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**From:** Rob Cadmus <rob@sawcak.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 6, 2022 11:27 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Cc:** John Hudson; Khrystl Brouillette  
**Subject:** Comments on Montana Creek Master Plan  
**Attachments:** 2022 Sep Mast Plan\_SAWC Comments\_09.02.22.pdf

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Dear CBJ Parks and Recreation,

Please find comments from the Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition on CBJ's draft map for the Montana Creek Master Plan.

Best,

Rob Cadmus

Executive Director

Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition

907-957-9818



SOUTHEAST ALASKA  
WATERSHED COALITION  
*CONNECT - INFORM - PARTICIPATE*

1107 W. 8th St.  
Suite 4  
Juneau, AK 99801  
www.alaskawatershedcoalition.org  
(907) 205-4028

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9/06/2022

Michele Elfers  
Deputy Director  
CBJ Parks and Recreation Dept.  
155 S. Seward Street - City Hall Rm 218  
Juneau Alaska 99801

Subject: Montana Creek Master Plan

Dear Michele,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Montana Creek Master Plan.

The Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition (SAWC) is a Juneau-based non-profit organization dedicated to improving watershed health and stewardship in communities throughout Southeast Alaska. We work with a wide variety of Tribal, state, federal, municipal, and private partners to assess watershed conditions and design projects that address watershed impacts resulting from urbanization, forestry management, and other land use and development activities. Through these partnerships, we restore salmon habitat, manage stormwater pollution, control invasive plants, and collect scientific data for gauging environmental health and monitoring the effectiveness of our projects. Recent examples of our work in Juneau include:

- 1) Partnering with CBJ Parks and Recreation to develop a Fish Creek Estuary Area Plan
- 2) Partnering with Juneau International Airport to improve the lower Jordan Creek greenbelt area for fish, wildlife and people through bridge and trail improvements, interpretive signage, invasive plant control, stormwater management, and habitat restoration
- 3) Managing high-priority invasive plants on CBJ parklands, and
- 4) Developing restoration designs to improve sockeye salmon habitat in Lake Creek

As you know, SAWC is actively participating in the Montana Creek Master Plan planning process by providing geospatial mapping services, providing watershed reports to CBJ, and attending stakeholder meetings. We have reviewed the draft Montana Creek

Master Plan maps and offer the following comments and recommendations to protect and restore habitat in the planning area.

### **A) Existing Watershed Damage**

**Existing roads, official trails, and unofficial trails have eliminated habitat and, in many cases, are causing erosion, sedimentation, and altered ground- and surface-water pathways.** These impacts have negative consequences for overall watershed health as well as the availability and productivity of fish and wildlife habitat. For example, numerous illegal motorized vehicle trails have eliminated trees, shrubs, and herbaceous vegetation and severely damaged wetland soils resulting in severe erosion, habitat loss, and altered hydrology in the planning area. Similar problems have been caused by unofficial (i.e., unplanned, unmaintained) non-motorized trails in the planning area. Montana Creek Road, from the Montana Creek bridge to the north end of the road, lies directly adjacent to the stream along much of its length. Construction of this road has eliminated trees and other riparian vegetation, which provide numerous ecological functions, along thousands of feet of salmon habitat. These functions include stream bank stabilization, wildlife travel corridors, fish habitat-forming large woody debris sources, stream shading, and carbon and nutrient cycling that support aquatic and terrestrial food webs. These functions are considered so important that the State of Alaska, U.S. Forest Service, and City and Borough of Juneau protect up to 100 feet of riparian area on either side of salmon streams to maintain these functions on lands in their respective jurisdictions.

#### *Recommendations:*

1. Decommission Montana Creek road from the bridge to its north end and restore native vegetation in the road corridor
2. Block access to and restore native vegetation on unofficial motorized and non-motorized trails that clearly adversely impact soils, vegetation, or hydrology.

The above actions should be the highest priority projects in the planning area to ensure that damaged habitat and erosion and sedimentation problems are eliminated prior to building new or enhancing existing recreation infrastructure.

### **B) Enforcement.**

In 2021, SAWC mapped numerous unauthorized ORV trails along Montana Creek and found evidence of recent off trail riding and new trail construction. Impacts to wetlands, streams, soils, and vegetation were observed. Prior to constructing or improving any new trails or infrastructure CBJ, State of Alaska, and US Forest Service should develop, fund, and implement an enforcement plan to prevent further degradation of watershed conditions by unauthorized ORV use, off trail riding, and unauthorized trail construction. New trail construction and trail improvements should only occur after enforcement has

proven to be successful. If new hardened trails are developed, gates and additional enforcement will be needed to ensure these trails do not enable illegal ORV use/off trail riding.

### **C. New Trail Construction**

New trail and parking lot construction will impact watershed functions in the planning area. These impacts will include loss of vegetation, wetland loss, altered hydrology, and likely altered wildlife travel patterns and habitat use due to increased noise and presence of humans and dogs. We expect that multi-use and non-motorized trails will essentially be roads replacing vegetation and soils with fill (i.e., rock). The relationship between road density (road miles/square mile of watershed area) and overall watershed health is well established: increasing road density contributes to increased erosion, altered hydrology, invasive plant establishment, noise, and reduced presence of certain wildlife species.

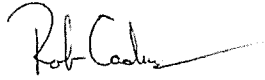
#### *Recommendations:*

- 1) Avoid building roads across or near wetlands. Wetlands, particularly fen and bog wetlands, are regionally rare and extremely sensitive to foot and vehicle traffic. In our experience, trails constructed near these types of wetlands in Juneau experience severe damage when humans and dogs leave the formal trail to access these wetlands. Locating trails away from these wetlands eliminates the attraction to them.
- 2) Avoid constructing redundant trails. The draft plan maintains the existing multi-use road along the west side of Montana Creek and adds a new non-motorized trail on the east side of the stream. Two roads essentially doubles the impacts described above in an ecologically sensitive stream corridor. We recommend, abandoning and restoring the existing road (as state above) and constructing one multi-use trail connecting the proposed parking area at the end of Montana Creek Road with existing and proposed trails in the vicinity of the McGinnis Creek-Montana Creek confluence.
- 3) Whenever possible, bridges should be favored over culverts to ensure maintenance of natural channel functions including sediment and debris transport, and fish passage. Use fencing to prevent trail users from crossing the stream in the channel.
- 4) Mitigate impacts to wetland and streams. While we encourage CBJ to prioritize avoidance and minimization of impacts to streams and wetland, if CBJ decides to move forward with activities that impact aquatic resources we ask that CBJ proactively mitigate impacts. Mitigation should occur in the watershed. For example, there are three private parcels within the Montana Creek floodplain along Montana Creek Road. These parcels are subject to flooding and development encroaches on wetland & stream habitat. Purchase, demolition of structures, and restoration of the floodplain could be appropriate

mitigation. *(Note: there is encroachment from parcel number 4B2901410021 onto CBJ Property, including fill material, ORV trails, and structures).*

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Cadmus", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rob Cadmus  
Executive Director

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**From:** Mary Willson <maryfwillson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 27, 2022 8:42 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** comments on montana creek plan  
**Attachments:** Montana ck draft plan.docx

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A glance at the map raises some immediate concerns.

1. An official trail for motorized traffic encourages more users. If that trail is in or anywhere near a meadow, there will always be more off-trail traffic. There has been little or no control over such off-trail traffic, which always produces serious habitat damage, as we see near the rifle range and over on Douglas (for example). ATV ruts last for years. The ground cover is shredded; more mud holes develop. Avian nesting habitat (e.g., for greater yellowlegs) is wrecked. Low-bush blueberry bushes are thrashed, reducing the berry crop (for birds, bears, and humans). It would be a downright shame to ruin Spaulding Meadows!
2. There already exist several unauthorized bushwhack routes between Spaulding and Montana Creek. If motorized traffic on Spaulding increases, it is a sure thing that some of those vehicles would use the bushwhack routes down to Montana Creek. That would seriously degrade the recreational values of Montana Creek for skiers, snowshoes, and hikers, which must be protected. It also increases the risk of damage to the creek itself, from erosion of the slopes etc., which would impair the fish runs and the fishing opportunities for bears and humans. Note: the slopes of Montana Creek valley are demonstrably unstable in some places now, and more can be expected.
3. For these reasons, I am asking that the master plan include effective measures to control habitat damage in the meadows and prevent access to Montana Creek. No master plan for this (or any other) area can be complete without explicit consideration of the ecological values of the area and how to prevent/reduce damage to them.

## Montana ck draft plan

A glance at the map raises some immediate concerns.

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**From:** stanandamy@aol.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 1, 2022 10:19 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** DRAFT Montana Creek Master Plan

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Hello,

I'm enthusiastic to support the planning process and the comments of the Juneau Nordic Ski Club Board. We are fortunate to have a group of community members putting time and effort into maintaining current trails and give input for future development. I have greatly enjoyed nordic skiing in recent years and look forward to future enhancements to our trail system. Thank you for your work on this plan!

Amy Lujan  
Juneau



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**From:** Roman Motyka <rjmotyka@alaska.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 29, 2022 10:48 AM  
**To:** Michele Elfers  
**Cc:** USFS; USFS; Trail Mix; DNR; DOTPF; George Schaaf; Dale Gosnell; Colby Shibler; Frankie Pillifant; Lance Mearig; Odin B.; Allen Steffert; Tim and Jeannie; John Neary; Mike Hekkers; JNSC Board  
**Subject:** JNSC comments on the Montana Creek Master Plan map  
**Attachments:** JNSC comments on M Cr MP map.pdf

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Dear Michele and other agencies,

Our comments regarding the preliminary master plan maps are in the attached PDF.

We wish to thank CBJ P&R and the other management agencies for their willingness to work with JNSC and other groups to produce a final master plan.

We would really enjoy discussing our ideas in more detail once you and others have had a chance to review our comments. Perhaps we can arrange a video conference?

Thank you again for your work towards development of a master plan and for including us in the process.

Roman Motyka, on behalf of the JNSC Nordic Trails Subcommittee

[rjmotyka@alaska.edu](mailto:rjmotyka@alaska.edu)  
907-723-0761 cell

"If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion."  
Dalai Lama

To: Michele Elfers, Deputy Director, CBJ Parks & Rec, [Michele.Elfers@juneau.org](mailto:Michele.Elfers@juneau.org)

From: Juneau Nordic Ski Club (JNSC)

Subj: JNSC comments and questions regarding the August 10<sup>th</sup> publication of the “Montana Creek Master Plan” maps and video presentation.

Submitted by: R J Motyka ([rjmotyka@alaska.edu](mailto:rjmotyka@alaska.edu)) on behalf of the JNSC Nordic Trails Development Subcommittee

August 29, 2022

CC:

Tristan Fluharty, USFS <[tristan.fluharty@usda.gov](mailto:tristan.fluharty@usda.gov)>,  
Pete Schneider, USFS <[Peter.Schneider@usda.gov](mailto:Peter.Schneider@usda.gov)>,  
Ryan O'Shaughnessy, Trail Mix <[ryan@juneautrails.org](mailto:ryan@juneautrails.org)>,  
Megan Hillgartner, DNR <[megan.hillgartner@alaska.gov](mailto:megan.hillgartner@alaska.gov)>,  
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Dale Gosnell, CBJ P&R <[Dale.Gosnell@skieaglecrest.com](mailto:Dale.Gosnell@skieaglecrest.com)>,  
Colby Shibler, CBJ P&R <[Colby.Shibler@juneau.org](mailto:Colby.Shibler@juneau.org)>

## General Comments

The Juneau Nordic Ski Club (JNSC) would like to thank Michele Elfers and CBJ P&R for their efforts in coordinating development of a “Master Plan” for the Montana Creek watershed and for getting the ball rolling by hosting the Aug 10 2022 and other meetings. We would also like to thank CBJ P& R and the other management agencies for their willingness to work with JNSC and other groups to produce the plan.

CBJ (and the other management agencies) presented a preliminary “plan” at the Aug 10<sup>th</sup> meeting in the form of two maps. We view these maps as preliminary concepts rather than constituting an actual plan. Currently, the online video of the meeting and slides are the only background information regarding the maps that is currently available. Without supporting narrative and background information, it is difficult for us to know who or which agency proposed a specific trail, cabin, parking area etc. and the rationale behind the choices. However, based on email exchanges with Michele Elfers, we understand that the intent of management agencies is obtain comments on the preliminary maps from interested parties, which would then be used as part of an iterative process to formulate the eventual master plan. In that spirit, JNSC is pleased to offer its comments and advice on the “plan” and hope that they will be considered and incorporated. Because the master plan maps lack any supportive materials, we found that we needed to ask numerous questions and make comments to help clarify issues.

We divided our specific comments into two categories:

1. Trails
2. Additional Comments and Issues

## Trails

### 1. Trails in general:

It is not entirely clear from the current “master plan” map and information thus far provided which trails are winter only vs. year-round, particularly the Spaulding Meadows access trails and the John Muir to Peterson Lake trail. The plan also has to make a distinction between “ski-touring” trails and Nordic ski trails. The distinction is discussed in our “JNSC Nordic Ski Trail Development Plan for Juneau, Alaska”:

*NORDIC SKIING is defined as free-heel skiing on trails that have been groomed for classic tracked and skate skiing techniques.*

*SKI-TOURING is typically over ungroomed slopes using wider, often metal-edged skis.*

We provide parameters and specifications for construction of Nordic ski trails in the appendix accompanying our comments.

### 2. Montana Creek and McGuinness Valley Nordic skiing/hiking/biking trails

The CBJ MP map shows a pink dashed line parallel to Montana Creek as well as another line as a connector to the MGRA. We presume these are “placeholders” for the actual design of the Nordic/multi-user non-motorized trails. We applaud the inclusion of these trails on the preliminary maps. In Figures 1 and 2, we show the JNSC vision for layout of these trails in much more detail and request that our trail routes be the ones included in the master plan.

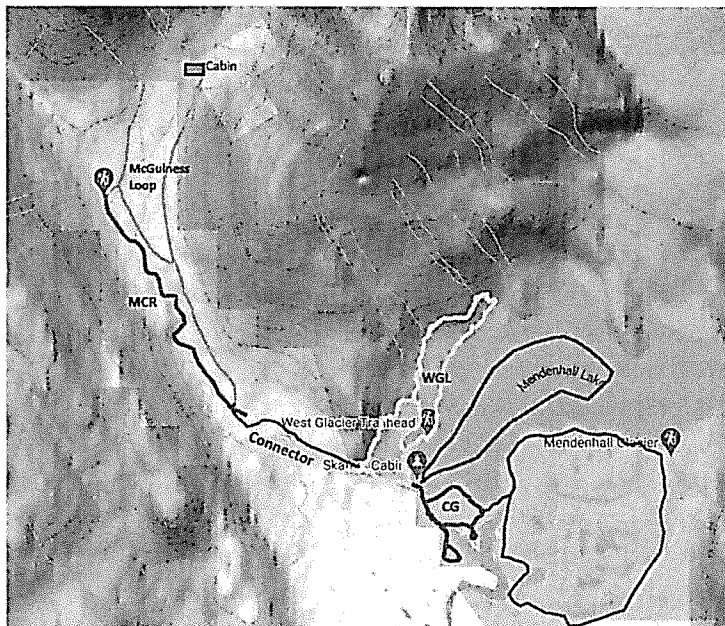
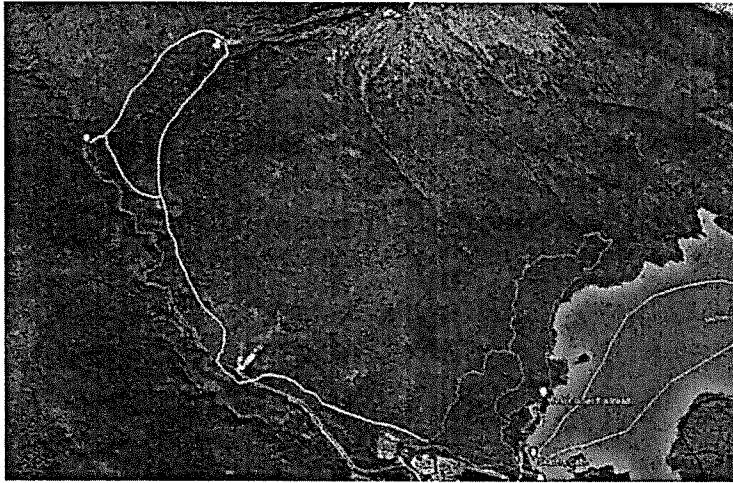


Figure 1. Current Montana Creek groomed trail (MCR, red). Also shown are several proposed additions and connector trails (yellow). WGL = West Glacier Loop (yellow); MMSC = MMS connector trail (black); and MV = McGuinness Valley loop trail (orange) (adopted from the JNSC Trails Development Plan).



*Figure 2. Similar to Figure 1 but using Google Earth satellite image as background and also showing location of a recreational cabin in McGuinness Valley.*

In the Aug 10 video narration, “loop” trails were held up as being particularly attractive features for trail development. The trail system depicted in Figures 1 and 2 offer multiple different loops: a) the McGuinness Valley loop; b) the Montana Creek loop, combining trails on either side of the river; and c) the entire Montana Creek – McGuinness Valley loop. These loops and trails would have great appeal for skiers, hikers, and bikers and also provide access for ski touring and ski mountaineering in the upper McGuinness Valley. We insist that the added trails be for non-motorized users only!

Figure 2 also shows the potential location of a recreational use cabin in the valley. The desirability of such cabins was emphasized in the Aug 10 meeting and this would be a perfect location for one, either on USFS land or adjacent CBJ land.

The construction of the Montana Creek and McGuinness Valley Nordic loop ski trails can be staged over time with the eastside trail parallel to Montana Creek given a five-year goal of achievement and the McGuinness Valley loop and recreational cabin designated as part of a ten-year goal for the plan.

### **3. Interconnect between MGRA and Montana Creek Trail Systems**

Such a connection is integral to the JNSC Nordic Ski Trail Development Plan. We are encouraged that both of the CBJ MP maps show an interconnect to the MGRA trail system, similar to what was presented in the JNSC trail plan. Figures 1 and 2 show the potential location of such a trail in much more detail (Figure 1, black; shown as orange in Figure 2). We suggest development of this interconnect be given highest priority as most of it occurs on CBJ land, with construction commencing within the next two years following plan approval.

### **4. Montana Creek to Windfall Lake Trail Upgrade**

Restoration and upgrading of the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake primitive trail was proposed by the USFS during informal conversations with JNSC last winter. The improved trail would potentially add ~ 8 – 10 km to the Montana Creek system (Fig. 3). Trail restoration could qualify for GAOA funding if this program is renewed. JNSC requests that upgrading of this trail be included in the plan and that it be designated non-motorized.

## **5. Spaulding Meadows Nordic Trails**

Development of a Nordic Trail system in the Spaulding Meadows non-motorized sector (as shown in Figures 3 and 4) is the key feature in the ten-year goals of the JNSC trail plan. It is therefore disappointing that this trail system was not included in the preliminary CBJ M Cr MP maps. As explained in the JNSC trail plan, development of this trail system is a key component in providing Nordic skiing opportunities as climate change and regional warming intensify. JNSC requests that the trails outlined in Figures 3 and 4 (yellow) be included in the next iteration of the M Cr MP.

Another priority is to develop a road to Spaulding Meadows that would create a trailhead at higher elevation, approximately ~ 400-460 m (~1300 to 1500 ft), where snow falls earlier and remains longer (Fig. 3). JNSC sees construction of a road to Spaulding Meadows as an important opportunity for maintaining accessible Nordic ski trails for the general public as climate change continues. JNSC seeks to partner with the Juneau Snowmobile Club to make this improved access and equity to Spaulding Meadows a reality for both user groups.

## **6. Auke Mountain Loop**

This 5-mile (8 km) Nordic ski loop trail would venture from the Spaulding Meadows loop past the John Muir Cabin to the base of Auke Mountain and return (Figures 3 and 4, cyan). The trail would traverse beautiful rolling meadows and would appeal to more advanced Nordic skiers and should be included as part of the plan's ten-year goals, perhaps first as a classic trail and eventually widened for skate skiing depending on demand.

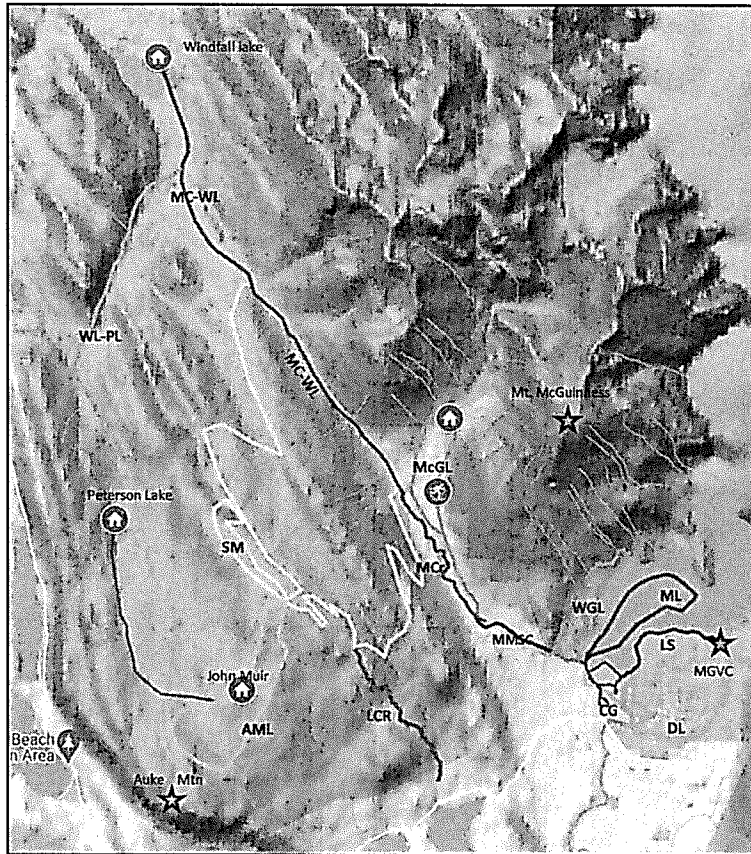


Figure 3. Mendenhall – Montana Creek – Spaulding Meadows Intertie (MMS) proposed Nordic trails: Spaulding Meadows (SM, yellow) and interconnects to Montana Creek; Auke Mountain loop (AML; cyan); connector to Windfall Lake (MC-WL, purple); Lake Creek Road access (LCR, magenta); Windfall Lake to Peterson Lake connector (WL-PL, orange). MGRA trails and other connectors also shown. Together, these trails would constitute the Mendenhall – Montana Creek – Spaulding Meadows Intertie (MMS), a world-class trail system for Nordic skiing and hiking. (Adopted from the JNSC Nordic Ski Trails Development Plan.)

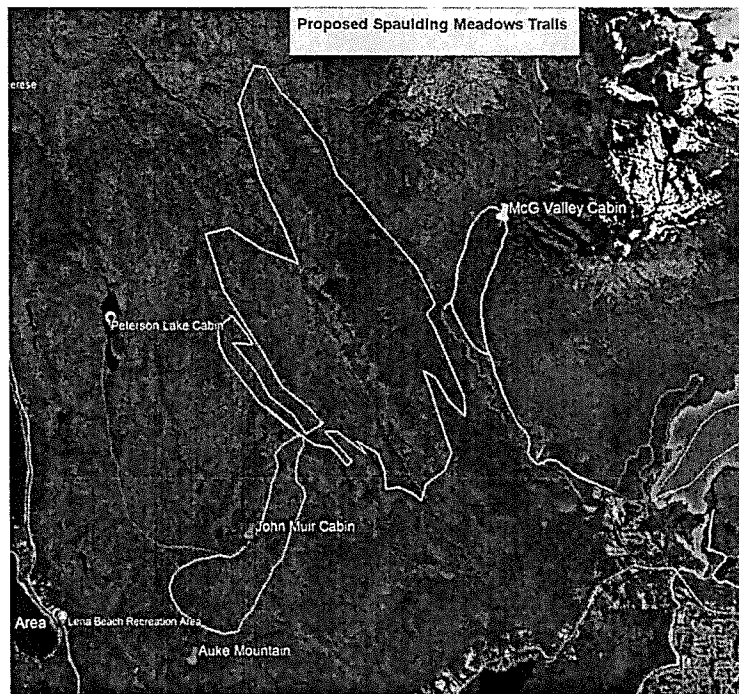


Figure 4. Spaulding Meadows Nordic ski trail system on Google Earth satellite image.

#### 7. Peterson Lake – Muir Cabin trail

JNSC supports inclusion of this winter ski and snowshoe spur trail as shown on the master plan maps. We include it in Figures 3 and 4 (magenta) as an extension of our proposed Auke Mountain Loop. The trail to Peterson Lake is already marked and periodically used by the ski-touring community. Better signage and trail development would make this option of cabin to cabin skiing even more attractive. However, JNSC wants to emphasize that the leg to Peterson Lake is a “ski-touring” trail and not a trail we would normally groom for Nordic skiing.

#### 8. 25-mile Trail

We are curious who proposed this motorized/ “multi-use” trail? We view this new trail with deep apprehension! The video presentation was confusing: is this solely a winter trail or is it intended for summer use also? Please clarify. Safety on such a trail if constructed would be a critical issue. Will there be speed limits and trail signage? Who will police activity on this trail?

### Additional Comments and Issues

#### 1. Summer Map Needed

JNSC requests that the management agencies provide a summer map for the watershed plan in order to clarify issues about trail use, cabin access, and parking. Which trails will be hardened for summer use and which will be winter only? The region is heavily used in the summer as well as winter and deserves to be included in the master plan process.

#### 2. Parking

Parking at trailheads has been an issue for some time. We agree with expansion of the John Muir and Auke Nu trailhead parking as this lot often experiences overflow. **We vehemently oppose the location of the Montana Creek trailhead parking zone as shown on the M Cr MP maps!** We hope that this was an oversight of the management agencies when making the maps, unless this lot is intended for summer use only.

The steep icy hill would pose a significant challenge to automobile traffic and for snow plowing in the winter. Its location would also cut off the first ½ km of the current M Cr Nordic ski trail.

Parking for winter use of the Nordic ski trails should be located near the current winter lot. Plans are already underway to expand the parking in this area. The map and plan should include this additional parking, projected to be developed this fall.

Lake Creek parking (see also number 4 under “Trails” above): the proposed Lake Creek Road should be at the ~ 400 – 450 m (1300 – 1500 ft) elevation with adequate parking for both motorized and non-motorized users. The location shown on the draft map is too low in elevation for Nordic skier access.

### **3. Bridges**

JNSC is aware that development of Nordic/ biking / hiking trails in the Montana Creek and McGuiness Valley area will require river crossings. These bridges should be wide enough to accommodate Nordic trail grooming equipment (see appendix and/or the JNSC Nordic Trails Development Plan for details). In general, trail and bridge width should be 10 – 14 ft.

An ongoing concern is to find a permanent solution to the Montana Creek trail bridge at the summer trailhead. This bridge is vital to Nordic ski winter grooming operations. The bridge has become increasingly subject to damaging floods, most recently this past August. JNSC has helped with repairing and reinforcing the bridge in past and has volunteered to do so again this fall. **JNSC recommends that replacement of this bridge with a stronger, more permanent bridge be among the highest priorities in the draft plan.**

### **4. Agencies and Land Management**

Land ownership: we have multi-agencies to deal with. Can DNR and DOT transfer responsibility to CBJ so that only two agencies are overseeing area management? Four different government agencies have land ownership in the plan area with the USFS having the largest. JNSC recommends that DNR cede their lands in the plan area to CBJ and likewise, DOTPF transfer responsibility for the bridge and road to CBJ. CBJ should then add this acreage to the designated Montana Creek Natural Area and take responsibility for management and maintenance.

### **5. Expertise for Nordic Trail design and construction**

JNSC recommends that CBJ P&R and/or Trail Mix contract expertise for Nordic trail design and construction (see Appendix for details on standards)

### **6. Construction, Maintenance, Signage and Policing**

The draft plan needs to spell out in detail 1) plans for obtaining funding for construction of trails, cabins and parking areas, 2) agency responsible for construction and maintenance of each trail, 3) the



regulations governing the use of the trails and cabins, particularly trails designated as motorized/multi-user. Will there be speed limits posted on the 25-mile trail and the Spaulding Meadows access trails?

We presume that Trail Mix will be the primary partner that will work with CBJ, USFS, and the other agencies for constructing trails. We ask that Trail Mix and the management agencies engage a professional expert for designing and constructing the Nordic ski trails included in the plan. JNSC will want to be directly involved in this process.

Our club has a membership base that is very willing to devote hours of volunteer time to make a Nordic Trail system a reality. We note that JNSC has already devoted hundreds of hours of volunteer time in repairing the Montana Creek trail from landslide damage and debris as well as doing work on stabilizing the bridge. Our volunteers have also worked many hours to maintain the Pioneer Road on North Douglas.

### **7. Cabin locations**

The draft plan/map shows two new cabins located in the Spaulding Meadows area on 25-mile trail and which border the motorized and non-motorized regions. The location of the proposed new cabins will favor dominance by the over-snow motorized community in the winter as has happened with the Dan Moller cabin. We recommend moving at least one of the cabins to the non-motorized sector or instead, preferably, build a new cabin in the McGuinness Valley as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

We also advocate for the addition of warming shelters on the trail system, locations to be decided.

### **8. Motorized vs. Non-motorized Areas**

For over thirty years JNSC has been a staunch advocate for Nordic skiing and for construction of non-motorized trails to support wintertime enjoyment of the Montana Creek Watershed. However, the allowance of winter-time motorized use of the Montana Creek trail has increased the likelihood of potentially dangerous encounters on that narrow and winding trail. The effects of motorized use are two-fold: the first is safety issues between skiers and ATVs on a narrow, winding trail; the second is rutting of the groomed trail that requires additional grooming to smooth ruts before being safe for skiers. We therefore request that any new Nordic ski trails, such as the McGuinness Valley loops, be designated for non-motorized use.

In support of this request we draw attention to the results of the survey commissioned by CBJ P&R, which showed that respondents preferred non-motorized to motorized use of the region by over a 2:1 margin (see slide 9, CBJ master plan website)! "Wilderness experience", "Snow", and "Quiet" all far out-weighted any other values. Thus, CBJ's own survey shows the strong preference for non-motorized use of the area.

We also point out the gross inequity in acreage allotted to over-snow motorized use vs. non-motorized regions in the Montana Creek watershed. How was this boundary defined and what is its legal basis? How can we access the documents used to define this boundary?

The current non-motorized portion of Spaulding Meadows useable for groomed Nordic ski trails (non-treed and relatively flat meadow) to 70 and 120 acres compared to the 1400 to 1700 acres of main meadow allotted to motorized use. The non-motorized part of the main meadow is a tiny sliver of one

side. We are not willing to sacrifice as much as 95% of Spaulding Meadows to motorized use, which would severely limit Nordic skiing.

In summary, we recommend the plan specifically ask for expansion of the non-motorized region in Spaulding Meadows and, wherever necessary, construct separate trails for motorized vs. non-motorized users.

## 9. Prioritization

- 1) The top priority should be to define and publish a roadmap for completion of the Master Plan process, complete with supporting materials and background information. The roadmap should also include timelines, approximate dates for public meetings and comment periods, and most importantly, who will make the decisions on what to include and exclude from the plan, and what the decision process will be based on.
- 2) Identify potential funding opportunities for development of trails, cabins, and infrastructure.
- 3) Add additional parking at rifle range for winter users.
- 4) Find permanent solution to Montana Creek Bridge.
- 5) Nordic Trails five-year goals:
  - a. Obtain Right-of-way and begin construction of the interconnect trail between MGRA and Montana Creek system.
  - b. Construct new non-motorized Nordic / hiking / biking trail on the east side of Montana Creek with a bridge across the creek to connect to the current end of the Montana Creek Nordic ski trail.
  - c. Construct the McGuinness Valley Nordic Trail loop with connections to the Montana Creek system.
  - d. Construct a recreational cabin in the McGuinness Valley
- 6) Nordic Trails ten-year goals:
  - a. Upgrade the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake trail to Nordic ski standards.
  - b. Construct the Lake Creek road providing access to Spaulding Meadows.
  - c. Construct the Spaulding Meadows Nordic Loop trail system.
  - d. Construct the Auke Mountain loop trail.
  - e. Construct an additional recreation cabin and warming shelters.

## APPENDIX

For general layout and construction specifications of Nordic ski trails, an example of guidance comes from Northern Arizona University, which cites the manual, "Recreational Trail Design and Construction," developed by the Minnesota Extension Service of the University of Minnesota. It emphasizes the following aspects of recreational Nordic trail layout and construction:

1. Trail layout and length – The trail system should comprise loops with internal connectors and cutoffs that allow the skier discretion in how long to ski. Loop lengths should range from 5 to 15 km with a beginner’s loop of about 1 km. Minimum clearing widths should range between 3 and 5 meters, depending on what type of skiing is accommodated and whether a steep section would require herringbone technique uphill or turns downhill. Grades should usually be less than 5% rise over run for general skiing with occasional sustained pitches of 10% and short (less-than-50-m) pitches of up to 25%.
2. Trail construction – Trails should be smooth enough and free from protrusions to accommodate grooming when snow depth reaches 0.3 m. Trails should have gentle curves, especially avoiding sharp turns at the bottom of downhills. Bridges should accommodate the width and weight of grooming and maintenance equipment.
3. Other considerations – Nordic and cross-country ski trails are considered compatible with winter snowshoeing and summer hiking and bicycling. They are considered to be incompatible with snowmobiling and wheeled traffic. Nordic and cross-country skiing venues should have adequate parking areas, rest areas for skiers, shelters every 15 to 20 km, and appropriate signage.

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**From:** Paul Khera <alaskakhera@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 5, 2022 2:01 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Comments

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EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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1. Any time you allow motorized and non-motorized equipment to mix, you create a serious safety hazard and issues with law suits. Skis are fragile and if motorized equipment runs over it, it is permanently damaged and there is no license plate for the off-road equipment, nor is there an insurance requirement. Extracting dead or injured persons from these areas will raise costs for the Fire Department, cause damage to the trails, and negatively impact the lives of people and families in Juneau.

2. Bicycles and pedestrians are also a bad mix, as has been well established. Smart cities separate bicyclists from pedestrians, many of which are pushing baby strollers. That being said, winter bicycles on ski trails are an accident waiting to happen. Bicycles are great but they have other places to ride than the ski trails. Lets keep them off the ski trails. Its too dangers and there is also the high likelihood for equipment damage. Skis can easily cost \$1000 and bicycles can cost between \$800 and \$10,000. Lets not build an accident with these new plans.

3. Lastly, this is supposed to be a "recreation" area and there are lungs at work. The emissions from off-road equipment creates very, very dirty air for people trying to use "recreation" to live a healthier life. Montana Creek is wonderful because the temperature inversions hold down the cold air allowing skiing until May. The flip side is that this inversion also holds down the the air pollutants. The problem with snowmobile emissions was so bad at Yellow Stone Park that rangers had to wear masks. The problem is so bad in the Fairbanks winter that it's air is amongst the worst in the nation, worse that some of our biggest cities like L.A. The problem is so bad in the Juneau Valley that there are burn bans. It is far worse in the Montana Creek area where the temperature inversion, which keeps all this snow, is on steroids. Requiring all off road equipment to use 4-stroke engines will somewhat mitigate the problem. However, you will still be inviting highly unhealthy air into a "recreation" area for people who are trying to live healthy and trying keep strong against COVID or the next pandemic.

Sincerely,

Paul Khera  
Juneau Taxpayer, Payer of many Federal Taxes, and Payer of every other Tax ever dreamed up

---

**From:** Alan McCabe <alan.b.mccabe@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 4, 2022 10:10 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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Please increase the number of ski opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan.

This is the second time I have lived in Juneau and the increase in cross country skiing opportunities has been fantastic. This new opportunity will continue that growth in skiing through extremely low impact to environment that enhances community linkages and promotes healthy lifestyles. Thanks you for the opportunity to comment.

Alan Mccabe.

Sent from my iPhone

---

**From:** Ammie Parker <ammie.parker@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 1, 2022 8:56 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

---

Please increase the number of ski opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan.  
Also ensure that the area is open to horses as we have limited recreational locations for horse back riding in the community.

Thank you  
-Ammie  
Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Art Bloom <artmbloom@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 1, 2022 6:38 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

---

Please increase the number of ski opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan.

---

**From:** Becky Iverson <bakiverson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 3, 2022 6:05 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

---

Please increase the number of ski opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan. So many people love to ski and it makes us love Juneau in winter time. Thank you so much for this consideration Becky Iverson

Sent from my iPhone



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**From:** Blake Fleming <blakefleming1911@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 2, 2022 4:23 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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Greetings,

I am in support of the draft Montana Creek master plan, specifically the increased motorized trail access and mixed use cabins. Increasing the parking and access for winter snow access stands to benefit both motorized and non-motorized user groups.

Thank you!

Blake Fleming

---

**From:** Carol Ende <carolende11@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 1, 2022 12:18 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

---

Please increase the number of ski opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan.

Additional ski trails will connect and add kilometers, alleviate congestion, and enhance skier experiences. Additionally, the development of nordic ski trails will also benefit multi-season, multi-sport users such as hikers, bikers, campers, and bird watchers.

Sincerely

Carol Ende  
Juneau AK

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**From:** Corey Baxter <cbaxter@iuoe302.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 1, 2022 2:04 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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Hi,

I am writing today on behalf of the Juneau Snowmobile club. After reviewing the Montana Creek Master plan and being involved with most of the meetings on this topic I wanted to comment on how well this Plan was drafted and that we are in support of this Master plan draft. We as a Club are very supportive of adding cabins to the Spaulding Meadows area , access to 25 mile, and adding a new parking lot at the lake creek trailhead area for better Snow access during the winter months. Our Club is also very supportive of all these other ideas as well since we believe that the Montana Creek area should be open to all user groups through out the year. Thank you for taking the time and energy in drafting this Master plan and getting all the groups together for discussing in this process. Thanks

Corey Baxter  
JSC President  
907-321-4271

---

**From:** dsanvik@gci.net  
**Sent:** Monday, September 5, 2022 5:15 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

---

I support the Juneau Nordic Ski Club's Ideas and recommendations listed in their letter of August 29, 2022.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Doug Sanvik  
PO Box 21774  
Juneau, AK 99802

---

**From:** Elaine Schroeder <eschroederjnu@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 3, 2022 4:41 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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Dear Parks and Rec staff,

My husband and I are 78 and continue to be Nordic ski enthusiasts. I bet we skied at least 2 times a week at Montana Creek this past winter.

We urge you to develop the ski trails and improvements in the Montana Creek master plan. It keeps us healthy and happy! And it keeps us in Juneau for all seasons!

Thanks so much for all your hard work on this issue, Elaine and Bob Schroeder

---

**From:** Heidi Brodersen <brodersenheidia@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 1, 2022 1:24 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

---

Dear CBJ Parks & Rec,

I am writing in support of the Juneau Nordic Ski Club's response to the draft Montana Creek Master Plan. Please increase the number of ski opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan. As an avid (though not particularly skilled!) cross-country skier, I use many of our local ski trails weekly on average, though normally at least twice a week in a good snow year. Montana Creek is a family favorite, and it would be great to see it expand in a way that is safe for skiers and environmentally responsible, while opening up trails to additional outdoor uses and users.

Thank you for your consideration of the JNSC's comments.  
Heidi Brodersen  
Downtown Juneau

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**From:** Jeff <jeffsloss11@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 2, 2022 5:21 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

---

Please increase the number of ski opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan.

I support what the JNSC Board is advocating for:

- Trails built wide enough to accommodate ski grooming equipment;
- New Nordic skiing/hiking/biking trails developed in the Montana Creek and McGinissValley;
- Upgrading the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake trail to accommodate ski grooming in the winter;
- Enhanced/new ski trails and routes in Spaulding Meadow;
- Interconnected trails linking the Mendenhall Campground and West Glacier area to the Montana Creek valley on up to Spaulding Meadow.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Jeff Sloss

Sent from my iPad

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**From:** Kathy Stepien <kathystepien2020@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 2, 2022 4:17 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

---

Please increase the number of ski opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan.

Skiing, hiking, and biking trails are good for Juneau's health and economic viability.

Kathy Stepien  
12331 Glacier Hwy, Juneau, AK 99801



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**From:** Keith Levy <keithblevy@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 1, 2022 2:18 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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I write to support the proposed Montana Creek Master Plan. In particular, I support the increase in nordic ski opportunities the plan will provide. To that end, the proposed additional trails should be wide enough to accommodate ski grooming equipment. The new routes will benefit a huge section of the community, both for winter ski and snowshoe opportunities, and summer hiking and biking opportunities. Count me in.

Keith Levy

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**From:** Mary Ellen Arvold Dave Haas <arvoldhaas@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 1, 2022 7:01 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

---

Please increase the number of ski opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan.

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**From:** Megan Behnke <megan.i.behnke@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 1, 2022 9:05 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan comments

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

---

Hello--

Thank you for the work you are doing on the Montana Creek Master Plan. I am writing with support for including

- 1) developing new Nordic skiing/hiking/biking trails in the Montana Creek and McGuinness Valley area
- 2) upgrading the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake trail so that it could accommodate ski grooming in the winter
- 3) building trails wide enough to allow for ski grooming equipment
- 4) making new and improved ski trails and routes in Spaulding Meadow  
and
- 5) linking trails from the Montana Creek/Spaulding area to the Mendenhall Campground/West Glacier area.

Thank you so much for helping us increase our winter activity access and ensure access for all sports!

Best,  
Megan

--  
Megan Behnke, PhD  
(she/her)  
Post Doctoral Fellow  
Department of Natural Science  
University of Alaska Southeast

[megan.i.behnke@gmail.com](mailto:megan.i.behnke@gmail.com)  
*I live and work in Lingít Aaní.*

---

**From:** Norman Thompson <nthompson1@gci.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 2, 2022 9:54 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

---

Please increase the number of ski opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan.

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Peggy and Alex <alaskawerts@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 5, 2022 9:01 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

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EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft "Master Plan for Montana Creek." The maps presented are not supported by any narrative material, and can be difficult to interpret. However, they do provide some general concepts which I think have merit.

1. Connector trail to MGRA trails. This should be a top priority. It would greatly extend the amount of groomed trails by linking existing maintained trails.

2. Hike/bike/ski connector Montana Creek to Spaulding Meadows. This would be a great addition to connect current ski areas. There is a second possibility for this route, as proposed by JNSC. That is to make this a road for motorized access to a higher elevation parking lot. This would provide equitable access for both skiers to the non-motorized portion of Spaulding Meadows and for motorized users in the motorized portion of the Meadows. Given the inexorable effects of climate change, having another higher-elevation trailhead besides Eaglecrest would help assure access to winter recreation opportunities without long hikes.

3. Upgrade Montana Creek to Windfall Lake Trail so that it can be groomed for Nordic skiing. Designate the section from Montana Creek to the intersection with Spaulding Meadows (where the trail starts to drop into the Windfall drainage) for non-motorized use. With the development of access from 25 mile and access from Lake Creek, motorized users will have additional opportunity to access the Meadows and link to the existing trail to Windfall Lake cabin. Making the Montana Creek trail non-motorized would resolve the current incompatible winter use of the trail, one of the few places that hold snow and can be groomed for Nordic skiing at lower elevations.

I hope these brief comments are useful, I look forward to seeing the next iteration of the plan.

Alex Wertheimer  
17200 Andreanoff Drive  
Juneau, AK

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**From:** Sam Steensland <sam\_steensland@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 1, 2022 11:20 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan Comment

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EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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Dear Michele Elfers,

Thank you very much for taking the time to study and plan for the future of Montana Creek! That area is an integral part of what makes Juneau such a wonderful place to live and recreate. As you know, consistent snowfall will continue to be less reliable and access to Montana Creek and Spaulding Meadows will only become more important to those of us who enjoy recreating outside in Juneau. So thanks for taking the time and effort to try to get it right!

The previous comment period that CBJ conducted concluded that the Juneau public prefers non-motorized use by a margin of over 2:1. I believe both user groups have a right to the area and that Parks & Rec can find a way to allow both motorized and non-motorized users to enjoy separate parts of Montana Creek. That said, the public clearly prefers non-motorized trails and I think Montana Creek should be developed with that in mind. I ski at least 5 days a week in the winter and our nordic trails and parking lots are at capacity. We've been lucky with a few snowy years lately, but we can't rely on snow to sea level on a regular basis. I fully support the Juneau Nordic Ski Club's stance and comments on the Master Plan. My personal favorite ideas are listed below:

- The construction of Lake Creek Road. The parking area should be at the highest elevation possible.
- Construction of the McGuiness Valley Trail (non-motorized) and McGuiness Valley Cabin. Backcountry skiing and climbing on the Juneau Icefield is world renowned, but accessing it is very challenging. Access is getting harder and more dangerous every year as the Mendenhall Glacier retreats. A trail and cabin in the McGuiness Valley would be a world-class asset to our community!
- Connecting the current Montana Creek trail system to the Mendenhall Glacier trails.

Thanks for asking the public for their opinions and taking the time to listen. I'm excited and hopeful for the future of Spaulding Meadows and Montana Creek!

Sam Steensland

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**From:** scottbetsy@gci.net  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 3, 2022 4:46 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek master plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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Here are my thoughts on the Montana Creek master plan. I have commented before and my ideas have not changed. I believe this area should be free of any form of recreational motorized use, other than the controlled ski trail grooming by the Juneau Nordic Ski Club. Motorized vehicles hurt and destroy wilderness areas, plain and simple. The Montana Creek area is a classic wetland and rainforest environment and the presence of motorized vehicles at any time of the year can cause great damage to this fragile area. If so-called boundaries are established between motorized and non-motorized use, I can guarantee you that the motorized users will not respect those boundaries, as evidenced by the transgressions that happen every year in the Spaulding Meadows area. I have seen this happen again and again since I first started skiing and hiking in that area in the early 1970s. The losers are the hikers, skiers, fishermen, mountain bikers, berry-pickers, and bird-watchers who are the very people that Parks and Recreation should be thinking of and planning for.

Respectfully,

Betsy Fischer

Juneau resident since 1972

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**From:** Therese Thibodeau <theresethib@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 2, 2022 5:25 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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As a frequent nordic skier who uses the Montana Creek trail and Mendenhall Campground ski areas that are groomed by the Nordic Ski Club, I would like to comment on the proposed plan. Please increase the number of ski opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan.

Expand the trails so they are wide enough to accommodate ski grooming equipment.

Build new Nordic skiing/hiking/biking trails in the Montana Creek area and the McGuinness valley.

Upgrade the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake trail to accommodate ski grooming in the winter, right now we can only ski 3 kilometers out and 3 back, it would be great to get a longer ski in on that trail.

Enhance the present trail and build new ski trails and routes in Spaulding Meadow.

Interconnect trails linking the Mendenhall Campground and West Glacier are to the Montana Creek valley on up to Spaulding Meadow.

Along with this increased access to trails, it would also be good to increase the parking availability.

Thanks

Therese Thibodeau

426 Gold St, Juneau, AK 99801



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**From:** thomascd@gci.net  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 8, 2022 7:57 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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CBJ Parks and Recreation Board & staff,

We are long-time alpine & Nordic skiers of our town. We have enjoyed skiing since our youth growing up here. We saw the hard work of many volunteers that made alpine and Nordic skiing possible for us and many others. We feel so lucky to have had such wonderful wintertime outdoor ski opportunities.

Volunteering to support skiing has been an ongoing activity for us for over fifty years. This includes supporting young skiers from an early age learning a healthy and fun wintertime activity. Other volunteer efforts that keep us busy are trail maintenance, grooming ski tracks, maintaining grooming equipment plus much more.

We are writing to express our full support for the Nordic ski trail development plan as presented in the current Montana Creek Master Plan. When Montana Creek became organized with consistently groomed cross-country ski trails veteran and new skiers could enjoy perfectly groomed ski trails. More and more people discovered the benefits of gliding on snow.

With a bigger population of Nordic skiers we need more ski trails and parking areas. We support new trails built wide enough for ski grooming equipment.

Thanks for all the work the CBJ Parks and Recreation staff has put into the Montana Creek Master Plan.

Sincerely yours,

Donald & Christine Thomas  
9220 Gee st.  
Juneau, AK. 99801

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**From:** Garrett Paul <gpaul99@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 1, 2022 5:15 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan Comments\_Garrett Paul

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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Hello,

I am in support of all aspects of the master plan and proposed improvements as long as they do not limit motorized use to this area. Constructing Cabins along the montana creek trail for summer and winter multi use activities (motorized and non-motorized) is a great idea and i suspect they will get great usage rates. It will also provide an economic benefit to Juneau's contractors. I also support the parking pad expansion at the Lake Creek Trailhead and construction of additional access into the recreation area.

All efforts to increase all uses in the area have my support. I do not support giving preference to one user or another, uses should be balanced not discriminatory.

Thanks,  
Garrett Paul  
(907) 227-1684

---

**From:** Gci <khock@gci.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 3, 2022 9:24 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

---

Please increase the number of ski opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan.

I am one of Juneau's cross country skier's and I would love to see more trails for use during the winter as the number of skiers seems to keep increasing. Furthermore all those trails could be used through the non- snowy times for hiking and biking. Just as Juneau has an awesome hiking trail system let's work on growing our network of ski trails.

Thanks for all your hard work. Appreciatively, Kristin Hock

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**From:** kristy@totten.com  
**Sent:** Friday, September 2, 2022 12:21 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan- Public Input Submission

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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CBJ Parks and Recreation-

Access to safe hiking and Nordic ski trails is one of the best aspects of living in Juneau! As a moderate level, active senior, I love the idea that CBJ parks and rec are developing plans for new Nordic skiing/hiking/biking trails in the Montana Creek and McGuiness Valley.

Please consider EXPANDING the Nordic trail systems in your plans. I am very much in favor of: 1) your upgrading the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake trails to accommodate ski grooming in the winter; 2) creating enhanced/new ski trails and well marked routes in Spaulding Meadow; 3) your development of interconnected trails linking the Mendenhall Campground and West Glacier area to Montana Creek valley and on up to Spaulding Meadow. It's important for my safe usage of these trails, that they are built wide enough to accommodate ski grooming equipment.

My husband and I moved to Juneau from Sitka, and although the Sitka Trail Works have developed some amazing hiking trails, sadly Sitka has never had enough snow for much Nordic skiing. Winter in Juneau has been a true wonderland for us and for our adult daughter. I urge the CBJ Parks and Recreation department to move forward with your plans to enhance ski opportunities in the Sapulding Meadow and Montana Creek Valley drainage areas. Please consider expanding and increasing the proposed Nordic ski trail development as presented in your current draft of the Montana Creek Master Plan. Additional trails will enhance the experience and opportunities for skiers at all ability levels, benefit multi-season/multi-sport users, alleviate congestion, user conflict, and support healthy lifestyles in Juneau.

Thank you very much for your hard work and dedication to providing multi-user solutions for Juneau. It's crucial that non-motorized trails be developed and linked together without interference and destruction from motorized users. Likewise, motorized users need their own roads where they can recreate without worries of running into skiers/hikers. Providing recreational cabins for each group (one for motorized and one for non-motorized only) within their respective road/trails networks would be great! Thank you again for making concerted efforts to work with a consortium of user groups and other interested parties.

Sincerely,  
Kristy K.Totten

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**From:** Shelly\_Noah Lager <lager\_house@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 10, 2022 7:25 PM  
**To:** Michele Elfers; Parks Rec  
**Cc:** megan.hillgartner@alaska.gov  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan-OHV use comments

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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Michele,  
Excellent presentation. Thanks for taking the time to research all of the info required for a project of this scope. I noticed that a map of spring/summer use was not shared, and was hoping there are some options for OHV (jeep, Atv, side by side) use.

On that note,  
Can we look into creating/allowing access to SOA land via CBJ parks lands for OHV use?

1. Can we look at using existing driveway access for Aant'iyek Park to create OHV access next-door to SOA-DNR lands?
2. Can we also look at allowing OHV access to Windfall lake road to access SOA-DNR lands?
3. And finally can we look into expanded use of 25-mile road OHV use? (I believe this is federal lands?) To include jeeps and side-by sides?

From my observations these areas are underused due to lack of access, and therefor lack issues from other user groups.

Plus continue to include me in the planing process. As I would like to continue to advocate for OHV use opportunities, that will allow for Juneau's Residents to further expand their outdoor entertainment options through out the borough. Along with providing responsible options for our youth to enjoy the outdoors.

Thank you,

Noah Lager  
907-209-0909

---

**From:** Paul Khera <alaskakhera@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 5, 2022 2:14 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Public Use Cabins

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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Trail Mix has taken the stand of "the more cabins the better." I am a member of Trail Mix and I disagree, we have enough cabins. More is not better, less is more and more is less. Cabins are popular right now due to COVID Cabin Fever. That fad will end about the time you build all those eye-sore cabins.

Existing cabins cost \$60 per night and the price is only going up. They are no longer a getaway for those on a budget.

Moreover, a cabin might be nice for the wealthy elite that use them, but they take away from the entire remote experience that is truly Alaska. We don't have to have a cabin everywhere we go. That is what Air BnB is for. We don't need an elevator going up to Mt. Denali or a cable car taking us down the Grand Canyon. Lets leave some wilderness please. Foggy Mountain, Nugget Outfitters, and Sportsman's Warehouse will all happily sell you quality tents and sleeping bags. Shopping at those stores will support the local economy better than government overspending. Enough with the cabin sprawl already.

Most sincerely,

Paul Khera

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**From:** Brenda Wright <bwrino19@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 8, 2022 12:56 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek watershed proposed motor vehicle use

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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Dear planning committee:

I would like to suggest that motorized vehicle use never occur on the same trail as generally used for hiking and cross country skiing.

I have lived here long enough to remember the motorized use of dredge lake trails. The narrow trails and motorized vehicles & cross country skiers was recognized as a very dangerous situation.

If more motorized trails are proposed, please make sure that there is no possibility of accidents between motor riders and walkers or skiers.

Also, the present trail along Montana Creek is a very important route for brown bears to reach good fishing areas from Peterson Creek to Montana Creek. Brown bears also need protection from motorized vehicles on narrow trails.

Thank you,  
Brenda Wright  
17430 Andreanoff Dr, Juneau, AK 99801

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**From:** Maureen Hall <maureenhall976@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 4, 2022 3:57 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec; Michele Elfers  
**Cc:** Roman Motyka  
**Subject:** Public Comment - Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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To whom it may concern:

I would like to add my comments as an almost 30 year resident of the West Glacier area and a several times a week user (walking, skiing, running, hiking) of the Montana Creek, Mendenhall Campground, West Glacier trail area year round. I'm a 60+ year old nurse, mother and grandmother who walks/skis these trails almost daily with family and friends as both a social outing and a way to exercise.

I highly value the ability to step out our door and exercise in nature, the benefits which are well documented. Prioritizing opportunities for our citizens to do just that are innumerable. Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide and is a major contributor to the overall burden of disease. Scientific studies have shown that "green exercise" can improve self-esteem and mood, as well as reducing anxiety disorders and depression. By comparing different exercise settings, studies showed that regular use of woods or parks for physical exercise reduced the risk of poor mental health, whereas no such pattern was found in non-natural settings like gyms.

My observations on motorized versus non-motorized users on both the Mendenhall Lake in the winter and Montana Creek trail is that one might encounter 1 - 2 motorized users a week compared to the constant flow of folks sharing the trails, out for a ski or walk/jog/hike. The occasional motorized user fills the air with exhaust, shatters the calm and causes one to fear for their safety on narrow trails. It is also very distressing to see them tear up a carefully groomed ski trail that hours of volunteer labor go into maintaining and are enjoyed by hundreds of our citizens. It is also distressing to see the destruction to the landscape. Just take a look at the area just beyond the Rifle Range before you drop down the hill to Montana Creek bridge. The beautiful muskeg has been rutted and turned into a muddy bog as a result of motorized users ripping around. That is what is visible from the road. I cringe to think of what would happen to the habitat if you expand access to motorized vehicles in the Spaulding Meadow area. Who will be up there to make sure they remain on the 25 mile road that is being proposed? I've seen 4-wheelers coming up the Montana Creek trail and then just shoot off the trail up the hillside tearing up everything in their path, making their own trail if you will. Do you seriously think they will remain sedately on the designated trail? They don't now, why would they if you open up more access for motorized use.

I agree with all the points brought forth by the Juneau Nordic Ski Club (JNSC) in their comments and would like to particularly comment on your proposed expansion of the parking for year round use at the bottom of the Montana Creek hill just before crossing the bridge to the trail. This parking is fine for the summer and doesn't particularly need expansion (maybe a little improvement). The parking that needs attention is right there at the Hank Harmon Rifle Range. Expanding this space to accommodate the heavy use by skiers in the winter is needed. It makes no sense to move it to the bottom of the icy hill thus removing 1/2 km of groomed trail which includes a nice hill workout. I am well aware of the complaints of the Rifle Range folks and their attempts to claim only Rifle Range users can park inside their gate. Hello, we are all residents of CBJ and in no other CBJ parking lot do we attempt to police who can park there (with the exception of the downtown library parking



garage). My observations during the many years of using this parking area during the winter is that there might be 2 or 3 vehicles at the rifle range parked right up close to where they are shooting. The skiers are parked on the road and just inside the gate. At no time have I witnessed rifle range users being squeezed out of a place to park. One simple solution would be to move their fence/gate closer to the range. This option would still give them plenty of space and allow better use of the remaining space. In the rare event that more parking is needed for rifle range users, they could park outside the fence in the general parking area.

I would also like to add my thumbs up to JNSC comment: "In summary we recommend the plan specifically ask for expansion of the non-motorized region in Spaulding Meadows and, wherever necessary, construct separate trails for motorized vs. non-motorized users."

Expanding the access for your citizens to get out and exercise in our beautiful land is an investment with incredible returns for the health and well-being of our people. As we have demonstrated with regular trail grooming for cross country skiing in the winter at Montana Creek, "you build it and they will come". This area is loved for the beautiful skiing along the creek in an area that holds its snow much longer, thus extending the season for such a beneficial sport that you can do on into old age as demonstrated by the many seniors out on the trails. Please continue to expand for non-motorized use and tap into the expertise by partnering with JNSC as you move forward.

Respectfully,

Maureen Hall  
[maureenhall976@gmail.com](mailto:maureenhall976@gmail.com)  
(907) 209-0799

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**From:** Debbie Hart <hartdebbi@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 11, 2022 8:27 AM  
**To:** Linda Shaw  
**Cc:** Gwen Baluss' via Juneau Audubon Society Board; Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Re: Montana Creek Master Planning Process

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Thanks Linda - appreciate you sharing. I am including the full Juneau Audubon Board on here.

Cheers,  
Debbie

On Wed, Aug 10, 2022 at 8:52 PM Linda Shaw <[linda.rose.shaw@gmail.com](mailto:linda.rose.shaw@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Hello again,

I was redirected to send the Audubon email to Debbie Hart, copied above.

Linda

On Wed, Aug 10, 2022 at 6:50 PM Linda Shaw <[linda.rose.shaw@gmail.com](mailto:linda.rose.shaw@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Montana Creek Master Planning process. This is the first I have heard of the process. My interests are non-consumptive appreciation of nature with the least impact, so hiking, photography, wildlife viewing and birding. I would like to see another planning meeting and I recommend reaching out to Juneau Audubon Society as a potential representative of these perspectives. I have copied them on this email. Another group you might consider reaching out to is the Community Garden, which is in the planning area. I would think you could find out how to contact them through CBJ.

I hope you will gather more input before finalizing any plans.

Best Regards,  
Linda Shaw  
[9684 Moraine Way, Juneau.AK](mailto:linda.rose.shaw@gmail.com)

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Debbie Hart  
[hartdebbi@gmail.com](mailto:hartdebbi@gmail.com)  
(907) 723-0258

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**From:** Tyler Wallace <viking\_sportsak@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 10, 2022 9:11 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Spaulding meadows devopment proposal

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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To whom it may concern. I would like to voice my support for the proposed improvements to the Spaulding meadows / Montana creek trail and cabin system. The more shared use trails and cabins the better. The power sports enthusiasts in Juneau have been sequestered and ignored for years. This would be a great step in reconciliation.

Sincerely, Tyler Wallace  
Juneau, AK

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**From:** Ray Imel <ray.imel3@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 4, 2022 12:06 PM  
**To:** Michele Elfers  
**Subject:** You don't even know you want it, yet. (Montana Creek Master Plan)

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Chargers for EVs at the trail heads and toes (Is there such a thing as a trail toe?) But not just cars and trucks but ev 4 wheelers and snow machines and electric bikes.

There will be grumblers, but it will be a win for all.

JNSC is signed up for a utility version of the Taiga, it is already been in service at ski areas around the west.

<https://snowgoer.com/latest-news/taiga-claims-big-orders-from-ski-hills/29831/>

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**From:** Chris Zimmer <zimmer@riverswithoutborders.org>  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 10, 2022 12:43 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Comment on MT Creek draft plan  
**Attachments:** MT draft plan comment.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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Comment on MT Creek draft plan attached

September 10, 2022

Michele Elfers  
Deputy Director  
CBJ Parks and Recreation Department  
155 S. Seward Street - City Hall Rm 218  
Juneau, AK 99801

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Montana Creek Master Plan.

My main comment is that the Draft Plan does not adequately recognize or describe the extensive habitat degradation and damage due to the use of ATV's in the watershed. Nor does the plan propose any significant measures to halt and restore the habitat damage. In fact, the draft plan appears to provide increased ATV use in the watershed, without any analysis of the damage from existing motorized use or an analysis of the impacts of the additional motorized use and access the draft plan would provide. This contradicts the fact that public comment to date has shown a preference for non-motorized access to motorized access by more than 2 to 1. It makes no sense to propose additional access without dealing with the problems created so far by AV access.

According to the CBJ Powerpoint:

Motorized Uses

Winter- Connects Lake Creek to 25 Mile Road with access to 3 cabins

Summer – Existing use under current regulations on Montana Creek Road, DNR land and 25 Mile Road

This appears to simply maintain the status quo of ATV use and access during summer months. As the Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition emphasized in its comments dated September 6, **“Existing roads, official trails, and unofficial trails have eliminated habitat and, in many cases, are causing erosion, sedimentation, and altered ground- and surface-water pathways.”** I fail to understand why the CBJ is not specifically addressing this issue.

20 years of habitat damage from ATV use in the watershed clearly shows that A) it is nearly impossible to prevent this illegal and damaging activity through enforcement and B) ATV riders simply cannot be trusted to avoid the habitat damage caused by illegal trail construction, off trail riding, riding in the creek, etc.

My recommendations are:

- Ban ATV use across the bridge across the creek that is currently in disrepair;
- Ban ATV use beyond this bridge;
- Block access to and restore native vegetation on unofficial motorized and non-motorized trails that clearly adversely impact soils, vegetation, or hydrology;
- If necessary work with DNR and USFS to accomplish the 3 measured listed above;
- Obtain a transfer of the DNR land across the bridge to CBJ;
- Replace the existing bridge with a bridge that would allow foot traffic, but not ATV's; and
- Ensure that the winter only trails are not used by ATV's during the summer.

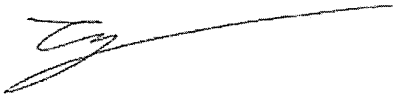
There is no need to provide ATV access to Montana Creek. The area to ride is very limited and does not provide a good riding experience. The development of the ATV park out the road near Cowee Creek will

provide a far better riding experience and reduce or eliminate user conflicts. The city is spending hundreds of hours of staff time and hundreds of thousands of dollars for the ATV park. There should be a formal or informal quid pro quo here. ATV riders get a new park, but they must give up the riding area in Montana Creek.

This is a real opportunity to solve some of the major ATV related habitat damage and user conflicts, but only if CBJ steps up and takes specific measures to stop the damage caused by ATV's in the Montana Creek watershed and specifically links the development of the ATV park out the road with a halt to ATV use in Montana Creek.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Zimmer', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Chris Zimmer  
Juneau

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**From:** lindablefgen@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 10, 2022 6:03 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Comment regarding Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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Agency Managers,

I grew up here and as a family we were always active, enjoying outdoor activities year around and I continue to do so.

I fully support the expansion of non motorized trails in the Montana Creek plan and area wide. A self powered sport activity versus a motorized activity are starkly different and they do not mix well.

Thank you.

Linda M Blefgen  
11435 Glacier Highway



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**From:** Gwen Baluss <gwenbaluss@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 10, 2022 9:32 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Comments, Montana Creek Master Plan  
**Attachments:** Baluss comments Montana Creek Plan.docx

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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Please see attached letter.

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"Stop acting so small. You are the universe in ecstatic motion."— **Rumi**

Gwen Baluss  
10236 Heron Way  
Juneau AK 99801

To Whom It May Concern,

Please consider my comments regarding the Montana Creek Master Plan and current management of the Montana Creek Natural Area.

- The comment period was short, especially at the end of summer, when residents tend to be busy. **I request the period be extended.**
- Moving forward, more stakeholder groups should be engaged. In addition to landholders such as Southeast Alaska Land Trust, it appears that more user groups could be queried. Its my impression that the planning is being driven mostly by only two organized and vocal interests, off-road vehicles and Nordic skiing. In particular, I suggest reaching out to birdwatchers via Juneau Audubon Society, night sky watchers via the Planetarium, and dog walkers via Grateful Dogs of Juneau.
- A winter use plan, primarily on US Forest Service land, does not address the current needs for the city land near the rifle range. The following issues still need to be addressed: accommodating multiple use in the winter on the existing roadbed; illegal trail building by off-roaders; restoration along Montana Creek; reparation of the bridge over Montana Creek.
- The project scope has grown well beyond the lands adjacent to Montana Creek; perhaps a more descriptive plan name is in order, or a scaling back of its zone of influence.
- Personally, I highly value the opportunity take a quiet walk and bird watch, take photographs, and view the night sky in winter, within a short commute of my home.
- Development of new trails should include routes that are close to residential areas. While long treks and connection cabins are great for some users, it is the close-in greenbelt type areas that get the most use. Juneau has an aging population, some people face mobility issues, and most residents live busy lives. The most community benefit is likely to come from trails that can be accessed after work, on a lunch hour, and where trekking gear or a snow mobile is not needed.
- New parking around the rifle range may be necessary to allow access. I hope that the streetlight there could be improved in the process. A lower level downward aiming light (perhaps also on a motion sensor) would reduce the light pollution of nearby areas for night sky watching. Any lighting should also be compliant with that latest guidelines for bird safety (for more information see [Bird-Friendly lighting flyer 2020.pdf \(audubonportland.org\)](#)).
- I would appreciate clarification and perhaps some limitation on rifle range hours. The sign mentions sunset, the streetlight coming on -- and 9 PM. Which is it actually? Personally, I would very much enjoy some evening times that the range would be closed a little before official sunset. The hill offers beautiful sunset views, but they are less enjoyable when there is loud shooting nearby. In the winter, shooting until 9 p.m., which may be long after sunset, is both annoying to aurora watchers, and unsafe to wildlife – deer and bears both occasionally wander down range.

- I would also appreciate clear signage and consistent ski grooming in the winter that makes a clear path for walkers and cyclists. Even while being careful not to interfere with the ski track, I have been told move off the trail.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gwen Baluss

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**From:** Shawn Eisele <shawneisele@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 10, 2022 3:53 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Comments on Draft Montana Creek Master Plan

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Dear Michelle and CBJ Staff,

Here are my comments on the Draft Montana Creek Master Plan. These are my personal comments, not on behalf of any organization. Thanks for your time addressing this issue.

**Any new parking must not shorten the nordic trails.** If parking is constructed for Montana Creek, it should be at the gun range or earlier. Montana Creek skiing is already a too-short out and back of only a couple kilometers. We should focus on extending, not shortening it. If this plan results in shortening it, by as much as 1/4, it would be an absolute shame and failure to achieve the goals of this plan. This plan is meant to enhance the use of the park and trail, yet reducing the trail length and the ability to ski one of its most diverse sections would be a stunning step in the wrong direction. I have been at several meetings regarding Montana Creek, and recall being told new parking would not shorten the trail, and I'm disappointed that it appears to do so in the draft.

It's hard to emphasize that point enough. If Parks and Rec is trying to benefit the skiing community by creating a parking lot, but the skiing community is opposed to the negative impact it would have permanently on the most used and loved ski trail, you need to take a time out and think it over better. CBJ's construction of a parking lot should have thousands of nordic skiers grateful, a step that instead undercuts their use should not be taken.

**I appreciate the interconnected trails proposed for Spaulding Meadows.** It's smart to connect trails creating loops and through hikes. Both will result in much higher trail use summer and winter, and offer a lot to Juneau residents and travelers.

**I would like to see the plan acknowledge and prioritize trail compaction for ski trails.** Groomability in marginal snow conditions relies on having a well-compacted surface underneath. I suggest acknowledging that in the master plan's discussion so it remains a commitment. Were this plan to result in trail alternatives to Montana Creek, but have them groomed for skiing a fraction of the time because they're not hardened, it would be a dramatic step backwards.

**I would like to see broad acknowledgement of the vast number of skier days.** CBJ has obviously made a commendable effort to balance multiple uses, but I think that has sometimes come at the cost of acknowledging the weight of the user numbers. Hundreds of skiers are on Montana Creek daily, and I'm consistently blown away that even in the dark of a cold night, I always encounter other skiers on the trail. That's a great thing that Parks and Rec can be proud of. The city's financial investment in development should mirror this community demand. As the department moves on the steps of this plan, they will no doubt consider competing uses, but I hope they prioritize projects based on best serving the number of users, not just the number of uses.

**Similarly, I would like to see Parks and Rec trumpeting the contributions and user numbers of the skiing community and organizations.** Last year I was surprised to see hand-ringing at over-used parking lots instead

of celebrations at the number of people using our parks and trails. That's a clear positive, and it's not just user numbers. The nordic skiing youth programs reach dozens of children daily, longitudinally across 10 years. They do so in ways that foster the participation of at-risk and underserved families, and provide a healthy outdoor recreation foundation that lasts life-long. Then, of course, the ski club leverages tens of thousands of dollars of contributions plus volunteer hours annually to contribute to maintenance, grooming, outreach, and programming. Many municipal governments could only dream of providing this--let alone from volunteers at no cost. I would like to see Parks and Rec invest in a culture that highlights and propels those users and contributions every day. It should do so at every level from staff meetings to social media to public newsletters, and from internal reporting to external funding requests.

**Economic equity and access should be considered when prioritizing trails.** Some uses can require expensive investments, such as a motorized vehicle, trailer, and tow vehicle, that are beyond many citizens. When the municipality invests in trail infrastructure, we should be careful not to over invest in trails in which only economically well-off individuals can participate.

**If a parallel trail is built along Montana Creek, I wonder if it could divert motorized traffic from the existing one.** It's notable that we're considering a parallel trail to the already-compacted one along Montana Creek. If a parallel trail is constructed, I wonder if it would make sense to have it be a less-built trail, and serve motorized uses? In other words, it might be expensive to build a new, compacted trail for skiing, and a better use of funds might be to build a less-developed second trail, and allow motorized winter use there instead of on the existing trail. To the extent motorized uses are on the current Montana Creek trail in the winter, it appears they're there as access not an end of itself. That is, motorized users generally do not want to be going slowly on a bland trail, rather they're getting to the area they want to ride. If that's the case, why not allow those uses on a parallel, less-built trail, that avoids the bland current hardened trail, and keep the current trail for skiing in the winter.

**I'd like to see CBJ acknowledge its right to manage the Montana Creek trail.** As a municipality we decide how our trails and roads are used. Some trails don't allow bikes or commercial use, some roads don't allow certain vehicles or modes of transportation, and are even closed seasonally. We trust our government to take such steps in order to improve safety and the experience of the users. Yet CBJ appears hesitant to temporarily or seasonally close Montana Creek to certain vehicles or uses. I do not believe the trail has ever been adjudicated under RS2477, and CBJ should not treat it as such. If temporal, seasonal closures serve the vast majority of users, they should be considered.

**I appreciate the acknowledgement of multi use when proposing motorized trails, and would appreciate it being explicitly discussed.** We make multiple user groups happy if trails are wide enough to allow ski grooming on one side and motorized travel on the other. I have heard that acknowledged and proposed by CBJ at meetings, and hope it is acknowledged in the plan. This plan was largely spurred due to the conflict of uses on the same part of the trail, so acknowledging that a multi-use trail can serve both if wide enough to segregate uses seems important to clarify, ensuring that the multi-use motorized trails are eventually built wide enough to make that accomodation.

**Extending the Lake Creek road to a higher parking lot should be evaluated for impact on the entire Spaulding Meadows.** Motorized use is limited to winter due to the impact it can have on the area when there's low or no snow. The current Lake Creek road protects for that by limiting motorized access when snow doesn't exist on the road. If a road extension allows access even with less snow, CBJ needs to consider the impacts of motorized use in those lower snow levels across the entire area accessed.

I know Parks and Rec has put extensive time and consideration into this plan. I appreciate the efforts, and I look forward to a Montana Creek/Spaulding Meadows plan that really expands enjoyment of that area. Thank

you for considering these comments.

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Shawn Eisele  
Juneau, Alaska

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**From:** Fred or Cinda <svsongline@me.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 10, 2022 12:40 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Comments On Montana Creek Master Plan

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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To Whom It May Con

To Whom It May Con  
To Whom It May Concern,

Having access to an extensive number of trails for skiing, hiking, and biking is one of the things I love most about living in Juneau. Our area trails provide extraordinary avenues to greater physical health, mental and emotional health, and general wellbeing.

CBJ's proposed plans for improving and developing more trails in the Montana Creek, McGinnis Valley, Spaulding Meadows, and Mendenhall Campground/West Glacier areas is a testament to Juneau's commitment to a world class trail system. Thank you.

My general comments concerning the current proposed plans are:

- Construct separate trails/areas for motorized and non-motorized use. This will make trails safer for both user groups, will help alleviate user conflicts, and will increase enjoyment for motorized and non-motorized users alike.
- Create non-motorized trails that link together, without the possibility of interference and/or damage from motorized users.
- Develop a strategic plan for protecting landscape adjacent to trails from being damaged by motorized users.
- Ensure non-motorized trails are built wide enough to accommodate ski grooming equipment.

My specific trail comments are:

- I support new skiing/hiking/biking trails in the Montana Creek area and in the McGinnis Valley.
- I support upgrading the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake trail to accommodate ski grooming in the winter.

- I support the expansion of a non-motorized region in Spaulding Meadows, including enhanced/new ski trails and well-marked routes.
- I support the development of interconnected trails that link the Mendenhall Campground, West Glacier area, Montana Creek valley, and Spaulding Meadows.

Thank you for providing safe and enjoyable trails for skiers, bikers, and hikers of all ability levels. Your hard work helps make Juneau an amazing place to live.

Sincerely,

Cinda Stanek  
[svsongline@me.com](mailto:svsongline@me.com)  
907-957-8502



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**From:** Fred or Cinda <svsongline@me.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 10, 2022 5:06 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Comments on Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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Regarding Montana Creek Master Plan  
Fred Hiltner  
9/8/22

Dear Montana Creek Master Plan Planners,

As a long-time Juneau outdoor enthusiast, I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Montana Creek Master Plan. As one of the most used valley trails in the Juneau area, optimal planning for the coming decades will continue to create safe, well designed, and enjoyable outdoor recreational activities for thousands of Juneau residents, as well as our many visitors.

Of course, safety needs to continue to be our top priorities. To promote that, my number one priority one would be designating designating non-motorized areas to minimize the danger to hikers, snowshoers, fishers, dog walkers, etc. who are out on trails.

One easy step towards safety (and reduced liability) would be to share use on the current Montana Creek trail between motorized and non-motorized by restricting motorized vehicles during the winter season from November 1 through April 15.

As we see every year, motorized vehicles have the potential for serious accidents, especially around the many sharp turns on the Montana Creek Trail. Skiers and snowshoers are quite at risk, as dodging snow machines is very difficult when surprised by one zooming around the corner towards you. Of course, a collision would be catastrophic for both the motorized vehicle as well as the walker, skier, snowshoer, etc. The rest of the year offers plenty of use for motorized vehicles using this trail.

I fully support:

- Expansion of the cross-country ski trails as proposed by the draft Montana Creek Master Plan.
- Trails wide enough to continue the established grooming of trails by the Juneau Nordic Ski Club.
- Non-motorized access trail up to Spaulding Meadows for snowshoers, hikers, skiers, etc. with well-marked routes and signage.

- Grooming-wide ski route to Windfall Lake Cabin.
- Cross country ski routes that connect with Mendenhall Lake and Dredge Lake areas.

Let's work together to expand the myriad of outdoor recreation opportunities. It is one of the greatest pleasures of living in Juneau, and careful planning is the key for long-lasting, safe, and accessible trails for such a wide variety of users.

Again, I appreciate and thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft plan. What a dream opportunity it is for launching into the rest of the twenty-first century!

With highest regards,

Fred Hiltner

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**From:** Jennifer Mondragon <jen\_mondragon@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 10, 2022 4:25 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Comments on Montana Creek Master Plan

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Montana Creek Master Plan. My family lives off Backloop and we use the Montana Creek project area regularly all year long. I really appreciate the development of a plan -- new and improved access will be wonderful!

Some specific comments:

- I am very supportive of the plan to develop a new ski trail along Montana creek. This trail gets so much use and is so narrow that we have stopped using it for skate skiing-- it is just too crowded to try and skate ski and deal with oncoming ski traffic, and walkers, and dogs. I would love to be able to use the area again -- please make this a broad trail that could accommodate all the people! Ideally, there would be a separate trail for people who are walking, since the snow is often soft and walkers tear up the skate skiing track.
- YES on more parking for the Montana Creek trail!
- It is hard to tell on the map, but I am assuming the new parking area for Montana Creek would be in the muskeg meadow just past the rifle range. This is a really nice spot with a beautiful view -- it would be great to have a picnic area to enjoy it. But I'm not sure if the loud noise from the rifle range can be avoided or mitigated somehow? At a minimum, it would be fantastic not to try plug my ears to avoid gun shots when trying to put on skis. (note, we use the rifle range a lot, so I'm not opposed to this facility. It is just unfortunate that it sits right in the access to Montana Creek).
- I like the idea of new parking area for Lake Creek trail. Our family uses this trail year-round for hiking and snow shoeing and is our preferred access to Spaulding Meadows. I'd prefer that this entire trail was non-motorized, but I acknowledge that this plan is also attempting to provide access to snow machines. However, I think Lake Creek Trail could be improved and better designed to accommodate BOTH motorized and non-motorized access to avoid conflict and potential injuries to skiers and hikers.
- The USFS area that is open to vehicles 50" or less Spaulding Meadows is a very special place for snow shoeing in the winter -- and it is higher elevation and therefore better snow than the non-motorized use area around John Muir Cabin. I recommend that that area be split into a non-motorized and a motorized section to accommodate both.
- I am very supportive of the proposed new cabins, but again, emphasize that we need well designed access to accommodate both motorized and non-motorized use.

Thank you, again, for the work on this project and the opportunity to provide input.

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**From:** jonheifetz <jonheifetz@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 10, 2022 1:49 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Cc:** Michele Elfers  
**Subject:** Comments on Montana Creek Master Plan  
**Attachments:** Tongass Trout Unlimited Comments Montana Creek Master Plan Sept 22.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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Attached are comments from the Tongass Chapter of Trout Unlimited on the Draft Montana Creek Master Plan,



Tongass Chapter of Trout Unlimited #581  
Juneau, AK 99801

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September 10, 2022

**Subject: Comments on the Draft Montana Creek Master Plan**

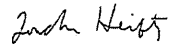
These comments are on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Tongass Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU). TU is a national non-profit organization with 300,000 members in 400 chapters. TU's mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. The Tongass Chapter of TU has about 160 members including several businesses. Most of these members live in Juneau. For over 25 years, we have worked to protect, enhance, and restore trout, char, and salmon habitat in the City and Borough of Juneau, and adjacent rivers and streams. We have partnered with government agencies and others in the past to get 500 ft buffers to development around parts of Montana Creek as part of the CBJ's Comprehensive Plan. We also partnered with the USFWS to provide funding for habitat restoration - the removal of junk cars and a decrepit house in the watershed. This past summer we partnered with Trail Mix to improve and reroute an existing trail that makes access to Montana Creek safer and minimizes impacts to salmon and trout habitat. Residents of Juneau are very lucky to have Montana Creek in our backyard. The watershed is easily accessible and is the best urban wild trout and salmon fishery in our town. The watershed is home to wild Coho Salmon, Dolly Varden, Cutthroat and Steelhead trout.

As one of the stewards of Montana Creek, in the past we have consistently expressed our concern about the impacts of off-road ATV use in the watershed upstream of the Montana Creek Bridge. A survey of the area conducted by ADFG has documented illegal anadromous stream crossing by ATVs, many of which are in the vicinity of the proposed project (Lindgren, J. 2021. Montana Creek ATV Stream Crossings. Alaska Department of Fish and Game Memorandum Jan 22, 2021). The ADFG survey noted that unpermitted ATV stream crossings have caused streambank instability, channel widening, and altered stream courses that have impacted fish habitat. These illegal stream crossings have taken place despite signage explaining the regulations. For example, there are signs that say "Do not drive motor vehicles and ATVs into the creek and adjacent side streams (AS 16.05.871, AS 16.10.010)" and another sign that says "No motorized vehicles off road (CBJ 67.01)", and "no trail building without a permit." We recognize that enforcement of this illegal activity is problematic.

The Draft Master Plan does not alleviate our concerns because under the Plan the existing trail above the bridge will remain open to ATV use. **For this reason the Tongass Chapter of Trout Unlimited recommends that the Plan be modified to close the trail above the bridge permanently to ATV use and consider making the bridge passible to only foot traffic and bicycles.** We recognize that this section of the watershed is primarily land managed by DNR. Thus our recommendation may require a special regulation by DNR. **We also recommend that the DNR consider transferring the parcel above the bridge to CBJ.** We believe this transfer is consistent with the 1993 Juneau State Land Plan as presented in the slide show. This will enable more consistent management of the area and enable the area to be more aligned with 2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the watershed "to protect and manage the natural environment with recreation as a secondary objective".

We are sympathetic with the desire for ATV users to have a place to ride and the Draft Plan provides more opportunities for this group. TU can potentially provide funding and volunteer labor for restoration of impacted fish habitat caused by ATVs and for any road/trail structures and improvements needed to curtail ATV access to this section of the watershed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jon Heifetz".

Jon Heifetz

President of the Tongass Chapter of TU

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**From:** Stephanie Warpinski <stephanie.warpinski@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 9, 2022 3:16 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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CBJ:

I am excited for the mixed used updates to the Montana Creek recreation area. Juneau is a small town that is densely populated on the road system and I believe that mixed user groups need to coexist. Building more cabins in strategic areas looked like great additions for CBJ revenue streams and anyone can attempt to reserve cabins on the road system to understand their popularity. I have concerns about maintenance costs (facilities, trail upgrades, plowing) and hope that is included in planning discussions (for example, can Juneau hire enough folks to accomplish maintenance?). Juneauites are on trails year-round and I hope energy goes into building quality trails that can be used year-round. I support additional loop trails because driving to do through hikes is challenging logistically (for example Windfall Lake to Montana Creek).

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**From:** Denice McPherson <dsmac@ak.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 10, 2022 2:00 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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#### Agency Managers

I have been a part of the Juneau outdoor recreational community since 1961 and have many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors via hiking, cross-country skiing, running and biking. I hope to have many more opportunities to have the quiet enjoyment of non-motorized recreational sports. It is critical for me and many of my family members and friends to continue to have places of quiet retreat particularly with the growing cacophony associated with the out of control cruise/industrial tourism loads that seem to have no bounds.

It is extremely important to follow the guidance given via CBJ Parks and Rec survey showing more than a 2:1 preference for non-motorized use of our recreational areas.

In addition, since the onset of COVID it has become more apparent that we have increasing incidence of anxiety and depression which can be in part mitigated by outdoor activities such as walking, hiking, biking, etc.

Given that a majority of us desire/need quiet enjoyment of the outdoors for our physical, mental and emotional health I strongly support:

- Construction of non-motorized cross-country skiing/hiking/biking trails on the east side of Montana Creek with a bridge connecting to the end of the present Montana Creek ski trail
- Construction of McGuinness Valley cross country ski loop connecting to the Montana Creek system
- Upgrade the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake for cross country skiing (and less treacherous hiking)
- Construction of Spaulding Meadows cross country ski loop system
- Construction of additional cabin/warming shelters.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. As a retired healthcare provider, I hope this will be the beginning of ongoing development of healthy non-motorized activities in our community.

Denice McPherson  
11435 Glacier Hwy

Sent from my iPad



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**From:** Elizabeth Flory <lizflory@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 9, 2022 9:16 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan  
**Attachments:** Montana Creek Comments Sep2022.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
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Please reduce the number of ATV access opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan.  
ATVs have no place in sensitive wetland muskeg habitat.  
Please read my comments attached.

Liz Flory

# Comments on draft master plan for the Montana Creek valley and watershed area

September 9, 2021

By Elizabeth Flory  
4546 River Road  
Juneau AK 99801

I am writing to comment on the Montana Creek Master Plan. I am opposed to allowing motorized vehicles to access muskeg habitat owing to the tendency to turn sensitive wetland vegetated areas into churned mud and to introduce loud engine noise into otherwise quiet areas. An exception would be the use of snow grooming equipment used in winter only to make ski trails for the many ski trail users.

I have been a Juneau resident for nearly 25 years and a keen hiker and skier who frequently makes use of Montana Creek valley in spring, summer, fall and winter. I feel that providing easier access to the open muskeg areas of Montana Creek watershed will destroy the scenic beauty and natural habitat of the area. There are already frequent mudslides on the banks of Montana Creek as gravel slopes appear to slide easily over lenses of clay in the area (see pics from 2021).

An enormous amount of rock fill would be required to build a road through the area as might have been learned from the amount of fill required for recent housing development projects on wetland areas near Glacier Highway, just north of the Brotherhood Bridge in Juneau. Once a road across the muskeg is built there is nothing to stop ATVs from running all over the sensitive muskeg bogs rendering them devoid of any vegetation for years to come.

The Juneau Off-Road Association proposed constructing a 25ft wide road accessed from the much narrower Montana Creek Trail and via "existing ATV trails", which appear to consist of deep muddy tracks that were made in summer 2020 by ATVs attempting to force a trail through the forest and up the steep hill immediately adjacent to Montana Creek. Montana Creek has a hardened surface, but it is not paved and would likely turn to mud with use of motorized vehicles in summer. In our rainy climate, the mud from Montana Creek and from the ATV trails going up hill would wash straight into Montana Creek and negatively impact fish habitat.

According to the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game Anadromous Waters Catalog Montana Creek supports Chinook, coho, chum and pink salmon, steelhead and cutthroat trout and Dolly Varden. Buffer strips of undisturbed vegetation along the sides of streams are important to help protect these fishery resources. Keeping vegetation intact along river banks is important in preventing exposed soil entering the river and affecting water quality and destroying sensitive salmon spawning habitat. Salmon require large (3-4 inch rocks) for laying their eggs in, but soil washed into a stream ends up deposited amongst these rocks and smothers salmon eggs. The US Forest Service guideline is to maintain a 100m (330ft) wide buffer strip next to the stream within which, natural vegetation including trees, shrubs and

ground cover is left intact. The existing hard surface of Montana Creek trail was constructed before this understanding of salmon habitat was gained. Using it now for motorized traffic when no buffer strip of vegetation can exist between the trail and the stream would undoubtedly affect fish habitat.

I am opposed to extending the road at the Lake Creek trail and opposed to construction of a parking lot on the upper wetland area. Easy access to the sensitive wetlands in the area by all-terrain vehicles in summer will destroy the sensitive plant communities there and greatly impact the unique beauty of the area. I am also opposed to providing motorized access to sensitive wetlands via a road at 25 mile on Glacier Highway.

The proposal states that the newly constructed road would be useable by skiers and other foot traffic, but the trailhead of Lake Creek Trail, currently used by snow mobiles in winter has signage warning people that hiking and skiing is not recommended due to motorized traffic. Montana Creek is too narrow to allow fast-moving machines and slow-moving foot traffic to pass each other safely. At least one skier reported "reckless endangerment" by snow machines on the trail this past winter, which increased their speed on approaching the skier instead of slowing down when requested to do so. A similar incident was reported by walkers endangered by an ATV in the summer of 2019.

Winter use of "all-terrain" motorized vehicles (other than grooming equipment) destroys carefully set groomed ski tracks and would prevent skiers from using the currently popular Montana Creek trail in winter months. As an active member of the Juneau Nordic Ski Club I do not support the use of motorized vehicles other than grooming equipment on Montana Creek Trail in winter.

Montana Creek trail is unique in offering a relatively flat area for cross-country skiing suitable for all age groups and skill levels. Mendenhall Lake can sometimes be used for cross-country skiing, but the past two winters the ice has only been thick enough for skiing for a few days each season. The proposal mentions use of ATVs for people as they age, but many other people in their 60s and 70s like to ski on Montana Creek groomed trails and will lose this important winter recreation and physical exercise if motorized vehicles are permitted on the trail. There is no shared space with off-road vehicles due to their size and speed on the narrow road there and it is difficult for other users on foot or skis to hasten out of the way quick enough to avoid them. Montana Creek trail is used by skiers of all ages and volunteers dedicate many hours each winter to setting a groomed ski track to make it skiable. Motorized vehicles traffic immediately destroys the groomed tracks and can leave deep frozen ruts that can be dangerous to try and ski on.

I do support the development and maintenance of non-motorized ski trails particularly the proposal linking the Mendenhall Campground and West Glacier area to the Montana Creek valley on up to Spaulding Meadow, but there is simply no place for the summer use of all-terrain vehicles on soft, wetland muskeg habitat common around Juneau.

Following page shows one of the many mudslides that already occur alongside Montana Creek. Not an environment for ATVs.



Sincerely  
Elizabeth Flory  
4546 River Road  
Juneau

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**From:** Gretchen Roffler <gretchen.roffler@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 9, 2022 4:35 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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Greetings,

I am writing to support the development of new non-motorized but multi-use trails (hike/bike/ski) in the Montana Creek watershed. In particular I support upgrading the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake trail so we can have a point to point trail in Juneau. I also support developing ski trails in the Spaulding Meadows area and connecting trails to the West Glacier area. I especially think it is important to ensure the trails are wide enough to accommodate ski grooming equipment. It will be important to have motorized and nonmotorized areas in Spaulding meadows to avoid user conflicts. Considering the current problems with parking and congestion, ensuring that there is adequate space at trail head parking lots is also important.

Thanks for the opportunity to weigh in, and for working on a Master Plan for this important area!

Gretchen Roffler

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**From:** Scott Spickler <sspickler@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 9, 2022 3:00 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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I would like to see expanded access, parking, and territory for ATV users in this area. ATV users seem to have zero opportunities to legally ride in Juneau. Most every other community in Alaska embraces ATV use. ATV owners deserve the opportunity to recreate in a responsible fashion. As a hiker, skier, ATV owner, former snow machine owner, and 63 year resident of Juneau, I think it can be done with minimal impacts to other users ... there is more than enough room in this area for everyone to enjoy their activity of choice.

There are well over 100 non-motorized trails in Juneau; the time is right to have the Montana creek area become available for ALL of Juneau's residents, especially the motorized sports community.

I appreciate all of the organizations working towards this goal.

Thank you,  
Scott Spickler  
10754 Horizon Dr.  
Juneau, AK. 99801

Sent from my iPad

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**From:** farrington-porter@gci.net  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 10, 2022 12:37 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Public Comment on Montana Creek Road Winter Closure

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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Comments on the Draft Montana Creek (Winter) Master Plan:

I want to comment first on negative aspects of the Plan, then comment on the positives.

Why have a second trail for USFS vehicles from the 'new' parking lot at the Lake Creek trailhead? It does nothing to gain anything beyond the existing snowmachine trail. Why does it cross both the Lake Creek Trail and the Auke Nu Trail? In summer, this will be yet another trail (third trail in the spread of a mile at their endpoints) that accesses Spaulding Meadows.

The proposed Lake Creek Cabin is just not necessary. It is not far enough away from either the John Muir Cabin or the trailhead for snowmachiners at Lake Creek. It will be an attractive draw in both winter and summer adding a significant load of more people. It will cause high impact at the cabin site to the fragile ecosystem. It is not necessary for either the public or USFS personnel.

Why extend the road to the parking lot for Lake Creek trailhead? With no Lake Creek Cabin, the use at the existing parking lot will remain as – is; currently the parking lot does not fill up, even on long weekends which have days with high levels of snow.

The reroute of the hike/bike/ski trail at Montana Creek is unjustified. Most hikers and bikers will continue to use the existing Montana Creek roadbed and trail. Will skiers be able to depend on grooming of the reroute? The reroute is not adequately represented by the map. It appears to enter broad areas of McGuinness Creek. In summer, this will serve to add a significant load of more people to that area with impacts to fish (coho salmon) and wildlife. Further, the reroute is located in an area that is designated 'DNR motorized use generally allowable'. Does this mean that skiers will again have to compete for space?

Now I will comment on the positive aspects.

I whole-heartedly support the proposed improvement of the route going from the John Muir Cabin to Peterson Lake Cabin. It will improve and turn skiing the John Muir Cabin/ Peterson Lake Cabin trails into taking a total of three days, something that is unusual in the Juneau area.

The proposed 'Spaulding Meadows Cabin' in the area designated 'USFS Vehicles 50" or less allowed' seems like a good thing.



Craig Farrington  
9471 Norris Place  
Juneau AK 99801

**From:** [greg\\_capito](#)  
**To:** [Michele Elfers](#)  
**Subject:** Montana Creek  
**Date:** Monday, September 19, 2022 11:09:07 AM

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Your proposed draft plan is troublesome, especially the provisions dealing with all terrain vehicles. For years, neither the CBJ, DNR or USFS have been able to monitor, control or enforce ATV off road travel along Montana Creek. And neither have the organizations that support off road motorized activity. Consequently, this extraordinarily valuable fish habitat was assaulted by illegal stream crossings with destruction of associated riparian habitat.

So this history strongly suggests that banning ATVs is the only effective method of protecting vital fish habitat in and around Montana Creek. And this option should be the cornerstone feature of the draft CBJ plan.

In addition, once the bridge is repaired/replaced, capital improvements should be kept to an absolute minimum. This wild, scenic and productive area is a precious gem. You cannot improve upon it. So help to maintain the integrity of our magnificent backyard playground by respecting it and planning to let nature have its way along Montana Creek. Keep in mind there is a strong economic incentive in effectively managing this wild land because the visitors that come to Juneau looking for the "real Alaska" will find it at Montana Creek only--- if you plan more carefully to protect it---as is.

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**From:** Karen Wilson <kwilson@wileng.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 13, 2022 10:08 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

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I apologize for the lateness of my response. I hope my thoughts will still be considered for this level of the planning process. I appreciate the effort that has already gone into this process, and appreciate the opportunity for community involvement.

The entire Montana Creek area has so much potential for outdoor recreation. As avid skiers and hikers, it is an absolute favorite for our family and friends. I have watched with amazement as the number of people cross country skiing has grown in recent years. And I give tremendous credit for that to the efforts of the Juneau Nordic Ski Club. I hope as this process evolves, there will be greatly increased skiing potential as part of the Montana Creek master plan.

I strongly support the plan recommendations made by the JNSC, with the important inclusion of new trail construction with the width necessary to use grooming equipment. As a family, we ski the existing Montana Creek trail more than any other trail in Juneau. And that trail magically holds its snow when it is long gone elsewhere. That whole valley has so much potential for increased trails that can be used year round for hiking and biking as well as skiing.

We could have a truly world class system of connected trails and future cabins, with access to the whole Mendenhall Lake and Spaulding Meadows areas. Please go big with planning for healthy outdoor recreation for our community: skiing, hiking and mountain biking.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to be involved.

Sincerely,  
Karen Wilson

- Trails built wide enough to accommodate ski grooming equipment;
- New Nordic skiing/hiking/biking trails developed in the Montana Creek and McGuiness Valley;
- Upgrading the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake trail to accommodate ski grooming in the winter;
- Enhanced/new ski trails and routes in Spaulding Meadow;
- Interconnected trails linking the Mendenhall Campground and West Glacier area to the Montana Creek valley on up to Spaulding Meadow. *Wouldn't it be amazing to ski from the Campground to Auk Mountain without ever having to kick your skis off!?*

Sent from my iPad

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**From:** Katy Prussing <katyprussing907@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 16, 2022 8:50 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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I am writing this message in support of the increased number of ski and bike opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan.

Thank you!  
Katy Prussing  
Douglas, AK

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Jeff Wilson <jwilson@wileng.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 13, 2022 10:08 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Re: Montana Creek Master Plan

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

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Good morning Juneau parks and rec! I'm sorry to say I missed the draft comment period for the Montana Creek Master Plan. That said, I'm sending my comments in hopes that they can be used.

I have personally used the entire area in the proposed master plan in the last 40 years. It is a beautiful and yet fragile ecosystem. Wetlands, muskeg, stream corridors, lakes and ponds, tall timber, and access to many trail systems are all included. The thought of motorized traffic competing with hikers, runners, bikers, and hunters is a terrible mix. I support expanded use of the area, but with very limited motorized access. Even winter time use of Spaulding Meadows needs to be carefully calculated. I've been up there too many times in the winter xc-skiing, only to be chased around by snow machines when they cross over their designated use area. The thought of summer access of ATV'S up in Spaulding Meadows makes me really concerned about the future of recreation in Juneau. It feels like P&R is trying to do it all, but is really sacrificing one sport for another (non) sport; motorized.

Let's not motorize MONTANA CREEK area!

Thanks - Jeff

Jeffrey W Wilson  
175 S Franklin St, #300  
Juneau, AK 99801  
Cell: 907-321-3210  
jwilson@wileng.net