



Date: August 4, 2004

To: Interested Individuals, Organizations and Agencies

From: Trails Working Group

Subject: The 2004 Review of the Commercial Use of Trails Recommendations

The Trails Working Group reconvened during the winter of 2003/2004 to review and update recommendations made in 2001 for the commercial use of trails. The following is a brief history of the Trails Working Group and the process that was used to make recommendations on the commercial use of trails. The Trails Working Groups focus is on the commercial use of trails, other trail user conflicts should be addressed through another process.

Why was the Trails Working Group created?

The City and Borough of Juneau Assembly perceived the following problems in 2000:

1. Increasing commercial use on trails was diminishing the experience of non-commercial users, with no area wide review of cumulative impacts.
2. Commercial operators had no area wide guidance for commercial activities on trails.

Who created the Trails Working Group?

The City and Borough of Juneau Assembly requested Trail Mix to facilitate a process that would evaluate commercial activity on the Juneau Trail System and make recommendations for commercial and non-commercial trail designations. To guide this process the Trail Mix Board of Directors invited representatives from the land management agencies, the public and the industry to be part of the Trails Working Group. The group was created in 2000 and reconvened in 2004.

Who are the current members of the Trails Working Group?

Merrill Sanford – Assembly, Alice Rarig, Sandy Warner and James King – Citizens, Paul Zahasky – Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Ron Marvin – U.S. Forest Service, Gary Mendivil – Eaglecrest, Bob Grochow and Kim Kiefer – Juneau Parks and Recreation, Bob Janes Jr. and Larry Johansen – Business Owners.

What is the mission of the Trails Working Group?

The Trails Working Group will systematically evaluate all trails in Juneau to develop a common vision for agency management to guide commercial use of trails, reduce conflicts between commercial and non-commercial users, and minimize natural resource degradation to provide and preserve quality experiences for all trail users.

What process did the Trails Working Group use to make their recommendations?

In 2000/2001 the group identified all the trails in Juneau, eliminated the trails that did not appear appropriate for commercial use, and evaluated effects of commercial use on each remaining trail. This was done by looking at social, neighborhood and local impacts and considering public input from a survey and public meetings. The Trails Working Group also tried to create a balance between subareas (subareas defined in the 1996 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan) and types of experiences. In 2004 the group was reconvened to consider requests and issues that had arisen since the last process and to review and update existing recommendations. This was done through a series of working group meetings open to the public and one open house on the evening of March 30, 2004.

What happens with the recommendations made by the Trails Working Group?

Recommendations will be presented to the Assembly, State Parks and the Forest Service for endorsement and then given to the agencies to be used as guidelines when issuing permits. Recommendations will also become a chapter in the updated Juneau Trails Plan.

What is the purpose of this review?

The main purpose of this review is to present and discuss the updated recommendations of the Trails Working Group. The group is soliciting comments, suggestions or solutions to better accommodate the mix of commercial and non-commercial use. Thank you for your participation.

The following is a written summary of proposed changes to the existing commercial use of trails recommendations followed by a matrix that summarizes the updated recommendations for the commercial use of trails. This document is intended to be an addendum to the 2001 written recommendations rather than producing a whole new publication. These recommendations if accepted will be implemented in 2005.

2004 Update of the
Commercial Use of Trails Recommendations
By the **Trails Working Group**
Draft August 4, 2004

The Trails Working Group recommends changes to the commercial use of trails recommendations on the following trails. Changes are indicated by an *.

Herbert Glacier Trail

Existing Recommendation:

Group Size - *up to 15*

Spacing - *30 people per day maximum*

Days - *M-Th no weekend*

Number of Groups per Day - *up to 4*

Hours of Operation - *no restriction*

* New Recommendation: Add Fridays and 1 group of 8 per day on weekends

Comments: Change will accommodate small groups of independent travelers.

Sunshine Cove

Existing Recommendation:

Group Size - *up to 20*

Spacing - *no restriction*

Days - *no restriction*

Number of Groups per Day - *1*

Hours of Operation - *no restriction*

* New Recommendation: Increase the number of groups to 2 per day and confine commercial use to the new beach access trail (southernmost trail).

Comments: Change will better accommodate scuba and kayak classes and will keep them further from the camping area. In three years a review of the hours for this area should be considered.

Proposed Amalga Meadow Trails:

Existing Recommendation:

none

* New Recommendation: Scheduled for future discussion

Comments: Criteria for commercial use to be determined after appropriate infrastructure is constructed.

Fritz Cove Road Parking Area

Existing Recommendation:

none

* New Recommendation: No commercial use

Comments: Based on an inquiry for commercial use this trail was discussed. The Trails Working Group made a decision in 2001 that this congested neighborhood was not a good place for commercial use. When the land for the parking lot was transferred to the city it was for the purpose of creating more parking for recreational beach access and not for expanded commercial opportunities. Therefore it does not make sense to add commercial use back to this neighborhood and the parking area should remain closed to commercial use including staging for bike tours.

Kaxdigoowu Heen Dei and Dimond Park Bridge (paved path along Mendenhall River)

Existing Recommendation:

none

- * New Recommendation: No commercial use

Comments: Based on an inquiry for commercial use this trail was discussed. It was determined that this trail already has a lot of use and congestion and it does not seem reasonable to add commercial use to the mix. In addition, the trail north of Montana Creek Bridge was previously closed to commercial use by Assembly and Planning Commission action.

Perseverance Trail System

A. Perseverance Trail

Existing Recommendation:

Group Size - *up to 15*

Number of Groups per Day – *up to 4*

Spacing – *two groups on trail max.* Hours of Operation – *off trail by 7 pm*

Days – *M-F, 1 weekend day*

New Recommendation: No change

Comments: Encourage ½ hour spacing

B. Granite Creek Trail

Existing Recommendation:

no commercial use after Perseverance Trail is repaired into Silverbow Basin

- * New Recommendation: Closed to commercial use

Comments: As recommended in the previous plan this trail has been closed since the Perseverance Trail was reopened through Silverbow Basin.

C. Red Mill Trail (New addition to the Perseverance Trail System)

Existing Recommendation:

None

- * New Recommendation: Open this trail to commercial use with the same restrictions as Perseverance Trail.

Comments: Allowing commercial use on this trail will help disperse existing use from the Perseverance Trail.

D. Glory Hole Trail (New addition to the Perseverance Trail System)

Existing Recommendation:

none

- * New Recommendation: Open this trail to commercial use with the same restrictions as Perseverance Trail.

Comments: Allowing commercial use on this trail will help disperse existing use from the Perseverance Trail.

E. Mine Camp Ruins Trail (New addition to the Perseverance Trail System)

Existing Recommendation:

None

- * New Recommendation: Open this trail to commercial use for 1 group of 8 per day.

Comments: This steep narrow trail can only accommodate minimal commercial use.

Treadwell Mine Historic Loop Trail

Existing Recommendation:

Group Size - *up to 15*

Spacing – *no restriction*

Days – *M-Sat, no Sunday*

Number of Groups per Day – *up to 4*

Hours of Operation – *off trail by 5:00 pm*

- * New Recommendation: Change the weekend recommendation to open one weekend day to be determined during permitting, and posted each season.

Comments: This change is consistent with recommendations for other trails and better meets changing customer demands.

Eaglecrest Trails

A. Eaglecrest Lower Mountain Trails (near the day lodge and parking areas)

Existing Recommendation:

open for commercial use proposals that provide improved infrastructure

New Recommendation: Allowable uses for these trails will be determined during the planning stage of each trail.

Comments: Conceptual approval was given for two projects presented by Eaglecrest. The first is to create an 8 to 14 foot wide, 2 mile long gravel pathway around the cross country ski track in the meadow near the parking lot for summer, wheeled dog sled use. Recommendations are to allow general use when the dog tours are not using the trail and to take precautions to preserve the surrounding muskeg during construction and during the summer use season. The second project is to create a canopy walk that leaves from the lodge and does a loop up into the drainages above the lodge. This trail would have sections elevated up to 80 feet off the ground and would require a guide for use. Anyone wishing to use the trail would be welcome as long as they paid the fee for the accompanying guide and the trail was open for use.

B. Eaglecrest Upper Mountain Trails (above the base of Ptarmigan Chairlift)

Existing Recommendation:

open for commercial use proposals that provide improved infrastructure

New Recommendation: Allowable uses for these trails will be determined during the planning stage of each trail.

Comments: The conceptual plan as presented by Eaglecrest for the development of multiuse trails on the upper part of the mountain was approved as a guide for further trail development. This included four trails creating a looping system with varying sizes of trails designed for varying user groups including commercial use. Overnight cabins would be constructed for use after the trails are completed. The four trails are:

1. A large scale trail on the east side of the mountain from the day lodge to the Eagles Nest warming hut.
2. A small scale trail from the day lodge to Cropley Lake.
3. A small scale trail from Cropley Lake to the ridge through Heavenly Valley and on around the ridge to the Eagles Nest.
4. A large scale trail from the top of the Hooter Chairlift to Cropley Lake.

False Outer Point to Outer Point Trail System

A. Outer Point Trail

Existing Recommendation:

Closed to commercial use

* New Recommendation: None

Comments: Based on an inquiry for commercial use, this trail was discussed. The inquiry suggested that better interpretation opportunities exist on the Outer Point Trail. Due to public comment and concerns over consistency the working group decided that this trail should remain closed to commercial use.

B. Rainforest Trail

Existing Recommendation:

Group Size - *up to 15*

Number of Groups per Day – *no restriction*

Spacing – *15 minutes between groups*

Hours of Operation – *off trail by 7:00 pm*

Days – *no restriction*

* New Recommendation: Complete a trail plan for the area

Comments: Groups should travel in a counter clockwise direction. During the winter of 2004/2005 a comprehensive trail planning effort should be undertaken by the City and Borough of Juneau for all city trails between False Outer Point and Outer Point. This effort should address creating a more interconnected system of trails, potential new trails, better trail surfacing on some trails, accessible trails, commercial use, dog use and other issues. This summer, trail use numbers should be counted in various different ways and possibly, user surveys should be taken.

General Commercial Use Recommendations

Signs

- Signs should be placed at every trail that is designated for commercial use so that the public knows what to expect and operators know a permit is required. The three agencies should agree on sign standards.

Trail to Nugget Creek Waterfall

- The group agreed to encourage the Forest Service to construct a better trail to the base of Nugget Creek Waterfall. Decisions for commercial use should be considered during the planning of this project.

Outer Point Area Planning

- A planning process for the trails between the North Douglas Boat Launch Ramp and Outer Point should be undertaken by the city as soon as possible. An interconnected system of trails with expanded opportunities for commercial and non-commercial use should be designed. Possible ADA trails should be included in this plan.

Leave No Trace Guidelines

- Guides should follow guidelines by the Leave No Trace Organization.

Wildlife Viewing Areas or Trails

- Based on an inquiry for wildlife viewing areas or trails and in recognition of the growing demand for these types of opportunities the group spent time considering the concept. The group agreed that the development of wildlife viewing areas or trails should be considered. It was also suggested that some areas should be set up for commercial use while others should be left for non-commercial use. The following areas were recommended for further study:
 1. The Airport Dike Trail – Create a trail and/or viewing blinds/areas on the inside of the Airport Dike Trail along some of the sloughs.
 2. Fish Creek – Has several diverse habitats that could provide opportunities for wildlife viewing trails and/or blinds.
 3. Salmon Creek Delta – It was suggested that a blind or viewing area could be set up behind the GCI building.
 4. Sheep Creek Delta – This area has many diverse species and could provide for improved wildlife viewing opportunities.
 5. Sheep Creek Valley – This area may provide opportunities for viewing of upland wildlife species.
 6. Ernest Gruening State Historical Park - Opportunities exist for trails and blinds to view a variety of wildlife species.
 7. Mt. Roberts – Many wildlife species that enjoy the alpine can be seen in this area.
 8. Other areas - There are many other areas that should be considered for wildlife viewing opportunities.

Summary of Commercial Use Recommendations 2004

Trail	Sub Area	Group Size	# groups per day	spacing	Hours of operation	Weekend use	comments
Ernest Gruening State Historical Site	1	up to 10	up to 4	1 group in park at a time		M - F no weekend	As Park improvements are made it is anticipated that allowable commercial use will increase
Herbert Glacier Trail	1	up to 15	up to 4	30 people per day maximum		M - F limited weekend	1 group of 8 per day on weekends
Sunshine Cove Beach Access	1	up to 20	up to 2				Commercial use restricted to southern most beach access trail
Amalga Meadows Beach Access	1	up to 30	up to 4	No more than 1 group on beach	off trail by 7:00 PM		
West Glacier Trail	2	up to 15	up to 4	45 people per day maximum	off trail by 6:00 PM	M - F no weekend	Improve parking and trail tread
Auke Lake Parking Area	2	up to 15	1				
DOT ROW on Montana Creek	2	up to 15	up to 5	1 group on trail at a time	off trail by 5:00 PM	M - F 1 weekend day	Road and parking area need upgrading Weekend day to be negotiated each season
Moraine Ecology /Fish View Trail	3	up to 15	up to 4		off trail by 6:00 PM		Improve trail to minimize side trails
Photo Point	3	no limit	no limit				Interp. allowed when FS interp. not present No commercial use on sand bars
Nugget Creek Trail	3	up to 15	up to 2				
East Glacier Loop Trail	3	up to 15	up to 4				
Trail of Time Nature Loop	3	no limit	no limit				Commercial use allowed with no interpretation Create pullouts along trail for group interp.
DZ School Trail (being planned)	4						If design is compatible use will be determined after construction
Perseverance Trail System	6						
A. Perseverance Trail	6	up to 15	up to 4	no more than 2 groups on trail	off trail by 7 pm	M - F 1 weekend day	Encourage 1/2 hour spacing
B. Red Mill Trail	6	up to 15	up to 4	no more than 2 groups on trail	off trail by 7 pm	M - F 1 weekend day	Encourage 1/2 hour spacing
C. Glory Hole Trail	6	up to 15	up to 4	no more than 2 groups on trail	off trail by 7 pm	M - F 1 weekend day	Encourage 1/2 hour spacing
D. Mine Camp Ruins Trail	6	up to 8	1		off trail by 7 pm	M - F 1 weekend day	
Mt Roberts Trail-above the tram	6						
A. Loop to Terrace above the cross	6	up to 15	no limit				Go Clockwise on loop, Encourage 15 minute spacing on loop
B. Cross to Gold Ridge	6	up to 10	up to 2				Operator familiar w/preservation practices No motorized access
C. Gold Ridge to Mt. Roberts Peak	6	up to 10	1			M-F No Weekends	No more than 10 groups per season No motorized access
Treadwell Mine Historic Loop Trail	7	up to 15	up to 4		off trail by 5:00 p.m.	M-F 1 weekend day	No Parking on St. Anns No use on July 4th, no beach use
Eaglecrest Trails	8						Open for commercial use proposals that provide improved infrastructure
Rainforest Trail New Trail	8	up to 15		15 minutes between groups	off trail by 7:00 p.m.		

Handwritten signature