8 Lake Loop	6

## TRAIL MAP NUMBER INDEX

	TRAIL NAME	MAP NUMBER
161.	Jonesville Mine	1,2
162.	Skyline	1,2
163.	Bear Ridge	1,2
164.	Lucky Shot	7
165.	East Twin Peaks	5
166.	Hunter Creek	5
167.	Lake George	5
168.	Knik-Fairview (proposed)	5,6
169.	McDougal Landing	Not mapped
170.	Gopher Creek Loop	12
171.	Sleeping Lady	8
172.	Yentna Cutover	8
173.	Trail Lake Access	8
174.	KML (aka Donkey Creek Lake)	12
175.	Old Hunters	7
176.	Willow Swamp	7
177.	North-South Seismic	4
178.	Windsock	7
179.	Almond Lake	7
180.	John Lake	7
181.	Boot Lake	7
182.	Long Lake Interconnect (Willow area)	Not mapped
183.	Emil J. Stanec Dog Sled	1,7
184.	Caswell Area	7,10
185.	Hiline Lake-Middle Talchulitna	8
186.	Fish Lake (Yentna area)	8,9
187.	Shell Lake	8
188.	Sorenson's Boulevard	8,12
189.	Whiskey Lake (Skwentna area)	8
190.	West Line	8
191.	Susitna Station	6,8
192.	Muddy Creek-Tatondan	3
193.	Index Lake	3
194.	Tahneta Pass	3
195.	Shirley Lake	7
196.	Lake Louise – McClaren River	4,13
197.	Tolsona	4
198.	Mendeltna	4
199.	John Lake (Eureka area)	3,4
200.	Old RCA	11

## TRAIL MAP NUMBER INDEX

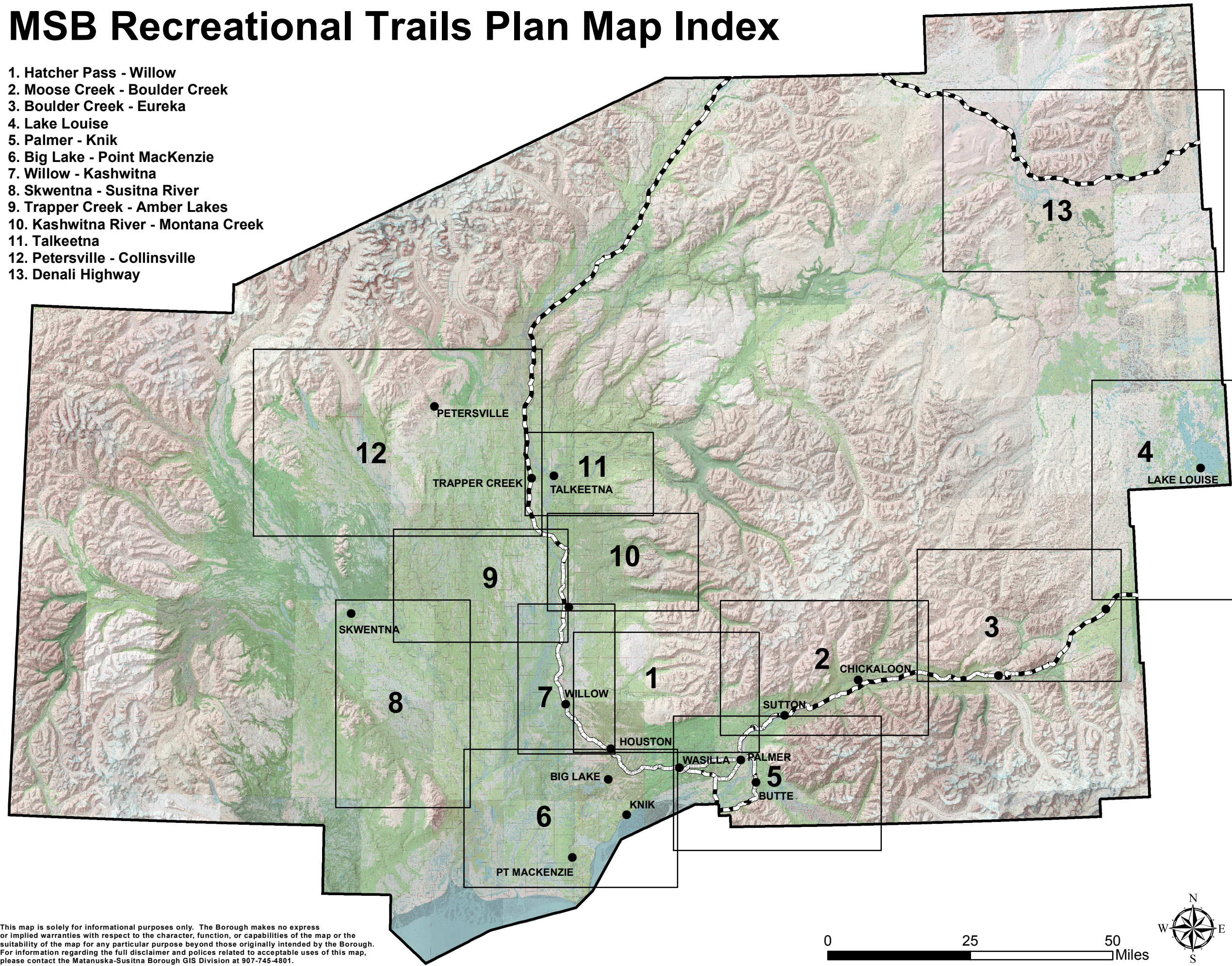
	TRAIL NAME	MAP NUMBER
201.	Old Lake (aka Old Town)	11
203.	Bluff Trail	11
204.	Talkeetna River	11
204A.	Ridge Trail	11
204B.	Talkeetna River Trail	11
205.	Talkeetna Lakes Park	11
206.	Ski Hill	11
207.	McWilliams Gold Creek	Not mapped
208.	Rabideaux (proposed)	9,11,12
209.	Deep Creek	12
210.	Bartlett (proposed)	11
211.	Twister Creek Winter Trail	11
212.	Chase	11
213.	Talkeetna Mail-Central Connector	1,7
214.	Mail Trail Re-Route	7,10
215.	Tokositna River	12
217.	Iditarod Link	6
218.	Iditarod-Pipeline	6
219.	Fish Creek	6
220.	Majestic Valley Ski Trails	3
221.	Moose Lick – Government Peak Trail	1
222.	Sunset Trail	1
223.	Susitna – Neil Lake Trail	9
224.	Susitna River Route Trail	11
225.	Meadow Lakes Community Trails	6
226.	Big Lake Trail #1 – Klondike Inn and Call of the Wild Tract	6
227.	Big Lake Trail #2 – Beaver Lakes and North Little Su Trail	6
228.	Big Lake Trail #3 – Beaver Lakes Loop Trail	6
229.	Big Lake Trail #5 – Iron Dog Connector	6
230.	Big Lake Trail #7 – Herning Big Lake and Knik Lake Trail	6
231.	Big Lake Trail #8 – Papoose Lakes Connector Trail	6
232.	Big Lake Trail #9 – Cow Lake and Red Shirt Lake Connector	6
233.	Big Lake Trail #10 – Cow Lake and Nancy Lakes Trail	6
234.	Big Lake Trail #12 – Knik Power Line and Tugs Trail	6
235.	Big Lake Trail #13 – Knik Connector Trail	6
236.	Big Lake Trail #14 – Purinton Junction and Susitna River Loop	6
237.	Big Lake Trail #15 – Marion Lake Trail	6
238.	Mona Lakes Trail	7/8
239.	Deshka Crossover Trail	7
240.	Fish Creek Trail	7
241.	Visnaw / Little Su Trail	1
242.	Deshka Su Trail	7





# MSB Recreational Trails Plan Map Index






1. Hatcher Pass - Willow
2. Moose Creek - Boulder Creek
3. Boulder Creek - Eureka
4. Lake Louise
5. Palmer - Knik
6. Big Lake - Point MacKenzie
7. Willow - Kashwitna
8. Skwentna - Susitna River
9. Trapper Creek - Amber Lakes
10. Kashwitna River - Montana Creek
11. Talkeetna
12. Petersville - Collinsville
13. Denali Highway



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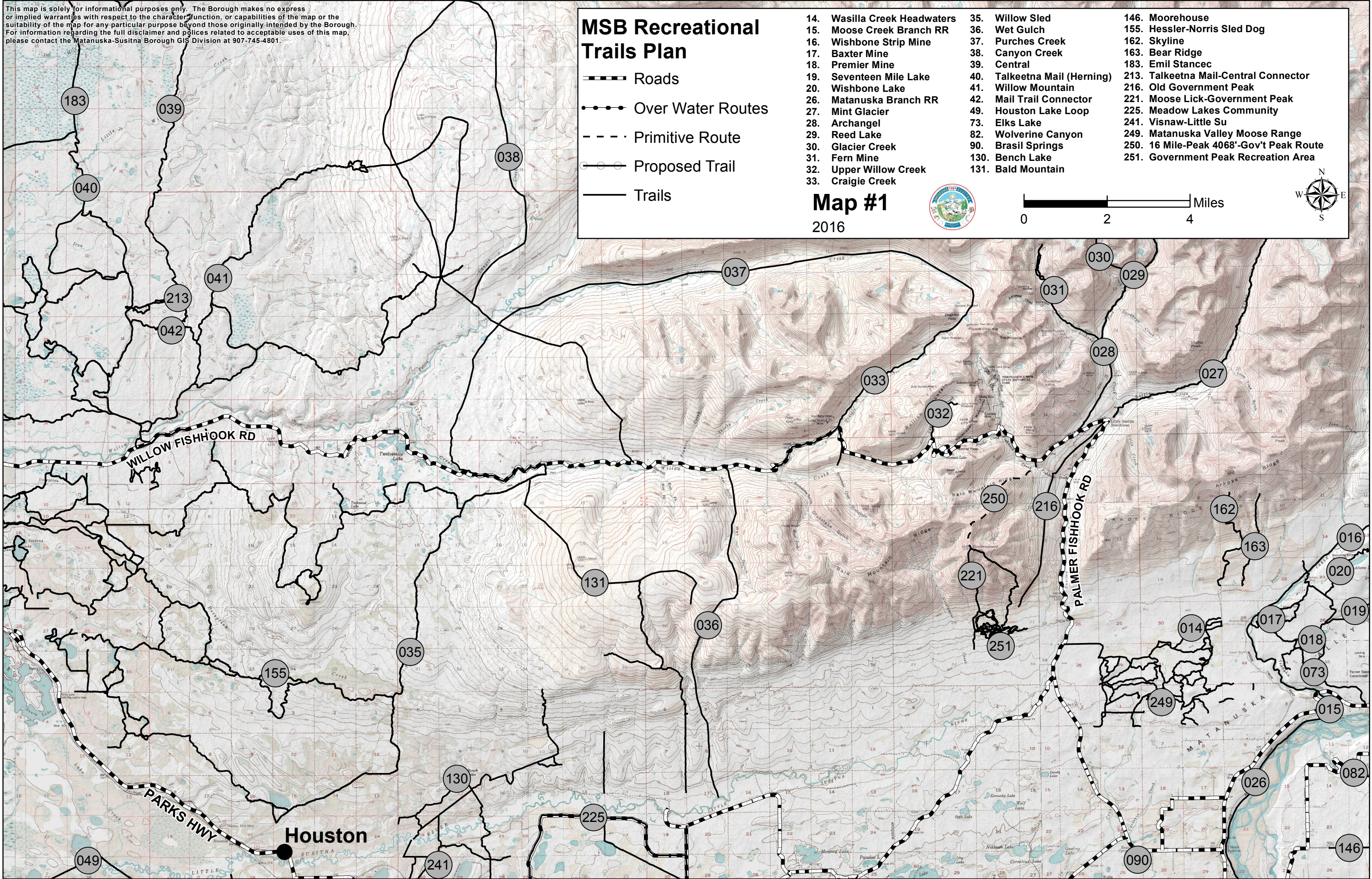
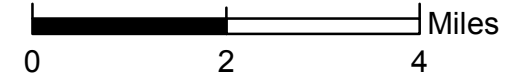
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# MSB Recreational Trails Plan


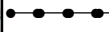
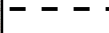
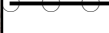

-  Roads
-  Over Water Routes
-  Primitive Route
-  Proposed Trail
-  Trails

- |                              |                              |  |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| 14. Wasilla Creek Headwaters | 35. Willow Sled              | 146. Moorehouse                          |
| 15. Moose Creek Branch RR    | 36. Wet Gulch                | 155. Hessler-Norris Sled Dog             |
| 16. Wishbone Strip Mine      | 37. Purches Creek            | 162. Skyline                             |
| 17. Baxter Mine              | 38. Canyon Creek             | 163. Bear Ridge                          |
| 18. Premier Mine             | 39. Central                  | 183. Emil Stancec                        |
| 19. Seventeen Mile Lake      | 40. Talkeetna Mail (Herning) | 213. Talkeetna Mail-Central Connector    |
| 20. Wishbone Lake            | 41. Willow Mountain          | 216. Old Government Peak                 |
| 26. Matanuska Branch RR      | 42. Mail Trail Connector     | 221. Moose Lick-Government Peak          |
| 27. Mint Glacier             | 49. Houston Lake Loop        | 225. Meadow Lakes Community              |
| 28. Archangel                | 73. Elks Lake                | 241. Visnaw-Little Su                    |
| 29. Reed Lake                | 82. Wolverine Canyon         | 249. Matanuska Valley Moose Range        |
| 30. Glacier Creek            | 90. Brasil Springs           | 250. 16 Mile-Peak 4068'-Gov't Peak Route |
| 31. Fern Mine                | 130. Bench Lake              | 251. Government Peak Recreation Area     |
| 32. Upper Willow Creek       | 131. Bald Mountain           |  |

**Map #1**  
2016

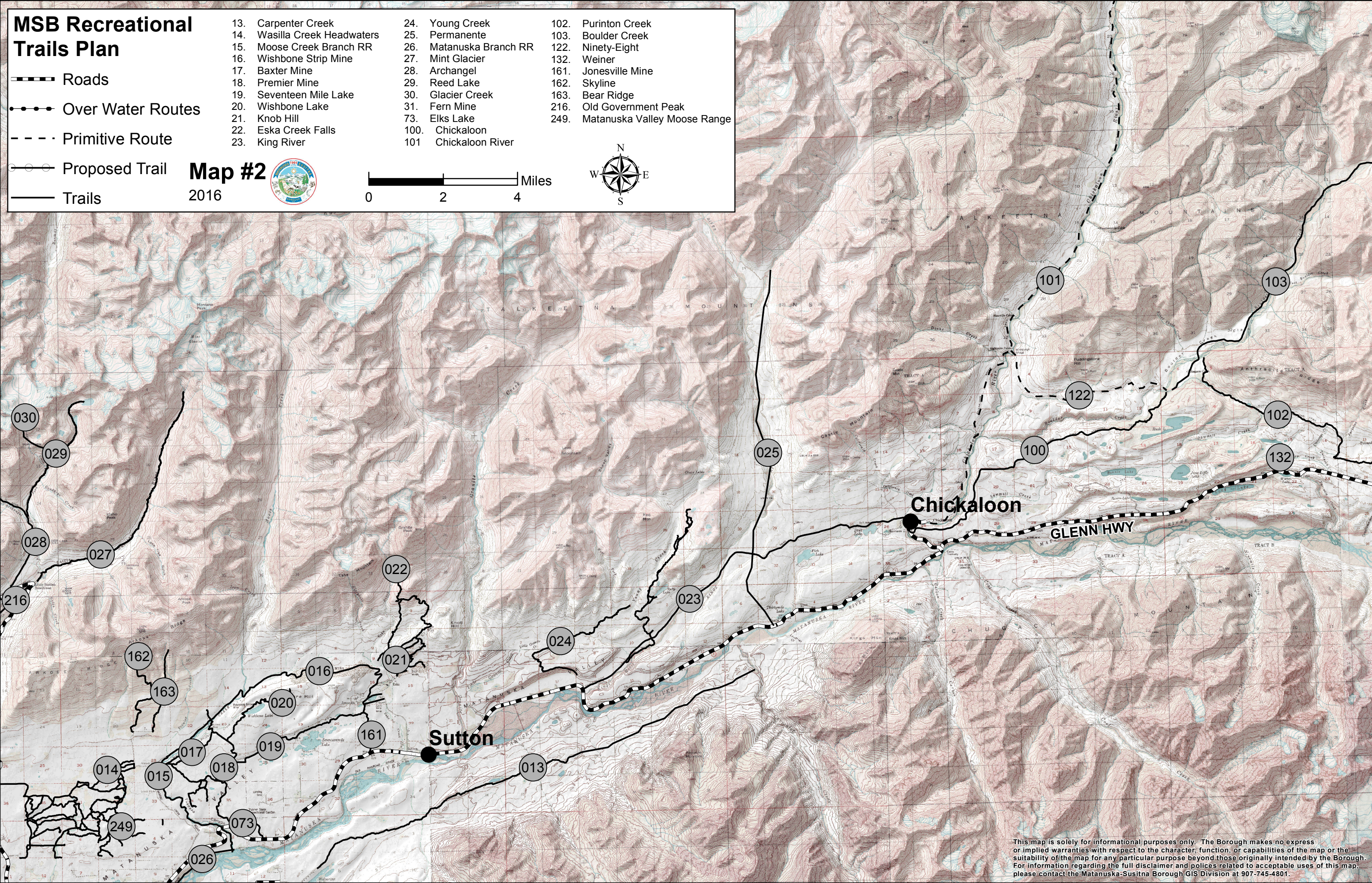
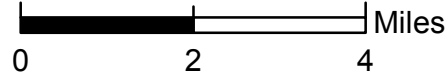


# MSB Recreational Trails Plan

-  Roads
-  Over Water Routes
-  Primitive Route
-  Proposed Trail
-  Trails



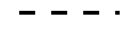


- |                              |                         |                                   |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 13. Carpenter Creek          | 24. Young Creek         | 102. Purinton Creek               |
| 14. Wasilla Creek Headwaters | 25. Permanente          | 103. Boulder Creek                |
| 15. Moose Creek Branch RR    | 26. Matanuska Branch RR | 122. Ninety-Eight                 |
| 16. Wishbone Strip Mine      | 27. Mint Glacier        | 132. Weiner                       |
| 17. Baxter Mine              | 28. Archangel           | 161. Jonesville Mine              |
| 18. Premier Mine             | 29. Reed Lake           | 162. Skyline                      |
| 19. Seventeen Mile Lake      | 30. Glacier Creek       | 163. Bear Ridge                   |
| 20. Wishbone Lake            | 31. Fern Mine           | 216. Old Government Peak          |
| 21. Knob Hill                | 73. Elks Lake           | 249. Matanuska Valley Moose Range |
| 22. Eska Creek Falls         | 100. Chickaloon         |                                   |
| 23. King River               | 101. Chickaloon River   |                                   |

**Map #2**  
2016



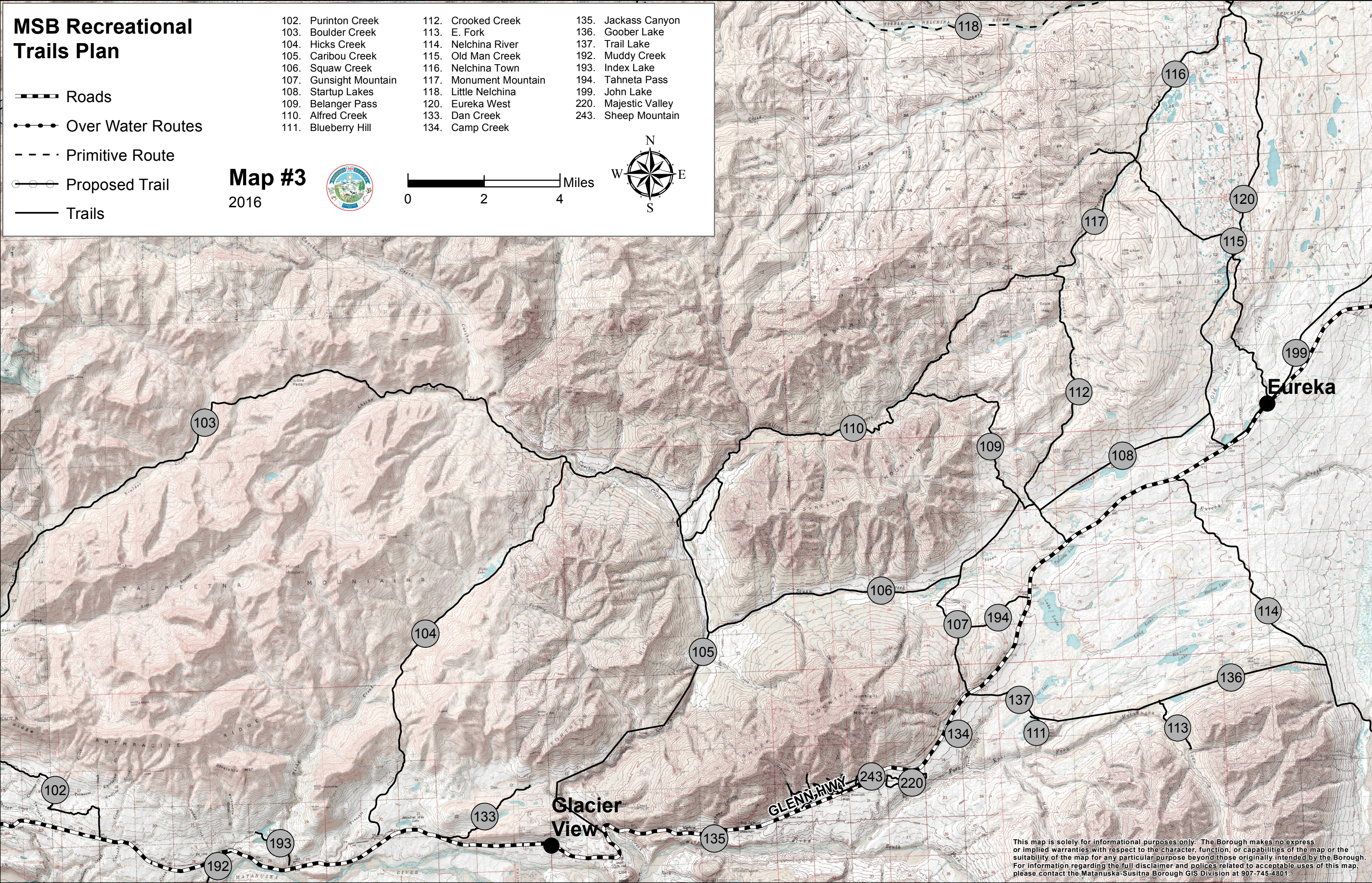
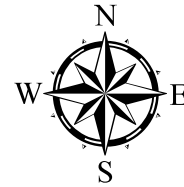
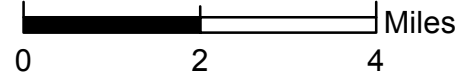
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# MSB Recreational Trails Plan

-  Roads
-  Over Water Routes
-  Primitive Route
-  Proposed Trail
-  Trails






- |                        |                        |                      |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 102. Purinton Creek    | 112. Crooked Creek     | 135. Jackass Canyon  |
| 103. Boulder Creek     | 113. E. Fork           | 136. Goober Lake     |
| 104. Hicks Creek       | 114. Nelchina River    | 137. Trail Lake      |
| 105. Caribou Creek     | 115. Old Man Creek     | 192. Muddy Creek     |
| 106. Squaw Creek       | 116. Nelchina Town     | 193. Index Lake      |
| 107. Gunsight Mountain | 117. Monument Mountain | 194. Tahnetta Pass   |
| 108. Startup Lakes     | 118. Little Nelchina   | 199. John Lake       |
| 109. Belanger Pass     | 120. Eureka West       | 220. Majestic Valley |
| 110. Alfred Creek      | 133. Dan Creek         | 243. Sheep Mountain  |
| 111. Blueberry Hill    | 134. Camp Creek        |                      |

**Map #3**  
2016

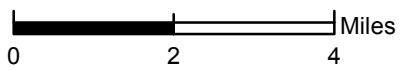


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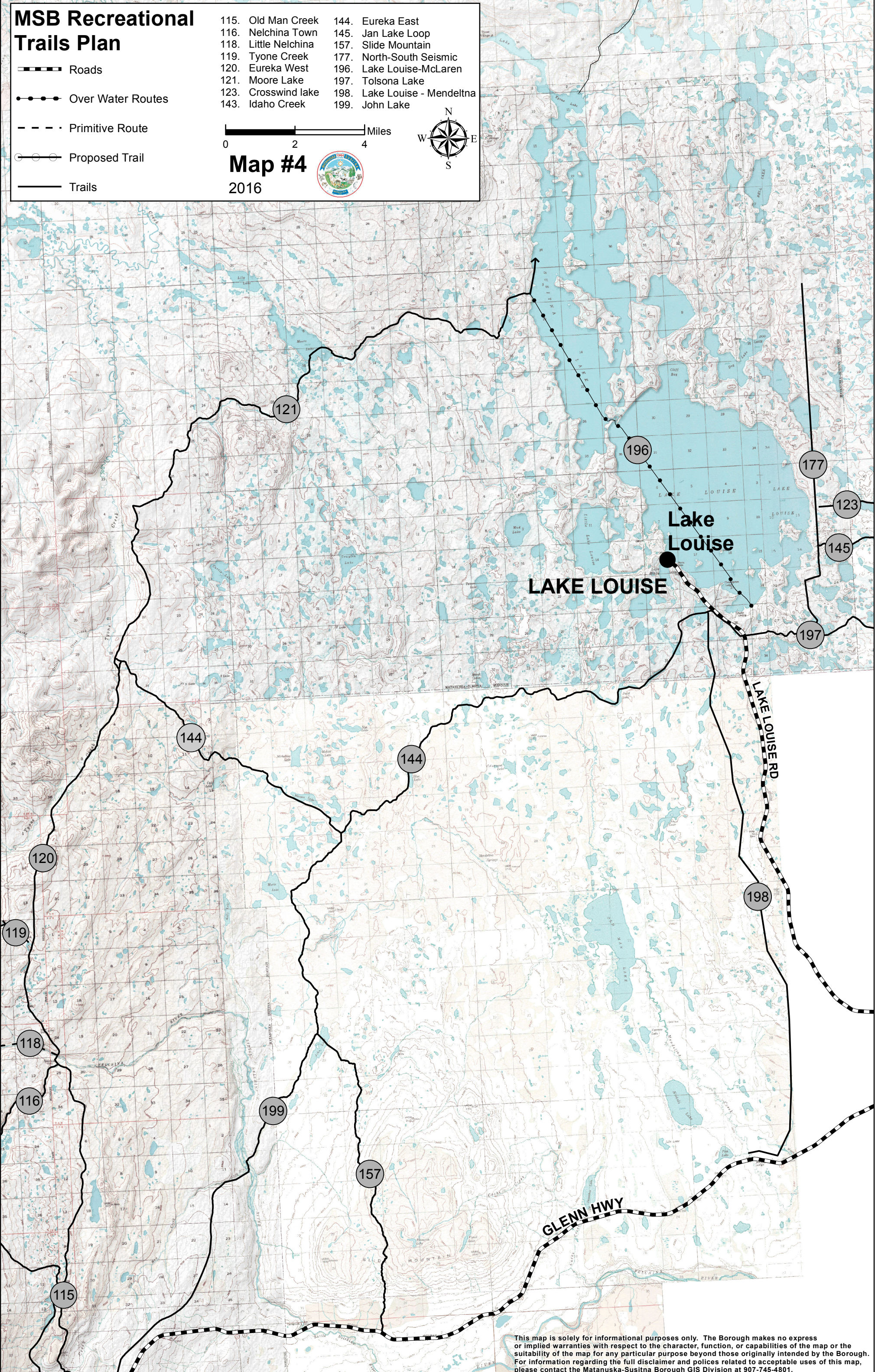
# MSB Recreational Trails Plan

-  Roads
-  Over Water Routes
-  Primitive Route
-  Proposed Trail
-  Trails

- |                      |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 115. Old Man Creek   | 144. Eureka East             |
| 116. Nelchina Town   | 145. Jan Lake Loop           |
| 118. Little Nelchina | 157. Slide Mountain          |
| 119. Tyone Creek     | 177. North-South Seismic     |
| 120. Eureka West     | 196. Lake Louise-McLaren     |
| 121. Moore Lake      | 197. Tolsona Lake            |
| 123. Crosswind lake  | 198. Lake Louise - Mendeltna |
| 143. Idaho Creek     | 199. John Lake               |



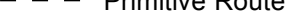
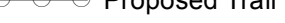



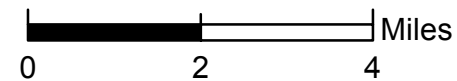
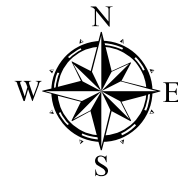
**Map #4**  
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# MSB Recreational Trails Plan

-  Roads
-  Over Water Routes
-  Primitive Route
-  Proposed Trail
-  Trails



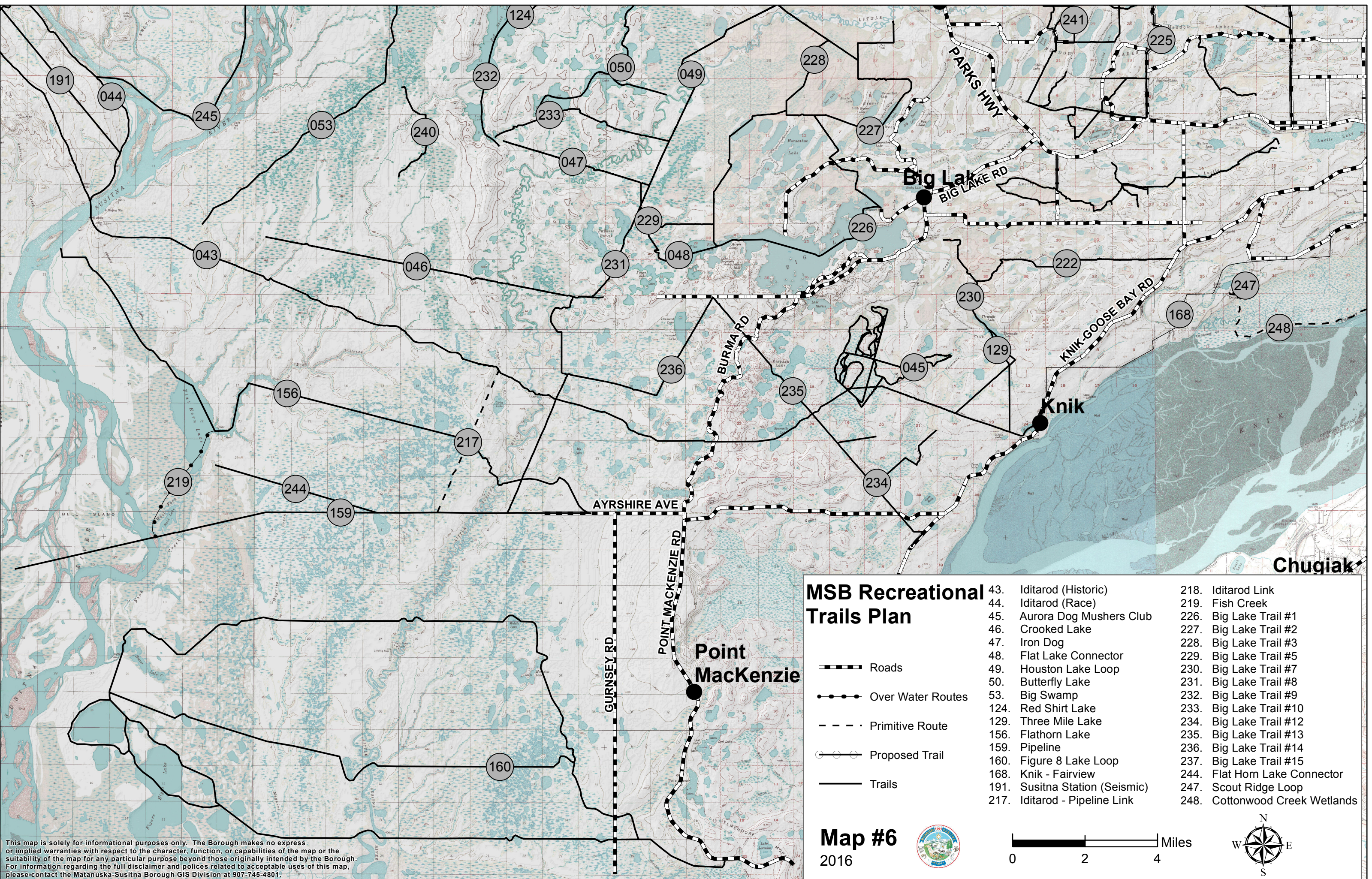
- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Crevasse Morraine         | 61. Knik Glacier                          |
| 2. Kepler-Bradley            | 62. Friday Creek                          |
| 3. Long Lake Connector       | 63. Metal Creek                           |
| 4. Lazy Mountain             | 73. Elks Lake                             |
| 5. Matanuska Peak            | 82. Wolverine Canyon                      |
| 6. Plumley-Maud              | 83. Pioneer Ridge/Austin Helmer           |
| 7. Rippy                     | 90. Brasil Springs                        |
| 8. Burnt Butte               | 125. Matanuska River Park-RR Link         |
| 9. Swan Lake Canoe Route     | 126. Morgan Horse                         |
| 10. Sexton                   | 127. Oswald                               |
| 11. West Bodenburg           | 128. Envy                                 |
| 12. Wolverine Creek          | 146. Moorehouse                           |
| 13. Carpenter Creek          | 165. E. Twins Peak                        |
| 14. Wasilla Creek Headwaters | 166. Hunter Creek                         |
| 15. Moose Creek Branch RR    | 167. Lake George                          |
| 17. Baxter Mine              | 168. Knik - Fairview                      |
| 18. Premier Mine             | 246. Refelctions Lake                     |
| 19. Seventeen Mile Lake      | 249. Matanuska Valley Moose Range         |
| 26. Matanuska Branch RR      | 252. Moose, Bear, Fox Singletrack - CMMGT |
| 34. 7 Mile Canoe             |   |
| 58. Lazy Mountain Southside  |   |

**Map #5**

2016



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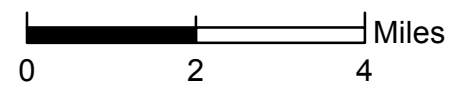


### MSB Recreational Trails Plan

- Roads
- Over Water Routes
- Primitive Route
- Proposed Trail
- Trails


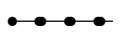
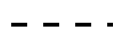


- |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 43. Iditarod (Historic)        | 218. Iditarod Link             |
| 44. Iditarod (Race)            | 219. Fish Creek                |
| 45. Aurora Dog Musers Club     | 226. Big Lake Trail #1         |
| 46. Crooked Lake               | 227. Big Lake Trail #2         |
| 47. Iron Dog                   | 228. Big Lake Trail #3         |
| 48. Flat Lake Connector        | 229. Big Lake Trail #5         |
| 49. Houston Lake Loop          | 230. Big Lake Trail #7         |
| 50. Butterfly Lake             | 231. Big Lake Trail #8         |
| 53. Big Swamp                  | 232. Big Lake Trail #9         |
| 124. Red Shirt Lake            | 233. Big Lake Trail #10        |
| 129. Three Mile Lake           | 234. Big Lake Trail #12        |
| 156. Flathorn Lake             | 235. Big Lake Trail #13        |
| 159. Pipeline                  | 236. Big Lake Trail #14        |
| 160. Figure 8 Lake Loop        | 237. Big Lake Trail #15        |
| 168. Knik - Fairview           | 244. Flat Horn Lake Connector  |
| 191. Susitna Station (Seismic) | 247. Scout Ridge Loop          |
| 217. Iditarod - Pipeline Link  | 248. Cottonwood Creek Wetlands |

**Map #6**  
2016



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# MSB Recreational Trails Plan

-  Roads
-  Over Water Routes
-  Primitive Route
-  Proposed Trail
-  Trails

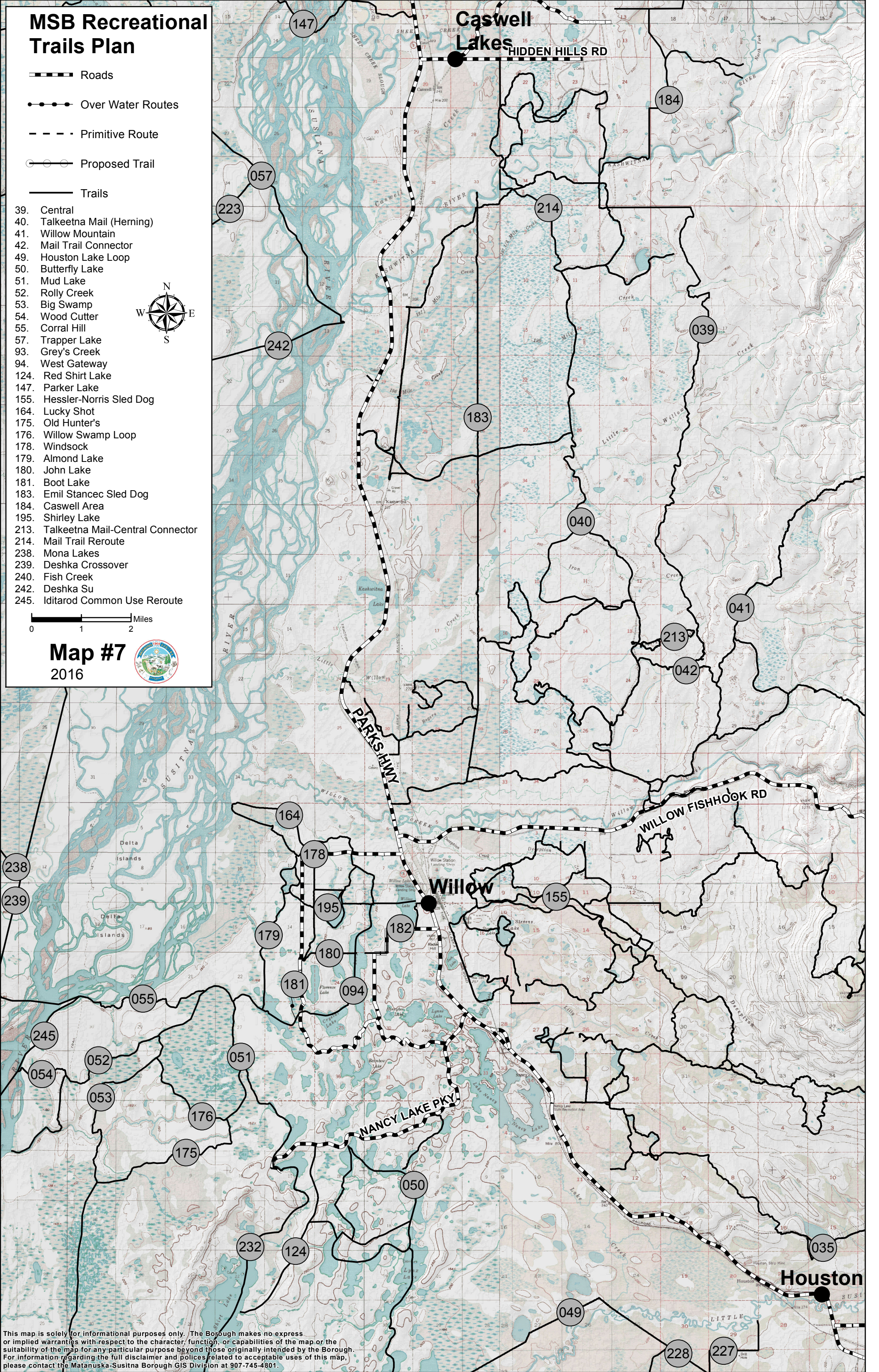
- 39. Central
- 40. Talkeetna Mail (Herring)
- 41. Willow Mountain
- 42. Mail Trail Connector
- 49. Houston Lake Loop
- 50. Butterfly Lake
- 51. Mud Lake
- 52. Rolly Creek
- 53. Big Swamp
- 54. Wood Cutter
- 55. Corral Hill
- 57. Trapper Lake
- 93. Grey's Creek
- 94. West Gateway
- 124. Red Shirt Lake
- 147. Parker Lake
- 155. Hessler-Norris Sled Dog
- 164. Lucky Shot
- 175. Old Hunter's
- 176. Willow Swamp Loop
- 178. Windsock
- 179. Almond Lake
- 180. John Lake
- 181. Boot Lake
- 183. Emil Stancec Sled Dog
- 184. Caswell Area
- 195. Shirley Lake
- 213. Talkeetna Mail-Central Connector
- 214. Mail Trail Reroute
- 238. Mona Lakes
- 239. Deshka Crossover
- 240. Fish Creek
- 242. Deshka Su
- 245. Iditarod Common Use Reroute



0 1 2 Miles

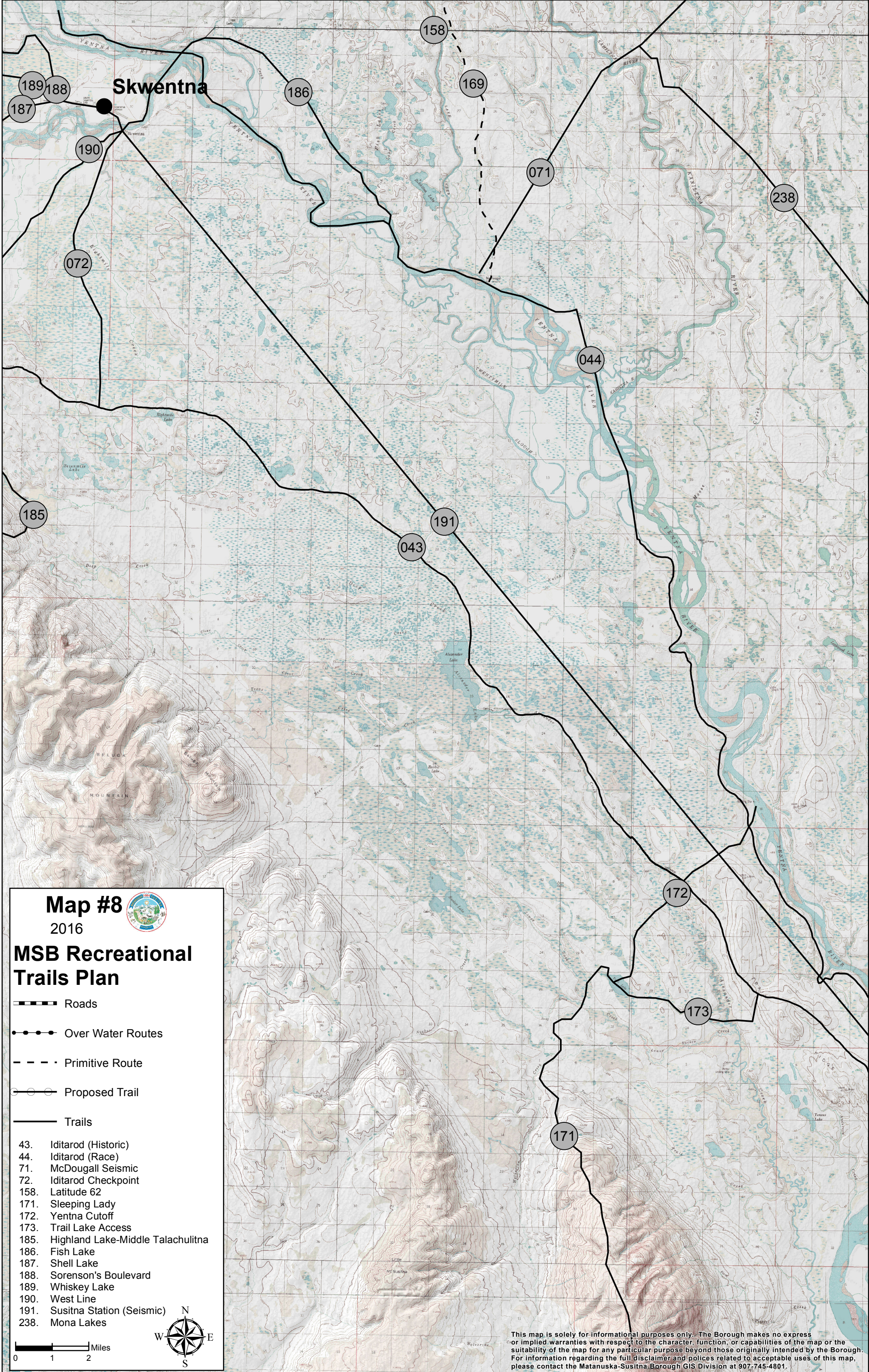
**Map #7**

2016




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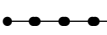
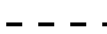






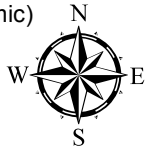
# Skwentna

**Map #8**   
 2016

## MSB Recreational Trails Plan





-  Roads
-  Over Water Routes
-  Primitive Route
-  Proposed Trail
-  Trails


- 43. Iditarod (Historic)
- 44. Iditarod (Race)
- 71. McDougall Seismic
- 72. Iditarod Checkpoint
- 158. Latitude 62
- 171. Sleeping Lady
- 172. Yentna Cutoff
- 173. Trail Lake Access
- 185. Highland Lake-Middle Talachulitna
- 186. Fish Lake
- 187. Shell Lake
- 188. Sorenson's Boulevard
- 189. Whiskey Lake
- 190. West Line
- 191. Susitna Station (Seismic)
- 238. Mona Lakes

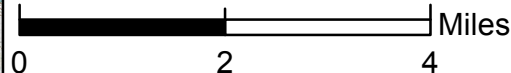
0 1 2 Miles 

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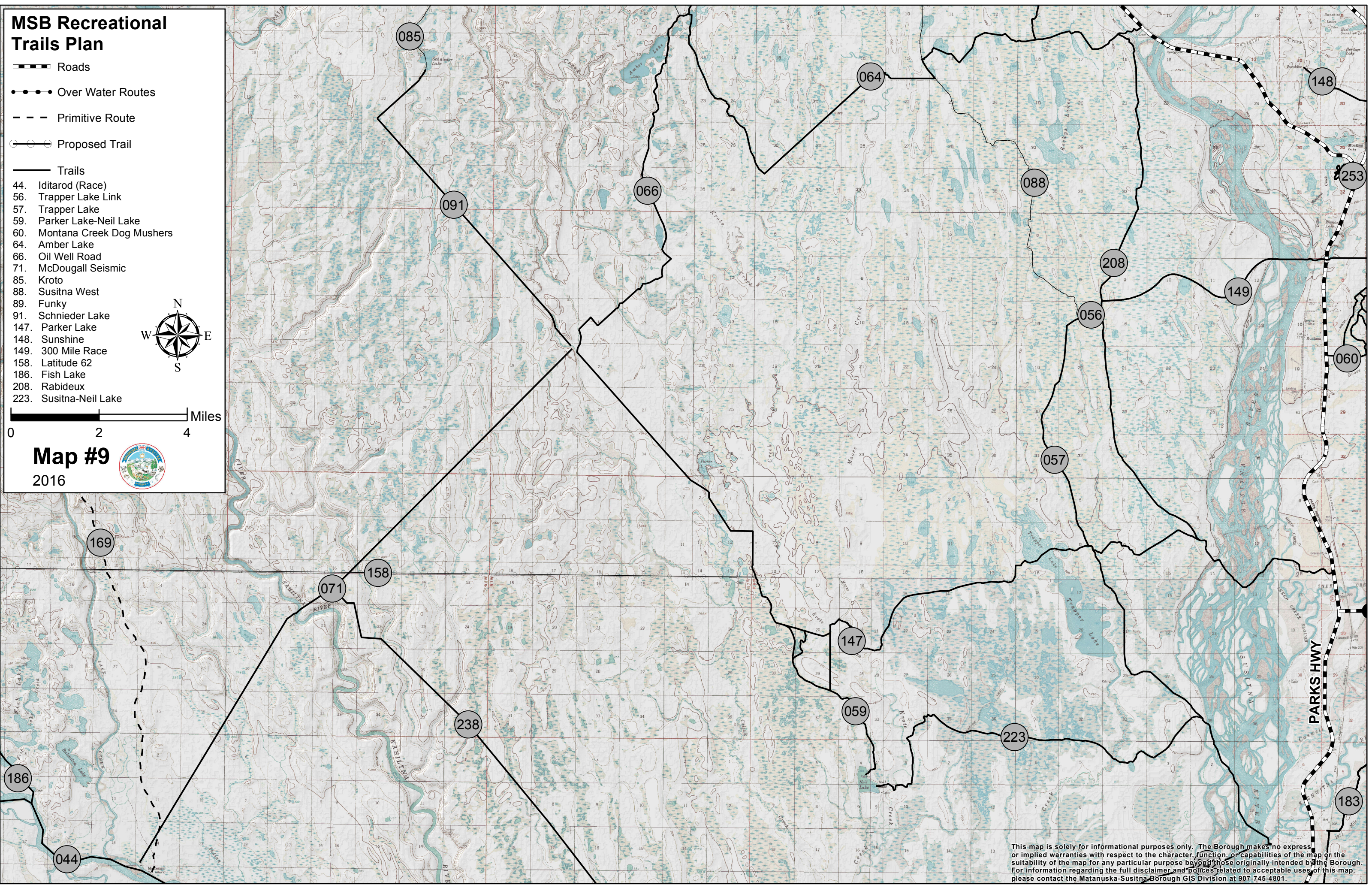
# MSB Recreational Trails Plan

-  Roads
-  Over Water Routes
-  Primitive Route
-  Proposed Trail

-  Trails
- 44. Iditarod (Race)
- 56. Trapper Lake Link
- 57. Trapper Lake
- 59. Parker Lake-Neil Lake
- 60. Montana Creek Dog Musher
- 64. Amber Lake
- 66. Oil Well Road
- 71. McDougall Seismic
- 85. Kroto
- 88. Susitna West
- 89. Funky
- 91. Schnieder Lake
- 147. Parker Lake
- 148. Sunshine
- 149. 300 Mile Race
- 158. Latitude 62
- 186. Fish Lake
- 208. Rabideux
- 223. Susitna-Neil Lake








**Map #9**  
2016

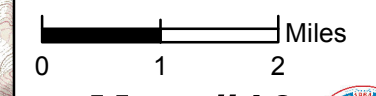


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# MSB Recreational Trails Plan

-  Roads
-  Over Water Routes
-  Primitive Route
-  Proposed Trail
-  Trails

- 35. Willow Sled
- 60. Montana Creek Dog Musher
- 75. S. Fork Montana Creek
- 77. Emil Lake
- 78. Upper S. Fork Montana Creek
- 79. Luthman
- 80. Montana Creek Falls
- 81. S. Fork Loop
- 147. Parker Lake
- 148. Sunshine
- 149. 300 Mile Race
- 152. Rainbow Lake
- 153. N. Fork Kashwitna Connector
- 154. Montana Creek Dog Musher 50 Mile
- 184. Caswell Area
- 214. Mail Trail Reroute
- 253. Dorothy Jones/ Su Valley High








**Map #10**  
2016

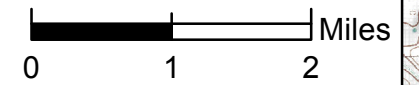


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# MSB Recreational Trails Plan

-  Roads
-  Over Water Routes
-  Primitive Route
-  Proposed Trail
-  Trails

- 76. Chulitna Bluff
- 84. E. Petersville
- 87. East-West Express
- 92. Petersville Roadside
- 200. Old RCA
- 201. Old Lake Road
- 203. Ridge
- 204. Talkeetna River
- 205. Talkeetna Lakes Park
- 206. Ski Hill
- 208. Rabideux
- 211. Twister Creek
- 212. Chase
- 224. Susitna River Route








Map #11  
2016



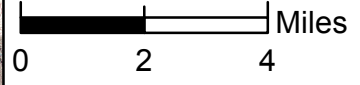
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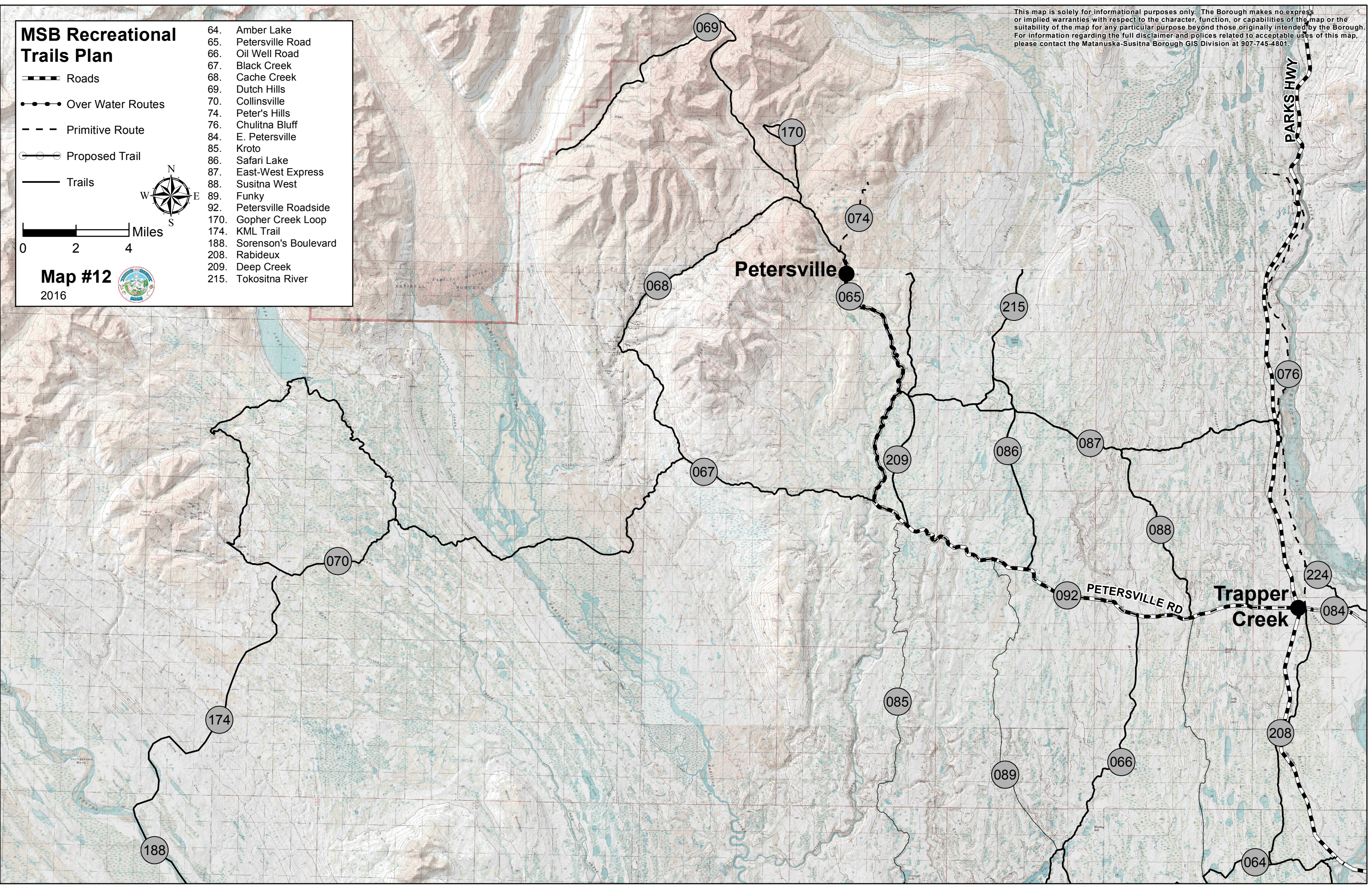
# MSB Recreational Trails Plan

-  Roads
-  Over Water Routes
-  Primitive Route
-  Proposed Trail
-  Trails

- 64. Amber Lake
- 65. Petersville Road
- 66. Oil Well Road
- 67. Black Creek
- 68. Cache Creek
- 69. Dutch Hills
- 70. Collinsville
- 74. Peter's Hills
- 76. Chulitna Bluff
- 84. E. Petersville
- 85. Kroto
- 86. Safari Lake
- 87. East-West Express
- 88. Susitna West
- 89. Funky
- 92. Petersville Roadside
- 170. Gopher Creek Loop
- 174. KML Trail
- 188. Sorenson's Boulevard
- 208. Rabideux
- 209. Deep Creek
- 215. Tokositna River



**Map #12**  
2016



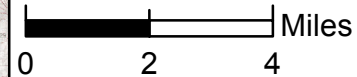
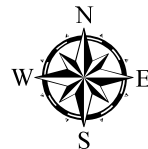
# MSB Recreational Trails Plan

Map #13  
2016

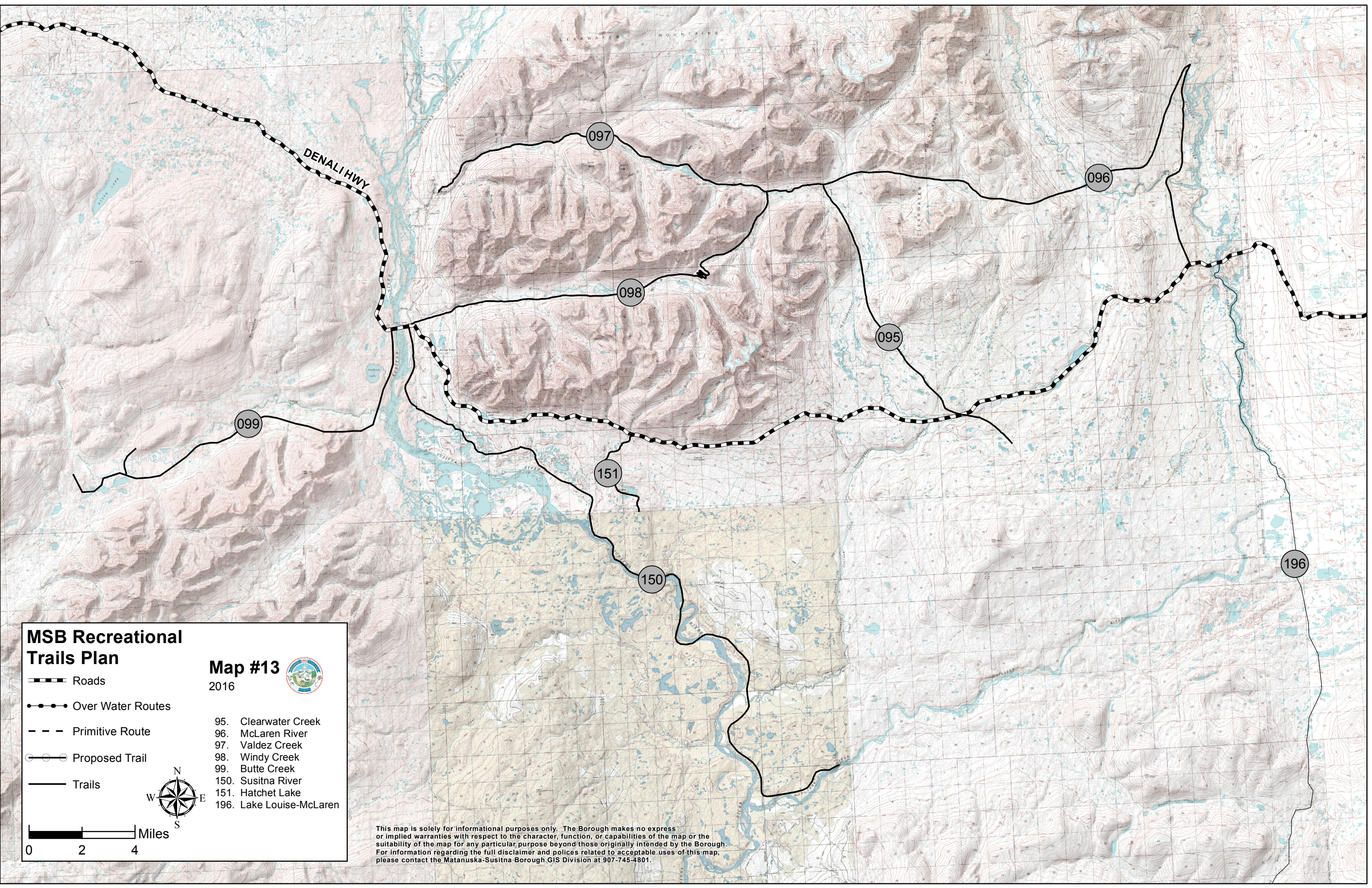


- Roads
- Over Water Routes
- Primitive Route
- Proposed Trail
- Trails

- 95. Clearwater Creek
- 96. McLaren River
- 97. Valdez Creek
- 98. Windy Creek
- 99. Butte Creek
- 150. Susitna River
- 151. Hatchet Lake
- 196. Lake Louise-McLaren



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## **Appendix B**

### **Adopted Policies and Programs**

**MSB Trail Care Program - September 2004**

**MSB Trail Marking Standards – August 2016**

## **Matanuska Susitna Borough TRAIL CARE PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

The goal of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Trail Care Program is to promote and support volunteer trail stewardship, teach trail maintenance and trail building techniques, promote health through safe and enjoyable trails. The program unites trail users with meaningful volunteer work and provides an opportunity for individuals and groups to be actively involved in our community. Volunteers assist the Matanuska-Susitna Borough by adopting a trail and helping with the vital task of improving and maintaining trails throughout the borough.

Volunteers who choose to become a Matanuska-Susitna Borough Trail Care Crew or crew member will adopt-a-trail to maintain and improve for a year or more. They will receive training and guidelines on trail monitoring, trail maintenance and trail building techniques. Tools, equipment and training will be provided by the MSB whenever possible.

Trail user groups, civic organizations, youth groups, church organizations, community groups, schools and private industries and businesses are encouraged to adopt-a-trail and become a trail care crew. All that is needed is the ability and desire to build, improve, and maintain trails.

Volunteer participants in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Trail Care Program must be at least 12 years old. For every 6 minors (age 12-17) who participate, at least one adult (age 21 or older) must be continuously present and act in a supervisory capacity for the minors. Minors under 18 years old may not operate motorized or power equipment.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough Trail Care Crews and crew members agree to:

- Complete a Volunteer Trail Care Application
- Attend a one day Matanuska-Susitna Borough Trail Care Training session
- Perform trail care as outlined in the Trail Care Agreement
- Provide adequate supervision to participants seventeen years of age or younger
- Advise the Matanuska-Susitna Borough of trail problems or concerns that are beyond the Trail Care Crew's resources and/or capabilities
- Encourage all trail users to utilize the "Trail Etiquette Standard for Trail Users"
- Adopt-a-trail for a minimum of one year

Matanuska-Susitna Borough will:

- Provide hand tools, and other trail maintenance equipment when available
- Provide Trail Care training on an annual basis
- Provide signs, trailhead kiosks and markers (if available)
- Publicly recognize the volunteer group for their work

---

*If your organizations would like to adopt-a-trail and become a Trail Care Crew please call the MSB Community Development Department. (907) 861-7869*



# MSB TRAIL MARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. *Introduction*

This manual describes sign and marking standards for trails maintained and/or managed by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB). It is meant to bring some uniformity to trail marking, make trails managed by the MSB easy to identify, enhance user 'enjoy-ability' and increase safety when recreating on trails.

The MSB trail markers should be consistent in appearance, providing information that is easy to understand. The markers should be useful for trail identification, maintenance and safety.

There are two types of trail marking recommendations, one for urban trails that are generally more heavily used and managed; and one for backcountry trails, which need less management and marking.

Urban trails differ from backcountry trails due to the reassurance some people need - to know they are on the right path and how far to their next destination. Whereas backcountry trail marking is placed less frequently, giving the user the sense they are in the backcountry, but still provides important information.

Many people think that marking a trail has one purpose: to indicate the route and reassure users they are on the trail. But, along heavily traveled trail sections, it serves to actually influence travel. In other words, blazes, signs, metal markers, posts, cairns when thoughtfully placed, can help guide people along the same footway, especially in open woods or in alpine zones. Markers guide users along a single route, which in turn prevents trailside trampling and resource damage.

## 2. *Trailhead Signs*

**Kiosk/bulletin board type signs should be placed at all trailheads and include the following:**

- Trail name
- MSB Logo
- Types of trail uses allowed - i.e. hiking, ORV- riding, horseback riding
- Map showing the trail location and trail amenities (water, toilets, benches, etc.)
- Trail distance (mileage)
- Trail difficulty and special instructions
- Rules of the trail – trail user yielding signs
- Warnings of dangers, safety messages and trail closures
- Contact phone numbers for trail manager and emergency services
- Recognition (*Thank You*) of organization that serves as *MSB Trail Care Crew*

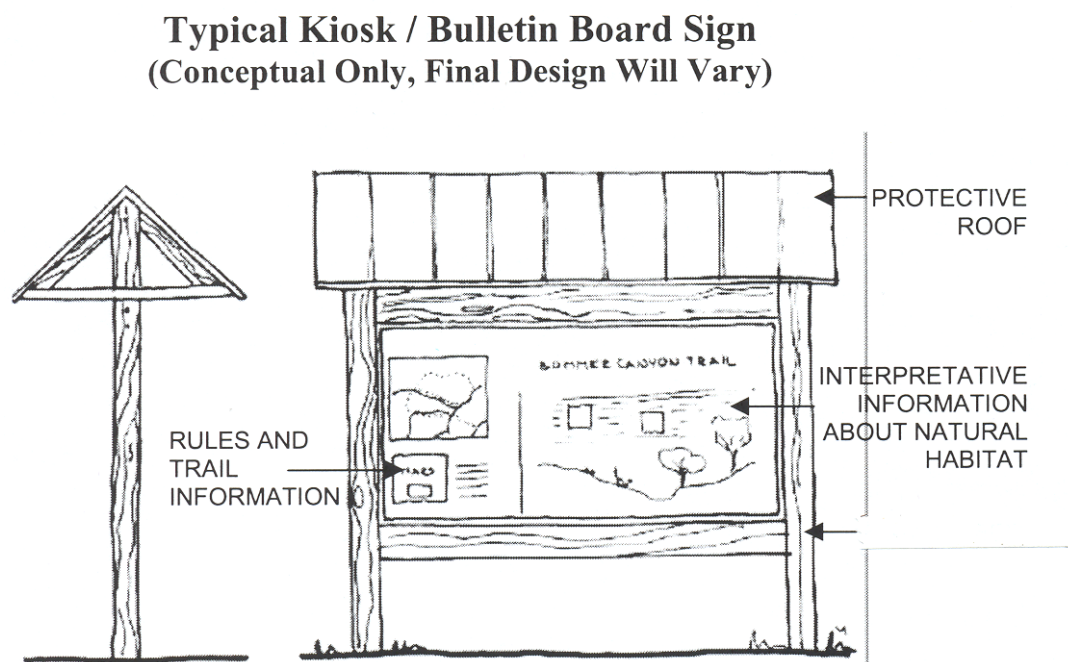
**The kiosk/bulletin board trailhead sign may also include:**

- Hours trailhead is open – if applicable
- Trail maps handouts
- Trail register
- Information re: trail organization partners and/or trail care crews
- Information re: how users can get involved in volunteering
- Information re: agency partners
- Interpretive information

**Example of a typical kiosks/bulletin board trailhead sign material and design:**

- Two sided 4' X 4' board made of wood, plastic or metal with beige or off white background and dark green lettering
- Framed with posts made of durable 2" X 4" or 4" X 4" material, such as metal, plastic or concrete
- Protective roof made of metal or plastic

*Figure 1: This figure shows the standard design for Trailhead kiosk/bulletin board*



### **3. *Types of Trail Markers***

#### **Standard markers trail:**

The MSB trails should be marked with brown composite fiberglass (carsonite) flat posts or an appropriate alternative. An example would be color coded posts to designate various trail loops. Carsonite posts, both flexible and durable trail markers, come in a variety of lengths (1' to 8' feet), are 4" inches wide (an industry standard), and provide a recessed surface for the application of 3" wide decals. The longer markers can be fitted with anchors to deter removal by vandals.

The information placed on these markers, in the form of decals or lettering has many functions and should carry several messages.

Examples of the markers signs are shown in the figure below. Their purpose is to achieve the following:

- Indicate what usage is allowed
- Identify the trail and/or trail segment
- Describe the accepted right-of-way hierarchy in which, for example, cyclists yield to runners and both yield to walkers and hikers
- Warn trail users of upcoming hazards
- Indicate the distance and direction to the trailhead or other designation
- Provide regulatory information when necessary

The following types of information may be provided by the MSB when marking trails:

#### **Directional**

- Arrows showing where trail goes
- Colored or numbered markers that indicate trail routes within a system of trails

#### **Informational**

- Example: "Private property - please stay on trail"
- Example: "Seasonal closure"

#### **Difficulty/Safety Warning**

- Universal degree of difficulty symbols
- Example: "Steep incline"
- Safety messages – Example: "Watch for Falling Rock"

## **Reassurance**

- Example:” Trailhead 1 mile “ or “Trailhead” with an arrow pointing the way
- Colored or numbered markers that indicate trail routes within a system of trails
- Distance markers
- GPS location (longitude and latitude)

## **Regulatory**

- Example: “Winter use only”
- Example: “Seasonal closure”

# **4. *Marking Trails***

## **Marking Urban Trails**

Placement of trail markers is a bit discretionary, but as a rule trail markers along urban trails are spaced more frequently than backcountry trails. They guide trail users along a route and provide detailed information about the hazards and trail use.

To start with, trailheads for urban trails have the standard kiosk/bulletin board type sign with the information listed in Section 2.

In addition to the trailhead sign the entrance to the trail will be clearly marked and include the trail name, MSB Logo, types of trail uses allowed, trail difficulty and special instructions. Markers along the trail or within a trail system need to provide direction and information, such as mileage to the trailhead or trail closures.

Direction and information:

At a minimum, directional and informational markers shall be placed in the following locations:

- Where the trail intersects with other trails or roads
- Where the trail enters/leaves private property ~ informing users to stay on the trail
- Every 2 tenths (1000 feet  $\pm$ ) of a mile along the trail route

Trail segments within a trail system are marked with the name of the segment and directions, in text and/or graphic form (arrows) and are placed along the trail for quick recognition.

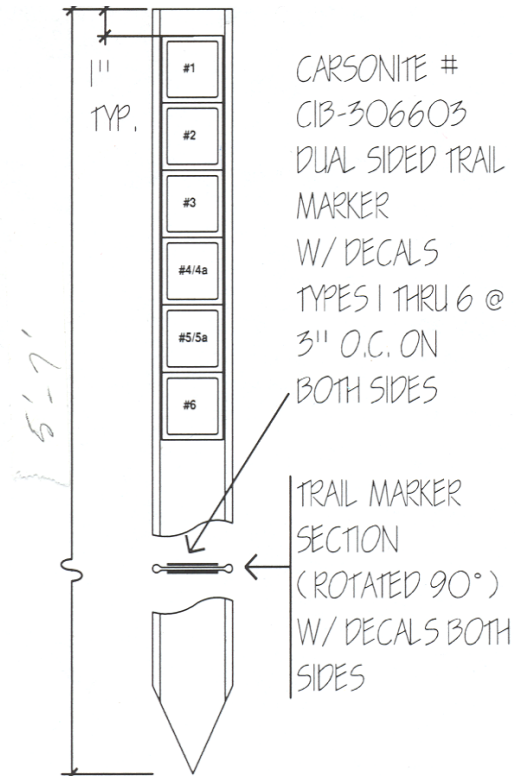
## Trail closures:

Place "Trail Closed" markers at the trailhead and/or along the trail segments which are closed.

*Note: Public notice for trail closures is important. Other than emergency situations trail closures shall require notice in a local newspaper.*

*Figure 2: Shows one acceptable design for a MSB trail marker*

*Figure 3: Shows an example of the decals for the markers*



## Marking Backcountry Trails

Trail markers for backcountry trails have just enough information to guide users along a selected route. A missed intersection is dramatically increased without trail markers; and in the backcountry it may cause dangerous consequences.

Backcountry trailheads have a kiosk type sign similar to the urban trails that identifies the trail name and shows the minimum information recommended for trailhead signage.

Special considerations are made in backcountry areas. "Directional" signs, those that show trail names and destinations should be used sparingly; "interpretive" signs, those that label items or provide information of an historical or scientific nature, should not be used.

For trails which cross large open tundra or swamps and which are heavily used in winter it may be necessary place markers more frequently and apply reflective tape or stickers that make the trail markers visible at night or in inclement weather.

Markers are spaced less frequently and allow for some sense of adventure. GPS locations should be included on the markers at trail intersections or important features whenever possible.

Directional signs and/or trail name markers are placed in the following locations:

- Wherever there are intersections with other trails
- Wherever there is trail braiding
- Wherever the trail enters and departs private land
- About 1 mile apart

Side trails that dead end at cabins (private or public), viewpoints, campsites or water sources should have a sign labeling it as such. Mark the main trail clearly in areas where there is trail braiding or confusing intersections.

### **Trail marking plans**

A trail marking plan shall be provided to all volunteer and staff that are given the job of marking trails for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

The trail marking plan shall include:

- A map (1" = 1 mile minimum scale) that clearly shows the trail(s) that have legal public right-of-way and are in need of marking.
- Points on the map showing locations of where trail markers need to be placed; and the type of markers needed at these points. If GPS locations are known they shall also be noted on the map.
- Written recommendations for placement of markers along the route; i.e., blind corners, steep inclines, stream crossings, hazards (such as falling rock), private land, distance markers and GPS locations markers.
- Written recommendations on how to physically place the signs, i.e., how far off the trail and at what height when placing on trees. This is important for purposes of maintaining the trail. If markers are too close they may be run down by winter grooming equipment or dog teams may collide with them on sharp corners.