

CDD COPY

**LAST CHANCE BASIN
LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN
UPDATE 1994**



CITY and BOROUGH OF JUNEAU
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
NOVEMBER 1994

Presented by: The Manager
Introduced: 12/19/94
Drafted by: G.H.G./J.R.C.

ORDINANCE OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA

Serial No. 94-44

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO ADD THE WATERSHED CONTROL & WELLHEAD PROTECTION PROGRAM - GOLD CREEK SOURCE AND THE LAST CHANCE BASIN LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA:

* Section 1. Classification. This ordinance is of a general and permanent nature and shall become a part of the city and borough code.

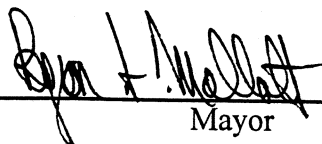
* Section 2. Amendment of Subsection. CBJ 49.05.200(c)(2)(A) is amended to add the following subsections to the list of interpretive materials included as part of the City and Borough Comprehensive Plan:

(vi) Watershed Control & Wellhead Protection Program - Gold Creek Source, dated November 1994.

(vii) Last Chance Basin Land Management Plan Update of November 1994.

* Section 3. Effective Date. This ordinance shall be effective thirty days after its adoption.

Adopted this 9th day of January, 1995.



Mayor

Attest:



Clerk

LAST CHANCE BASIN
LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

UPDATE 1994

CITY and BOROUGH OF JUNEAU

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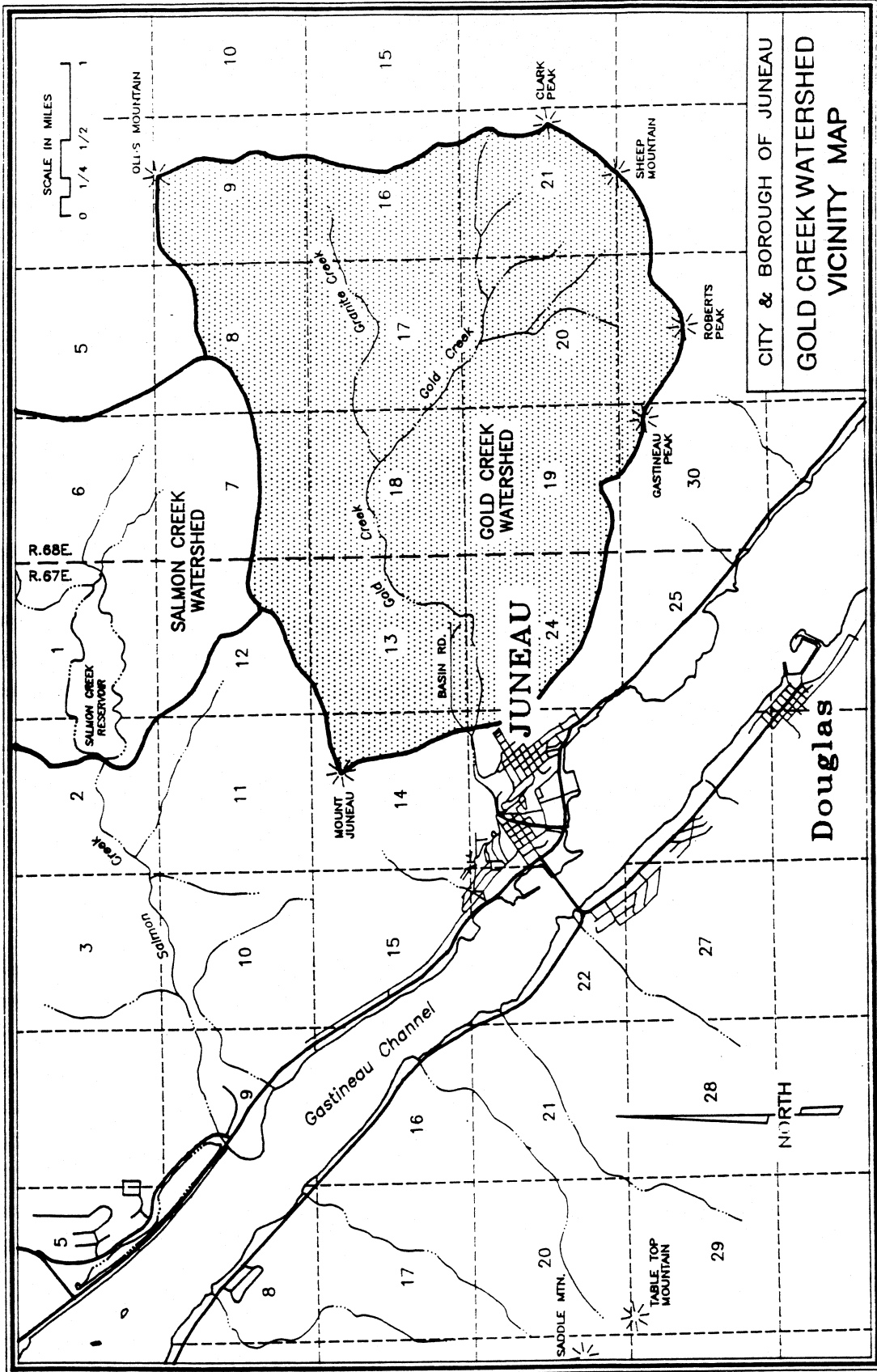
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Murray Walsh, Director
Gary Gillette, Planner

Cover Photo Credit: Last Chance Basin/Juneau Panorama - circa 1935
Winter and Pond #87-542
Courtesy of Alaska State Historical Library

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CITY & BOROUGH OF JUNEAU
 GOLD CREEK WATERSHED
 VICINITY MAP

SCALE IN MILES
 0 1/4 1/2 1

NORTH

Douglas

JUNEAU

SALMON CREEK WATERSHED

GOLD CREEK WATERSHED

R. 66E
 R. 67E

SALMON CREEK RESERVOIR

Gastineau Channel

MOUNT JUNEAU

BASIN RD.

TABLE TOP MOUNTAIN

28

SADDLE MTN.

20

29

27

22

17

16

10

11

12

3

2

6

5

10

9

8

7

15

16

17

18

13

14

15

CLARK PEAK

21

20

19

24

GASTINEAU PEAK

30

25

ROBERTS PEAK

20

SHEEP MOUNTAIN

21

OLLI'S MOUNTAIN

I. INTRODUCTION

The City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) incorporates, by reference, the Last Chance Basin Land Management Plan (LCBLMP) which was developed and adopted in 1978. This 1994 Update amends the 1978 LCBLMP with additional information regarding current land uses and land use policies for the foreseeable future. Much of the base information contained in the 1978 LCBLMP remains accurate today. Many of the land use issues identified at that time are timely today as well. There have been some changes since the earlier plan. Those changes will be identified and discussed in this update document. The format of this update is patterned after the 1978 plan such that it is easy to follow and relate to the original plan.

The 1978 LCBLMP concluded that Last Chance Basin's most important use is as the principal watershed for Juneau. Based upon public input received for the 1994 Update, this conclusion remains the same. The Basin, as it is commonly referred to, also remains a favorite hiking, picnicking and casual recreational area as well as a place to jog, walk dogs, and bicycle.

In 1971 a local entrepreneur leased an acre of CBJ land and began the Gold Creek Salmon Bake. Over the years the Salmon Bake became an institution in the Basin and was in operation through the fall of 1993. In 1978 the Salmon Bake served approximately 14,500 persons, and their last season served 37,000 persons. The Gastineau Channel Historical Society (GCHS) has proposed to convert the former Salmon Bake cook house into a disabled accessible cabin and information kiosk to generate funds for preservation of the historic mining buildings in the Basin.

In 1976 the CBJ developed and operated a mining museum in the historic Compressor Building of the former AJ Gold Mining Company. Also, in a portion of that building, the Juneau Chamber of Commerce presented a locally produced stage show. In 1978 the museum and stage show hosted 3,000 visitors. By 1982 both the museum and the stage show had ceased operations. GCHS re-opened the museum during the summers of 1987 & 1988. Since then it has remained closed to the public.

About 1979 Alaska Travel Adventures began operating a gold panning tour in the Basin near the former Salmon Bake site. This commercial activity is still operating today. In 1993 the gold panning tour brought 9,000 visitors to the

Basin. It is estimated that the total for 1994 will be 11,000 persons. In addition, other small commercial tour operators use Basin Road as part of sightseeing tours and to access Perseverance Trail for organized hikes.

Two proposals identified in the 1978 LCBLMP never materialized. They are the Alaska Tourism Marketing Services (ATMS) attraction and the Alaska Hydro Gardens. Chuck Keen remains active in his efforts to construct a tram to the top of Mt. Juneau, however, he holds no active leases for CBJ property in the Basin.

Some recent development in the Basin has resulted with the upgrading of Juneau's primary water supply. A series of wells have been drilled and construction pumping stations and associated buildings. USGS maintains a couple of water gauging stations in the Basin.

An additional activity which is having some indirect impacts to land use in the Basin is the mine exploration activities by Echo Bay Alaska in their efforts to re-open the AJ Gold Mine. A concrete pad and transformers have been placed near the trail head of the Perseverance Trail to provide the level of power needed in the mine workings. Also, a small trailer with water monitoring equipment has been placed on the bridge structure near the former Salmon Bake to provide continuous water sampling because a mine drainage tunnel empties into Gold Creek..

II. RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Natural Environment

The basic natural environment information contained in the 1978 LCBLMP is generally accurate for today and continues to be used as a basis for land use decisions. Additional up-to-date natural environment information can be found in the *Watershed Control & Wellhead Protection Program - Gold Creek Source*.

B. Man-Made Environment

1. Land Use / Land Status

As in 1978, the primary use of lands in the Basin is for watershed purposes. The area remains extensively used for casual recreational use as identified in the earlier plan. The trail head to the Perseverance Trail is located in the Basin. This trail is used by tourists and locals. Alaska Division of Parks reports that approximately 10,000 persons hiked the trail during the 1993 summer season.

Recognizing the importance of the only publicly owned extant historic mining buildings, the CBJ Assembly established the Last Chance Basin Historic District in 1979. And in 1993 the Jualpa Mine Camp was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. A caretaker residence exists in the Compressor Building to discourage vandalism to the buildings and historic artifacts on the site.

In 1994 the Gold Creek Salmon Bake relocated out of the Basin. During its 21 years of operation in the Basin, the Salmon Bake had an exemplary record in the management of their lease and protection of the watershed. In 1993, the Salmon Bake served 37,000 people.

The largest remaining commercial venture based in the Basin is the Alaska Travel Adventures (ATA) Gold Panning Tour. In 1993, ATA brought 9,000 gold panners to the Basin. Other commercial users in the Basin include small tour operators who offer sight seeing, hiking and occasional gold panning. With current growth trends in the visitor industry, commercial use of the Basin is expected to increase as new tour opportunities and companies appear each year. This has been the trend for cruise activity overall.

Currently there is one proposal for a new venture in the Basin. The Gastineau

Channel Historical Society (GCHS), a non-profit organization, has proposed to convert the former Salmon Bake cook shack into Juneau's only disabled accessible overnight cabin. The proposal also includes an information kiosk which will feature historic mining interpretive material and information regarding Juneau's primary water source. Ultimately the goal of the GCHS is to re-open the former mining museum in the Compressor Building. All proceeds from the rental of the cabin or the museum admission will be used for preserving the historic mining buildings in the Basin.

Echo Bay Alaska is in the exploration phase of re-opening the historic AJ Gold Mine. While the lease of CBJ lands within the Basin are restricted to subsurface rights, there are some related activities which are currently going on in conjunction with the exploration. Access to the mine workings through the Ebner Adit at the end of Basin Road occurs on a periodic basis. Due to water quality monitoring requirements, a small trailer with monitoring equipment is stationed on the wooden bridge near the former Salmon Bake site. Also, new electrical transformers have been installed near the head of Perseverance Trail.

Detrimental activities have occurred in the Basin including vandalism, partying, road racing, and illegal dumping. Unfortunately these activities have increasingly become a problem in the Basin.

2. Access

As in 1978, the primary access route to the Basin is via Basin Road. Although a portion of the road was reconstructed in recent years, the width and blind curves remain the same. The road alignment through the existing neighborhood is less than standard width and for all intent and purpose is only one lane. After passing a narrow wood planked trestle the road becomes wider and gravel based. The road is posted for fifteen miles per hour in consideration of the many pedestrians using it.

In the winter the road is closed to public access beyond the entrance to the community wellfields. During the winter of 1993 Echo Bay Alaska plowed the road beyond the wellfields for access to the AJ Mine through the Ebner Adit.

3. Community Facilities

Much of the information in the 1978 LCBLMP remains accurate to date. A

discussion of changes in the Basin relative to community facilities follows.

The State Division of Parks has enlarged and improved the parking lot at the end of Basin Road and re-graded the lower portion of Perseverance Trail. This was done to encourage users to access the trail at the end of the road as opposed to the former trail head across from the wellhead pump station.

Due to seasonal flooding and exceptional high water in recent years Gold Creek has changed its course significantly. So much so that it no longer passes under the existing wooden bridge. This has resulted in no convenient form of access to the historic buildings located across the creek from the former Salmon Bake.

The CBJ mining museum and opera house are no longer in operation, but the facilities remain in the Compressor Building. The cook shack and rest rooms of the former Salmon Bake remain in the Basin as well. The GCHS has proposed to develop the cook shack into a disabled accessible cabin and information kiosk and to ultimately re-open the museum once access across Gold Creek is re-established.

4. Economic Relationships

Much of the information in the 1978 LCBLMP remains accurate to date. A discussion of changes in the Basin relative to economic relationships follows.

With the Salmon Bake relocating out of the Basin the economic uses have changed significantly. In addition, the mining museum and opera house is no longer in operation and no CBJ land is currently leased to Chuck Keen for the Mt. Juneau Tram Project.

The largest tour operator currently in the Basin is Alaska Travel Adventures which operates a gold panning tour. Other commercial operators use the area for sight seeing tours, guided hikes and occasional gold panning. The GCHS has proposed to operate a disabled accessible cabin and information kiosk in the former Salmon Bake cook shack and to use the proceeds of the rental fees to re-open the former mining museum and preserving the historic buildings.

Gold Panning Tour

The Gold Panning Tour, run by ATA, has been operating in the Basin for the past fifteen years. No permit was issued for this particular use and no fees collected

for use of CBJ property. This was primarily due to the fact that no permit and fee system has been established for such enterprises using CBJ property.

The gold panning operation transports its patrons via "airporter" type vans to the site. The guides demonstrate gold panning techniques and then allow the patrons to try their hand at panning. Gravel from a nearby rock pile are sifted and put into gold pans which have been "salted" with flakes of gold. Each patron is given a filled pan which then is used at the creek bank to find the gold.

The current tour operation utilizes two facilities which remain from the former Salmon Bake business. Gold pans are stored in a crew car which is on site and the toilet facilities are maintained by ATA for use by their patrons.

Disabled Accessible Cabin

The GCHS has proposed to use the former Salmon Bake cook shack for a disabled accessible cabin and information kiosk. It would be the only such cabin in the City and Borough of Juneau. GCHS is a non-profit organization with one of its primary goals being the preservation of historic buildings. While the cook shack is not a historic building, the GCHS sees the proposed operation as a way to fill a need in the community and raise funding for preservation activities in the Basin. All proceeds from the rental of the cabin will be targeted toward the preservation of the historic mining buildings and the ultimate re-opening of the former mining museum.

Former Mining Museum

In conjunction with the cabin proposal, the GCHS has proposed to re-open the former mining museum located in the Compressor Building. The GCHS has had a long term presence in the Basin with the funding and construction of interpretive material and the operation of the former museum in 1987 & 1988. GCHS envisions a small scale operation which would cater to those interested in a remote museum experience not on the mainline of visitor attractions. Currently the main obstacle to re-opening the facility is the lack of access across Gold Creek. GCHS has been actively seeking funding assistance for re-establishing this access.

The CBJ has had a long-standing concept of creating a new visitor facility based on the historic buildings and features in the Basin. For a time during the late 60's and early 70's, there was a visitor train which ran through tunnels and

overland from the switchyard and mine Compressor Building up in the Basin and terminated at the mill ruins above the downtown ferry terminal. This novelty ride allowed large numbers of visitors to see the facilities and provided some revenue with which to maintain them.

III. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The primary issues of concern in the Basin include the protection of Juneau's water source, commercial activities, status of historic buildings, and traffic on Basin Road. To better discuss the issues the following analysis has been broken into categories. They include large, medium or small scale impacts from commercial activities, the fate of the historic buildings, traffic on Basin Road, impacts to the watershed, and use of CBJ property for commercial activities.

Large Scale Impacts from Commercial Activities:

Relocation of the Salmon Bake to Salmon Creek means that the Basin no longer has any large scale tourism facilities. The Salmon Bake was "large" in the sense that it drew many thousands of customers each season and hundreds of people each day. At its height, the Salmon Bake was serving an average of about 300 meals per day although there were some days when as many as 1200 meals were served. Most customers arrived on 40-passenger converted school busses. On a typical day, this resulted in about 10 bus trips up the road and the same number back down. When the other activities in the Basin are included, (9,000 gold panners, 10,000 hikers, and others) the net result is over 400 persons per day on the average. The impacts to traffic and the natural and scenic qualities in the Basin by such an influx of users is considered to be of a large scale.

The actual physical plant of the Salmon Bake was relatively modest. Most of the cooking and dining was done outdoors. All wastes generated from the operation of the facility were removed from the Basin on a daily basis. A grey water tank and toilet facility tanks were pumped on a regular basis.. The Salmon Bake catered to tourship passengers as their primary clientele. The reason for relocation of the bake to Salmon Creek is that the business needed room to grow.

Medium Scale Impacts from Commercial Activities:

With the Salmon Bake gone from the Basin the impacts from commercial activities will be substantially reduced. There remains a commercial gold panning tour conducted in the Basin. This business has grown steadily but was far overshadowed, in terms of impact and visibility, by the Salmon Bake. It is not widely known that the panning tour has been going on for the past 15 years. This particular business has not had a CBJ permit to operate in the Basin primarily because no permitting system has existed for such a use. In 1993 ATA brought

9,000 gold panners to the Basin. For the 1994 season they expect to bring 11,000 patrons. ATA expects an increase of gold panner tours to increase by about 1,500 persons per year for the next three years. This would mean that the 1997 season could expect 15,500 gold panners.

Public comments to CDD and in the press suggest that the gold panning activity causes avoidable and undesirable impacts in the Basin. Recent observations and reports from others regarding the current gold panning activity would indicate relatively minimal impacts. There may be some misunderstanding over how significant the activity is. Neither guides nor patrons use shovels, sluice boxes or other mechanical methods in the panning process. It has been observed that an individual with shovel and sluice box can cause much more impact than the patrons of the gold panning tour. Currently this individual recreational gold panning is not prohibited in the watershed.

As with the larger visitor facilities and services, traffic and vehicles will still be primary issues along with protection of the watershed. It may be possible to divide medium scale visitor activities into two groups: one which involves people using roads and trails only, such as guided hiking, and the other being more extensive activities that involve structures or the presence of people walking on areas that have not been reinforced for that purpose such as soft creek banks and forest floor. The draft Watershed Protection Program seeks to discourage the latter form of visitor activity.

Small Scale Impacts from Commercial Activities:

The proposed re-use of the former Salmon Bake cook shack as a disabled accessible cabin and information kiosk would be considered a small impact. As currently envisioned the cabin would have a maximum capacity of about 12 persons for an overnight stay. If the cabin were rented out every night of the season this would result in an impact to the Basin of 12 persons per day. Even with this small impact there could still be watershed implications. However, use of a fee and permit system will allow review and monitoring of such a proposal. It seems reasonable to at least consider proposals that might provide for special access such as the GCHS concept to allow overnight use of an existing cabin left over from the Salmon Bake. Sewage and other waste would be disposed of outside of the Basin and there would be strict rules about behavior. One of the features of the proposal is that the cabin would meet disabled accessibility requirements and would be the only recreational cabin in a rustic setting which is available to people

in wheelchairs or otherwise physically disabled.

Cumulative Commercial Activities

As stated previously, the relocation of the Gold Creek Salmon Bake has significantly reduced the commercial activities in the Basin. There is no current proposal to operate a large scale commercial activity in the Basin and it is very doubtful such a large scale operation would get much support.

The remaining commercial activities, while described as moderate or small scale, could have a cumulative impact similar to a large scale operation. The ATA gold panning tour is the only known commercial use in the Basin on a daily basis. Other tour companies have been observed in the area. While these companies may not use the area each and every day, they do add to the cumulative traffic and potential water quality impacts. The level of risk of a potential impact depends largely upon their activities while in the Basin. Many are merely on a sight seeing ride, while others get out and hike the Perseverance Trail or walk down to the creek near the former Salmon Bake site.

Assuming the ATA gold panning tour brings 11,000 patrons in 1994 and that the Perseverance Trail traffic increases similarly to 12,000, the combined total would be 22,000 users in the Basin. The impacts to traffic and the natural and scenic qualities to the Basin by such an influx of users is considered to be of a medium scale. As is the case with other tourist services, more growth is expected. Just how much growth is always hard to estimate. The most current thoughts are that the major increase experienced in the past couple of years will continue for another three years or so and then tend to flatten out. Based on a 20% percent increase per year the result would be about 38,016 in 1997. It is interesting to note that the current number of Basin users is slightly higher than it was in 1978 and the projected number of users could reach the same level as 1993 when the Salmon Bake was still operating.

Traffic on Basin Road

The public concerns regarding traffic on Basin Road are quite well known and not generally argued. Private and commercial traffic on Basin Road has angered residents along the road for years. Especially undesirable are the larger busses which make more noise, trail fumes and are generally seen as menacing and oversized when compared to the scale of development along Basin Road and when

the narrowness of the road and the trestle are considered. Less objectionable are the smaller busses. These hold 16 to 24 passengers and are usually under 30 feet in length. They are every bit as wide as a large bus but the lower profile and shorter length make them seem better sized for the Basin and Basin road. The current gold panning tour uses such busses.

The CBJ Public Works Department has taken traffic counts at the wooden trestle over the past few years. The counters were placed for two to three week periods in late July. The numbers are an average daily count reflecting the trips into or out of the Basin, the number of vehicles is half the number of trips. The number of trips and number of vehicles per day are shown in the following table:

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Trips	480	423	588	477	383
Vehicles	240	212	294	238	192

Traffic on Basin Road, prior to the trestle, must pass through a residential area where houses are built very close together and with little in the way of front, side or rear yards. Basin Road itself is very narrow and has incomplete sidewalks. The road was reconstructed in 1992 but the result did not widen the road or make it any safer. There are sight distance problems and places so narrow that two busses would not be able to pass. The passage of busses on Basin Road is the single largest source of complaint from the neighborhood over the years. Relocation of the Salmon Bake to another site has been warmly applauded and now the residents fear that other commercial undertakings could move in and create new bus traffic in the same or greater quantity as that caused by the former Salmon Bake operation.

The traffic problem changes a bit when the road in the Basin itself is considered. This road is gravel but is in generally good repair and reasonably wide with gentle curves. Here, the traffic problem is speeding cars. In many cases, the busses act as a deterrent to speeding cars but they don't run all the time. As the evening gets later, the pace of cars speeds up and other inappropriate behaviors increase. There have been several acts of vandalism and abandonment of stolen cars in the Basin.

Solutions to the traffic problems have been debated for years. The road cannot be

closed altogether and left to become a foot trail because the CBJ needs vehicular access to the well field. Further, the end of Basin Road provides parking for the Perseverance Trail, the most heavily used of all trails in the city. If the road is closed, parking will need to be developed elsewhere. Depending upon where the road is closed off there may not be space to develop adequate parking. Another widely debated notion is to limit access to passenger cars. As noted above, the busses seem to have a controlling effect on speeding cars. Just as significantly, access by bus is a far more efficient means of transporting people to the Basin than by private car. A bicyclist or jogger on the road may be annoyed by passage of a bus but the same would be true if the person is passed by the bus-equivalent of a dozen cars. Other recreational activities benefit by having the road available. What does seem desirable is to limit access during the night and to keep vehicles down-sized to limit the impacts on the Basin Road neighborhood.

Historic Buildings:

Of the hundreds of buildings constructed during Juneau's "gold rush" only six remain in a preservable state. Of the six, three are in immediate danger of demolition, due to currently proposed development projects. The Compressor Building and the Transformer House located in Last Chance Basin are the only remaining mining buildings owned by the public. They currently are in danger of demolition through neglect.

The 1978 LCBLMP encourages resident and visitor appreciation of the Basin's rich historical heritage. A 1990 McDowell Group study, "An Evaluation of the Juneau Tourism Industry" recommends the development of the historic buildings in the Basin as a visitor attraction.

The Community Development Department has maintained a long interest in eventually revitalizing an historic attraction aimed at the visitor industry. The idea has remained dormant because of the traffic problems associated with large volumes of visitors. The relocation of the Salmon Bake is not seen as a sufficient reduction in current traffic to enable a significant new development. So, until a new means for transporting several hundred people per day into the historic facility is found, the city should keep any large scale visitor attraction ideas in a continued dormant state. The railroad track and tunnels that were used for visitor access two decades ago are in considerable disrepair now. The largest tunnel, which carried the trains through Mt. Roberts from the Basin to the Gastineau Channel side is now in use as a CBJ reservoir. To put the train back

into commission would require establishment of a new reservoir of at least three million gallons plus a significant new investment in track, tunnel clearing and rolling stock. The key feature is replacement of the tunnel reservoir and until there is some reason to believe this will happen, there is little point in working on the other problems.

For many years a private tramway has been proposed that would have a mid-terminal station on the flanks of Mt. Roberts. There might be a way for tram passengers to disembark at the mid-terminal and take another conveyance down to the Basin and the historic facility. This tram project is still being pursued by its developer and so this access option might become viable. Recently a second tramway proposal has been made known which would have its upper terminal located at the 1800 foot elevation on the west ridge of Mt. Roberts. On the other side of this ridge is the mining museum. The new tram proposal as it stands will not solve the access problem discussed above but it too may offer a future opportunity to access the Basin.

Protection of Juneau's Primary Water Source

CBJ's primary water source is the wellheads in Last Chance Basin. The contributing watershed extends beyond the Basin and into Silverbow Basin as well. A primary concern raised when discussing any sort of user activity in the Basin is the potential impact on the water quality of Gold Creek and indeed the entire watershed.

The water source in the Basin is derived through a series of deep wells. The underground aquifer, which feed the wells, is recharged from the flow of Gold Creek. The specific locations of aquifer recharge are difficult to pinpoint. It is generally accepted that the primary recharge zone is in the general vicinity of the former Salmon Bake. However the entire contributing watershed is of concern and measures are being taken to protect this valuable resource. The CBJ Department of Public Works has developed a protection program for the watershed and wellhead area. This program, while specifically targeted at protecting water quality, has direct implications to land use activities in the Basin. As such, the *Watershed Control and Wellhead Protection Program - Gold Creek Source* is a companion document to the *Last Chance Basin Land Management Plan - 1994 Update*.

Municipal drinking water standards are set by the Environmental Protection

Agency (EPA) and regulated by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Currently studies are underway to determine if the wells in the Basin are under direct influence of the surface waters of Gold Creek. If they are, substantial steps will need to be taken to satisfy EPA/DEC regulations regarding this municipal water source. Even if the wells are not under direct influence it is known that surface water ultimately contributes to the water source through the underground aquifer. Because this relationship exists, it is imperative that the area above and in the recharge zone is protected and managed to assure the quality of the water source is not negatively impacted.

In discussions with the CBJ Water Utilities Division it is clear that a concern exists relative to the gold panning operation above the city wellheads. With future EPA regulations expected the issue may become even more critical. The problem arises with people stirring up sediment in the creekbed and causing a turbidity problem. The utilities personnel recommend moving the panning operation below the wellhead to Cope Park or near the steel bridge in the Basin.

A related issue is the impact recreational gold panning may have on water quality. The occasional recreational panner in the recharge zone probably has very little impact assuming they only use a pan at the creek bank. However, concerns arise when the panner might employ the use of shakers, sluice boxes, dredges, and shovels. Such use could cause substantial turbidity impacts with just a couple hours of activities by one or more persons.

Also of concern, is the current exploration activities by Echo Bay Alaska (EBA) which have the potential to impact water quality and quantity in the Basin. A mine drainage tunnel empties into Gold Creek above the recharge zone. Some estimates indicate that as much as 20% of the water quantity in Gold Creek is supplied from this drainage tunnel. In addition, the water flow passes through workings of the mine and may contain pollutants which are then entered into Gold Creek. The CBJ is working with EPA, DEC, DGC, EBA and others to resolve issues of water quantity for the Gold Creek source. In addition, investigations and monitoring activities are under way to determine if pollutants are being released into the watershed.

Use of CBJ Property for Commercial Activities

In the process of developing the LCBLMP 1994 Update another issue has surfaced, that of using CBJ property for commercial activities. This issue has

borough-wide implications, not necessarily limited to the Basin. In some cases, tour providers are using CBJ resources for commercial gain without providing any compensation to the city. These activities have been unregulated and operate without any substantial oversight by the city. This is not a concern with the passage of tour buses over city streets. Streets are intended for transportation and commerce. Rather, this is a concern whereby a commercial enterprise utilizes public lands from which to operate their business.

There are two general instances by which this happens. In the case of the current gold panning tour in the Basin, the operator drives busses across city land to park and unload patrons onto city land and conduct the activity on the creek banks which is also city land. While the tour is underway, the land involved is not available to other users.

The other case occurs when tour companies conduct guided hikes on city owned and maintained trails. The CBJ Parks and Recreation Department is currently developing a permit and fee program for commercial use of CBJ maintained trails. It is conceivable that a similar program would be developed for commercial use of city lands as well. The former Salmon Bake located in the Basin was operated under a permit and fee system through the CBJ Lands and Resources Division.

The Forest Service faced a similar situation with the rafting tours which put rafts and passengers in the Mendenhall River at a location managed by the Service. Their approach is to charge a fee calculated through a complex national USFS regulation. The rafts haul out at Brotherhood park, which is owned by the state. No fee is charged by the state for use of the parking lot, however, a permit and use fee is charged for use of state-managed trails by commercial users.

IV. EXAMINATION OF ISSUES

A. Public Input

Recent public hearings on issues regarding Last Chance Basin were held in conjunction with the proposed adoption of the *Watershed Control and Wellhead Protection Program - Gold Creek Source* and the *Last Chance Basin Land Management Plan - 1994 Update* as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

The one issue which seems to have support by all those commenting is the protection of the Juneau's high quality water resource in the Basin. There is, however, some differing opinions as to the actual impact of certain activities on water quality.

Public sentiment on the issue of traffic on Basin Road differs widely. Local residents in the Basin Road area would like all commercial traffic eliminated and some go so far to propose the closing of the road to all traffic. At the opposite end of the spectrum, some commercial users want no control or limitations on the use of Basin Road.

B. Existing and Proposed Activities

None of the existing and proposed uses identified in the 1978 LCBLMP are factors in developing the 1994 Update. All uses and proposals have expired. Current existing and proposed uses are the ATA Gold Panning Tour, the GCHS proposed disabled accessible cabin and the proposal to re-open the former mining museum. These items are described elsewhere in this document.

C. Conclusions and General Recommendations

Commercial Activities in the Basin:

The CBJ should make no effort to promote or encourage any form of large scale visitor facility in the Basin until a viable form of access is devised which will handle the anticipated volume. To be acceptable, the access method must avoid the use of Basin Road. In the meantime, the CBJ should maintain an awareness that significant historic buildings and artifacts still exist in the Basin which could be the basis of a visitor attraction. The CBJ should continue to work with GCHS in its preservation efforts. Further, the CBJ should keep open the idea of

promoting a large scale facility if the access problem is solved and if the development can be carried out and maintained in a manner that causes no risk to the quality or quantity of groundwater and in a way that is consistent with the Watershed Protection Program.

The level of activities considered to be medium scale could be allowed provided no impacts to the quality or quantity of Juneau's water source are expected. A permit and fee system should be developed for use of CBJ property for such uses. It is recommended that these type of activities be regulated to allow only trail or road based visitor services in the Basin and to not allow any other facility or service which could involve visitors walking on surfaces which could be damaged in a way that would cause erosion or turbidity in the creek above the city wellheads. Regulations should also prohibit structures or physical facilities associated with medium scale visitor activity.

The ATA gold panning tour appears to conform with these new rules at least at the level it is currently being operated. The gold-bearing material in the pans is salted with gold flecks so it is not arguable that CBJ gold is being taken without compensation. It should be stressed, at this point, that no adverse impacts from the current panning tour activities in the basin has been noted except for traffic. No litter, water quality, erosion or other sorts of impacts have been identified. The tour company erects no structures and leaves no sign of its presence after the tours are done for the day. Currently the company uses three buses. Each bus makes four to seven trips per bus per six-day week (typically no trips on Saturdays). There are three buses thus the average for each bus is about two trips per day.

Small scale operations similar to the proposed disabled cabin could be allowed, on a case by case basis, under a permit and fee system. Conditions in the permit would assure no impacts to the quality or quantity of Juneau's water source occur.

Traffic on Basin Road:

The CBJ has an existing gate across Basin Road on the town side of the steel bridge. This gate should be open during the day and locked during the evening hours in the summer. Public vehicular access to upper Basin Road should be prohibited after 12:00 Midnight in the summer. The gate should be locked at all times in the winter. This was done in the winter of 1993 with no complaints from the public. This action should not be taken, however, until a clear plan for

management of the gate is established. The plan would have to specify who will open and close the gate and what is to happen if a vehicle is trapped on the upper side after hours. Signs could be posted informing people of the hours of access and that the gate will be locked during certain hours. A CBJ employee, perhaps a police officer or Parks and Recreation worker, may need to drive the road to look for stragglers, warn them, and then lock the gate. This activity could be supported by the fees generated from commercial users of the Basin.

A further recommendation is that no commercial vehicle longer than 30 feet be allowed to traverse Basin Road. This limitation would prohibit the use of school buses or large tour buses. This, plus the fee and permit system should enable the CBJ to substantially limit the amount of and type of traffic on the road. The problem of speeding can be managed with greater patrolling of the area. The CBJ police should make an effort to seriously patrol the area at the beginning of the season and issue tickets to speeders. If this is done the message will get out that the city is serious about this issue.

Historic Buildings:

The historic buildings in the Basin are a valuable resource and offer a glimpse into the past development of the community. The CBJ should keep open the idea of future development of the historic buildings until an alternate feasible transportation system can be found. In the meantime, the efforts of the GCHS to maintain and stabilize the buildings should be encouraged and assisted if possible.

Impacts to the Watershed:

The protection of the water supply in the Basin should be the highest priority. Only those activities that can demonstrate they would have no impacts to the quality and quantity should be allowed in the Basin. Any permits issued for use of CBJ land above the wellheads should contain conditions to assure protection of the watershed. The *Watershed Control & Wellhead Protection Program - Gold Creek* should be adopted and enforcement policies developed.

The CBJ should work expeditiously with EBA in the identification and development of additional water sources for the municipal water system. This needs to be done prior to the sealing of the mine drainage tunnel into Gold Creek. Until such time that this additional water source is on line and the tunnel sealed, no pollutants should be allowed to be discharged into Gold Creek through the

tunnel. Current water monitoring activities should continue in the Basin.

Use of CBJ Property for Commercial Activities:

The CBJ should enact a general application ordinance which specifies that any use of CBJ lands for commercial gain, other than the passage of commercial vehicles over public streets, must occur under a permit from the city and with payment of a fee similar in nature to that charged by the Forest Service. The permits might be limited to time of day, day of week, contain bonding and insurance requirements, and address other pertinent issues such as protection of the watershed and traffic on Basin Road. The permits could be administered by the Parks and Recreation Department, the Lands and Resources Division or the Community Development Department.

Further, in order to limit the impacts resulting from commercial activities, a cap on the number of visitors to the aquifer recharge zone should be established. In addition, ATA should be given an exclusive permit to operate the gold panning tour on CBJ land in the Basin which would not be transferrable and would not be issued to any other operator if ATA should voluntarily leave the Basin site. The gate to the former Salmon Bake parking lot should be kept locked at all times with keys issued to ATA and those with a need to access the area. An additional fee for this exclusive use may be appropriate. It should also be made perfectly clear in issuing this permit that at such time EPA/DEC were to require stricter measures for protection of the municipal water supply by eliminating commercial activities the CBJ could cancel the permit without liability to the operator for loss of business.

Fees generated from the commercial use of the Basin lands could be used to maintain the driveway and parking area utilized by the gold panning operation.

V. LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

OBJECTIVES

Much of the 1978 LCBLMP objectives and policies are still appropriate today. The following have been developed to be used in conjunction with those of 1978 and may supersede the earlier ones in some cases.

The objectives of the Last Chance Basin Land Management Plan are:

- O-1. Protect the high quality of the municipal water supply obtained from Last Chance Basin's vital water resource.
- O-2. Encourage and enhance resident and visitor appreciation of Last Chance Basin's rich historical heritage.
- O-3. Maintain the wild, natural and scenic qualities of Last Chance Basin.
- O-4. Encourage and enhance resident and visitor enjoyment of casual recreational opportunities in Last Chance Basin.

POLICIES

Policies directed toward accomplishment of the stated objectives are listed relative to the issues identified previously:

Impacts to the Watershed

- P-1. Adopt the *Watershed Control and Wellhead Protection Program - Gold Creek Source* as part of the Juneau Comprehensive Plan and implement its recommendations.
- P-2. Prohibit recreational mining operations employing shaker tables, sluice boxes, dredges, shovels above and in the aquifer recharge zone.
- P-3. Prohibit overnight camping in the Last Chance Basin above the steel car bridge. Camping for more than two consecutive nights in the watershed outside of the Last Chance Basin is prohibited.

- P-4. Prohibit any commercial or non-commercial activities in the watershed that might result in the discharge of pollutants in the watershed.
- P-5. Encourage responsible practices by the removal of waste generated by domestic animals and pets in the watershed above and in the recharge zone.
- P-6. Prohibit the discharge of water to Gold Creek above the well field from the drainage tunnel or any other mine openings where the water quality is less than the historic water quality. Since historic water quality varies with time, it will be determined to be the prevailing highest quality historic condition measured during an annual, seasonal, or shorter time period concurrent with discharge. The time period of reference for historic water quality started after the closure of the A-J in 1944, but prior to the resumption of current exploratory work. Existing fish and wildlife uses shall be fully protected.

Traffic on Basin Road

- P-7. Manage the gate across Basin Road such that it is open for public access from 6:00 AM until 12:00 Midnight from April 16 until October 31 and closed for public access from November 1 until April 15.
- P-8. Limit commercial passenger vehicular access on Basin Road above Eighth Street to commercial vehicles which are no more than 30 feet in length.
- P-9. Increase police surveillance of Basin Road to discourage vandalism, partying, illegal dumping and speeding.

Historic Buildings

- P-10. Continue to protect the valuable historic resources in the Basin.
- P-11. Work with a qualified non-profit organization, such as the Gastineau Channel Historical Society, to develop and maintain interpretive material, perform preservation activities, seek funding for establishing disabled access to the historic mining buildings, and to eventually re-open the former mining museum.

Commercial Activities

- P-12. Under a general permit and fee system established for CBJ lands, resources, and trails, restrict commercial activities, except as provided in (2) and (3) below, to minor and incidental uses consistent with other policies herein.
- P-13. Under an exclusive permit and fee arrangement with Alaska Travel Adventures (ATA), allow the continuation of the ATA Gold Panning Tour with the following stipulations:
- a. An annual fee for use of CBJ land for commercial activities which would include the exclusive commercial right of use of the actual land area necessary for parking at the former Salmon Bake site and the area along the creek necessary for the gold panning demonstration.
 - b. A requirement that the permittee cover the costs of maintenance of restrooms, refuse containers, and other activities necessary to assure the area is kept clean, sanitary and that all wastes are removed from the Basin.
 - c. A provision that the commercial activity be limited to 25,000 patrons per season.
 - d. A prohibition to install or construct any additional structures or facilities in the area.
 - e. A requirement that the gate across the driveway to the former Salmon Bake parking lot be kept locked at all times.
 - f. A provision that in the event it is demonstrated that the gold panning activity is creating excessive turbidity or erosion in Gold Creek the permit will be terminated.
 - g. A provision that the permit would not be transferrable and would not be issued to any other operator if ATA should leave the Basin site.
 - h. A provision that at such time EPA/DEC were to require stricter measures for protection of the municipal water supply, by eliminating commercial activities, the CBJ could cancel the permit without liability to the operator for loss of business.

- i. A provision that if ATA suspends operation of the Gold Panning Tour for one entire season the right to the exclusive permit will lapse and the operation must be removed from the Basin.

P-14. Under a general permit and fee arrangement with the Gastineau Channel Historical Society, or other appropriate non-profit organization, allow the conversion of the former Salmon Bake cook shack into a disabled accessible cabin and information kiosk with the following stipulations: *

- a. A provision that requires the management of the facility to discourage beer parties, pallet parties, unattended youth, uncontrolled dogs, fire dangers, and other undesirable activities.
- b. A requirement that the gate across the driveway to the former Salmon Bake parking lot be kept locked at all times.
- c. An annual fee of \$1 for use of CBJ land and existing facilities (former Salmon Bake cook shack and restrooms) provided all proceeds obtained from the operation of the cabin and information kiosk will be used for historic preservation related activities in Last Chance Basin.
- d. A requirement that the permittee cover the costs of maintenance of restrooms, refuse containers, and other activities necessary to assure the area is kept clean, sanitary and that all wastes are removed from the Basin.
- e. A provision that at such time EPA/DEC were to require stricter measures for protection of the municipal water supply, by eliminating commercial activities, the CBJ could cancel the permit without liability to the operator for loss of business.
- f. A provision that the operation of the disabled accessible cabin be limited to the annual period of April 15 to October 31.

* Note: If an agreement for the re-use of the former Salmon Bake facilities has not been substantially completed by May 1, 1995 the buildings and all associated facilities shall be removed in accordance with the terms of the former Salmon Bake lease.

