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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](http://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.

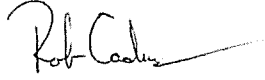
#### *Recommendations:*

- 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, sweeping horizontal line 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

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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.

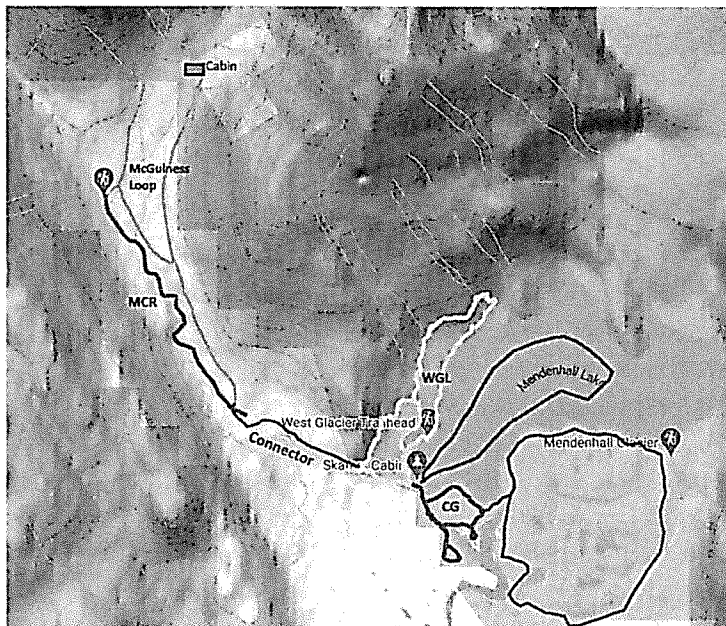
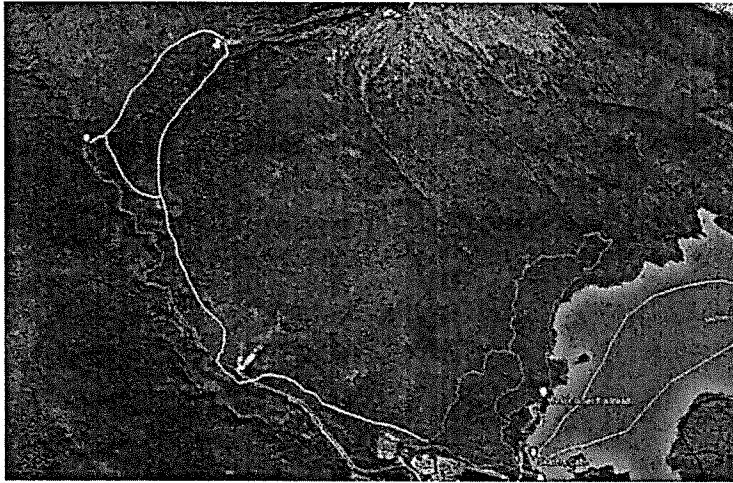


Figure 1. Current Montana Creek groomed trail (MCR, red). Also shown are several proposed additions and connector trails (yellow). WGL = West Glacier Loop (yellow); MMSC = MMS connector trail (black); and MV = McGuinness Valley loop trail (orange) (adopted from the JNSC Trails Development Plan).



*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.

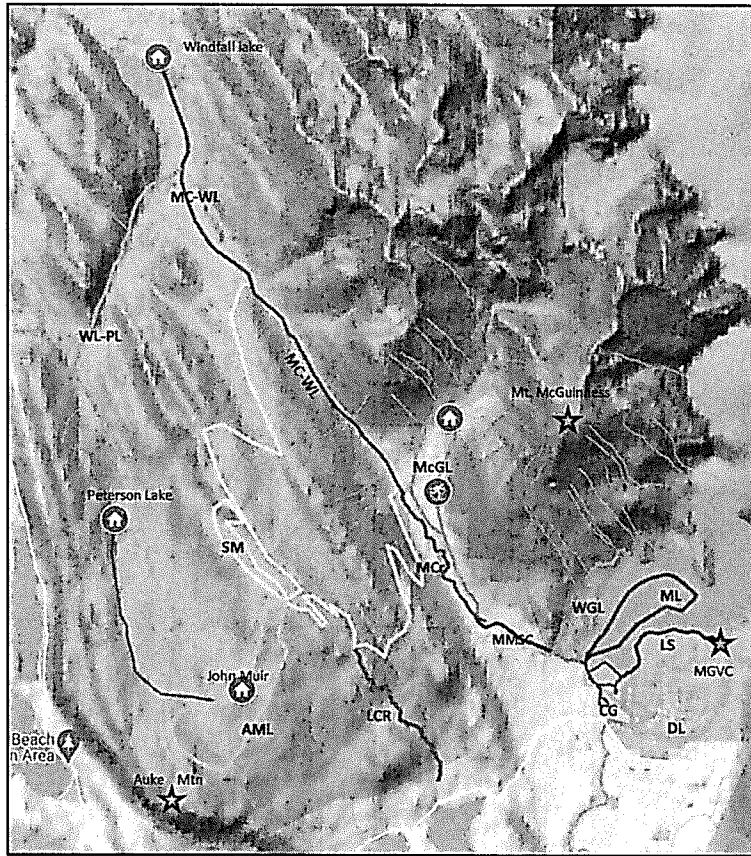


Figure 3. Mendenhall – Montana Creek – Spaulding Meadows Intertie (MMS) proposed Nordic trails: Spaulding Meadows (SM, yellow) and interconnects to Montana Creek; Auke Mountain loop (AML; cyan); connector to Windfall Lake (MC-WL, purple); Lake Creek Road access (LCR, magenta); Windfall Lake to Peterson 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.)

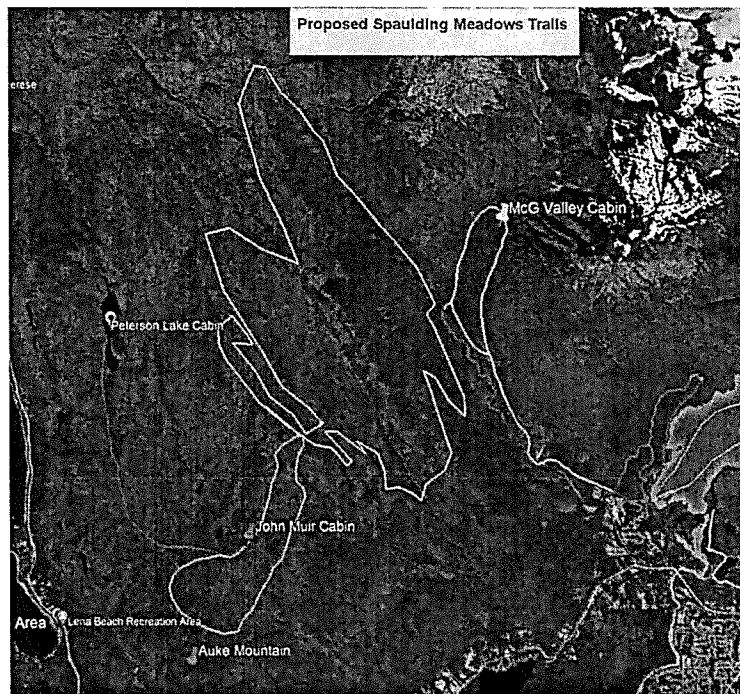


Figure 4. Spaulding Meadows Nordic ski trail system on Google Earth satellite image.

#### 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 McGuiness 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 McGuiness 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-weighed 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

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**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.

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**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

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**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 McGiniss 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.

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

**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 McGuiness 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

---

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

---

**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

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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

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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

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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 Spaulding 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

---

**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

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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.

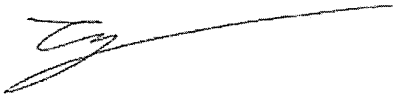
There is no need to provide ATV access to Montana Creek. The area to ride is very limited and does not provide a good riding experience. The development of the ATV park out the road near Cowee Creek will

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 be '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

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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. It's 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 to 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](http://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

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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 would be 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**

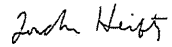
These comments are on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Tongass Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU). TU is a national non-profit organization with 300,000 members in 400 chapters. TU's mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. The Tongass 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, appearing to read "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 McGuiness 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  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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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 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 <katypussing907@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

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Rob Cadmus <rob@sawcak.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 22, 2022 9:28 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Comments on Montana Creek Master Plan  
**Attachments:** 2022 Dec Mt Creek Mast Plan SAWC Comments12.22.22.pdf

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

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Dear Parks and Rec,

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the Montana Creek Master Plan.

Please see attached.

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

December 21, 2022

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

Subject: Montana Creek Trail, Cabin, and Access Plan

Dear Michele,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the most recent version of the Montana Creek Plan as presented in a public meeting on December 7, 2022.

SAWC is actively participating in the Montana Creek planning process by providing geospatial mapping services, providing watershed reports to CBJ and other land managers, and attending stakeholder meetings. We provided comments (dated 9/6/2022) on an earlier version of the plan and thank you for considering those comments in developing the most recent plan. Below we provide additional recommendations that will minimize the impacts of future recreation infrastructure projects on watershed health. Please consider these and our earlier recommendations as the planning process goes forward.

#### *Montana Creek Trail/Road*

Between the bridge at the end of Montana Creek Road and the confluence of Montana and McGinnis Creeks, Montana Creek Trail is essentially a road. As expressed in our previous comments, a road immediately adjacent to a stream is bad for the stream. **To improve the health of Montana Creek, we recommend a long-term plan to remove and rehabilitate Montana Creek Road upstream of the multi-use bridge crossing.** This road provides wheeled motorized vehicles access to wetlands, streams, and forest areas that have been severely damaged by those vehicles, historically and in recent years. While it is likely that a small percentage of users have engaged in these activities, these areas are too fragile and ecologically important to risk future damage from irresponsible users. After the new 35-mile off-road vehicle park is completed and improved snow machine access to Spaulding Meadows is completed (as proposed in this plan), we believe that non-motorized and motorized users of this section of road will be more open to consider options for road closure and habitat restoration. If necessary, this section of road could be replaced with a new trail built on a bench above the existing road.

### *Habitat Damage*

As stated in our previous comments and above, illegally construction of motorized trails has severely damaged habitat accessible from the road portion of Montana Creek Trail.

**We recommend that restoration and rehabilitation of these areas should be the highest priority during plan implementation.**

### *Proposed New Trails*

The proposed trail labeled project 4 in the plan extends along the east side of Montana Creek from the end of Montana Creek Road to McGinnis Creek. To protect sensitive and hydrologically dynamic stream corridors in this area, we recommend ending the trail at a bridge constructed over Montana Creek near the downstream edge of the McGinnis

Creek fan. **We recommend that no trails should be constructed on the fan to protect the high-quality fish and wildlife habitat in that area.**

At this point in the planning process, the nature of proposed non-motorized trails is not clear. If these trails are intended for use by skate skiers in winter, trail construction will include removal of trees, removal of soil, altered hydrology, placement of rock fill, and additional tree and branch removal to eliminate snow interception by the adjacent forest canopy. Such trails can be considered to functionally mimic roads and the cumulative loss of habitat to construct them over several miles is substantial. To minimize environmental impacts, **we recommend that trails be designed with the minimal footprint needed to accommodate hiking and skiing.**

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



## Eric Moots

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**From:** Peter Nave <peter nave@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 9:54 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana creek master plan

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

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Hello,  
I'd like to voice my support for the latest draft of the Montana creek master plan.

The few tweaks I would like to see made include:

- Higher elevation road access to extend the snow season for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Enshrining the lake creek and 25 mile rd motorized access both.
- Putting in a strong vote of support that all trail design supports downhill backcountry ski touring access of Grandchild's Peak, Mt. McGinnis, and the terrain above Windfall lake.

Increased access to Spaulding meadows will no doubt make Nordic skiers and snowmobilers happier, but backcountry skiing is exploding in Juneau (and is already a user group at least as large as either sledgers and XC), and access to mainland areas is very limited.

Thanks for all your hard work! What a great town we live in.

-Peter Nave

Sent from my iPhone

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Julius Adolfsson <julius.adolfsson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 9:08 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Supporting JNSCs comments regarding the Montana Creek Masterplan

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

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Dear P&R,

I am writing to voice my support of the Juneau Nordic Ski Club's comments to the Montana Creek Master Plan, which includes developing a connector trail from Montana Creek to the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area, replacing the broken bridge across Montana Creek, increased access to Spaulding Meadows from the Montana Creek valley, and a new non-motorized trail on the northeast side of the Montana Creek valley.

I strongly support developing new, non-motorized trails that can be groomed for nordic skiing in the winter, and, hopefully, could be tied in to the development of a biathlon range in the area. Parking for the Hank Harmon rifle range should also be available to skiers.

Thank you and Happy Holidays.

Best,  
Julius

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Aldyn Brudie <aldynbrudie@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 8:45 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan Comments

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

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Hi there,

I am just writing to voice my support of the Juneau Nordic Ski Club's comments to the Montana Creek Master Plan, which includes developing a connector trail from Montana Creek to the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area, replacing the broken bridge across Montana Creek, increased access to Spaulding Meadows from the Montana Creek valley, and a new non-motorized trail on the northeast side of the Montana Creek valley.

I strongly support developing new, non-motorized trails that can be groomed for nordic skiing in the winter, and, hopefully, could be tied in to the development of a biathlon range in the area. Parking for the Hank Harmon rifle range should also be available to skiers.

Thanks and have a pleasant holiday,  
-Aldyn

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Frank Rue <frankrue44@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 5:51 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek plan

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

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Please keep Montana creek trail non- motorized for skiers, bikers and hikers. New cabins and new and improved motorized access at Lake Creek and 25 mile are great. Thanks. Frank Rue

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Christina Mounce <clmounce@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 4:52 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan Comments

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

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Hello,

I really like all of the connector trails. I think the connector trails are a great way to expand the already existing trail system. However, repairs to the existing Montana Creek trail should be conducted before investing in additional trails.

I would like to see the UAS - Auke Bay Elementary - Auke Nu connector trail (#10) prioritized over the other connector trails. I think this trail would probably get the most use and be the most accessible for people of various abilities. This connector would also help alleviate the parking issue at the Auke Nu trailhead. People could park at the other trailheads (i.e. Auke Bay Elementary, UAS). The lower parking lot of the UAS Rec Center is usually empty so it would make great overflow parking. Connector #10 appears to be the most "bang for your buck" option.

I also like connector #3 for improving ski access. I like the proposed new cabin and associated connector #8. Developing these would provide valuable additional recreation opportunities for residents and add a three-cabin backpack loop option.

I have concerns about developing additional motorized trails within the Montana Creek watershed. The Montana Creek watershed contains amazing salmon habitat and is arguably the most productive watershed on the road system. I have spent some time walking areas of habitat damage within the watershed. The damage caused by ATVs is extensive and is not limited to a few bad apples. There appears to be organized development of illegal, off-road trails within the watershed. I have walked user-made ATV trails where people have cut down trees, and where people appeared to have spent considerable time developing access. I sympathize with the local ATV users and groups that promote responsible trail use, but the damage shouldn't be understated or overlooked.

I was at the most recent public meeting and members of the Juneau Off-Road Association commented that there were lots of salmon streams in Juneau in response to concerns expressed by Trout Unlimited. Not all salmon streams are created equal, and the Montana Creek watershed contains some of Juneau's best salmon streams. I realize that the proposed motorized trail is in the upper watershed, largely away from anadromous streams, but I worry about illegal development off of the proposed trail. I also realize the proposed trail is for winter motorized use, but I am concerned that people will illegally use ATVs to access the area during non-winter months. Law enforcement hasn't been able to curtail illegal ATV use at the existing Montana Creek trail, so I imagine they would be even less successful enforcing the rules at 25-mile.

Thank you for considering my comments,  
Christina Mounce

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Kate Slotnick <kateslotnick@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 4:45 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** 2nd Draft Montana Creek Plan

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

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This second draft seems to have paid little heed to the many Juneau residents who commented on the first draft, and who expressed the need for increased cross-country ski opportunities and protection of fragile habitat from the damage from motorized vehicles. Let me state these concerns again.

Non-motorized users including cross-country skiers, need a much larger portion of Spaulding Meadows for their use. Non-motorized users are by far the larger group of current users in Spaulding Meadows and need their space. The current non-motorized boundaries are frequently violated by snow machines. I've had close encounters while skiing, and often see their tracks in ski-only areas. Space is needed to increase safety for non-motorized users.

The current proposal for improved access for winter motorized use through the hardened trail at 25 mile will lead to the destruction of the areas surrounding this trail with off-trail 4-wheeler use. (Montana Creek trail has extensive signage about no off-trail riding, and also has extensive damage from off-trail riding). Habitat destruction is a real concern and remediation is very expensive.

There is no provision in this 2nd draft for improved access for the non-motorized users. Of particular concern, there is no means for ski trail grooming equipment to access Spaulding Meadows to create the additional ski trails desired by so many Juneau residents.

The current draft of the Montana Creek Plan threatens the physical integrity of the area and does not meet the needs of Juneau residents.

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Shawn Lovell <shawnlovell@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 4:34 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Master Plan Montana Creek

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

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Hi, Regarding the Montana Creek Master plan and some concerns I may have as part of the motorized user group.

My name is Shawn Lovell, a 30+ year motorized user in Juneau.

While opening more trails is a good thing for all, along with more areas to access in the future and a possible cabin that can be utilized by the motorized user group as well as the non motorized users.

The proposal for access from the 25 mile location sounds like a great idea until it says "Primary". So does this mean we will lose our lake creek access we have maintained for years? Also have you ever been to and scouted the 25 mile access? It's near impossible to reach Spaulding meadows without a lot of work and honestly, I don't know if anyone who has ever done it and for good reason.

The wording for the latest proposal seems very vague in my opinion and should be revisited to be more clear on what the long term results of what this master plan will be.

Will we lose Lake creek access?

Is our season being shortened by nearly 2 months? The proposal shows Dec 15 to April 15 where as currently we typically use the area from Nov 1 to May 1 dependent on snow cover and frozen ground.

Is there "Really" any plan to build another cabin or warming shelter that can be utilized by the motorized user group?

Is there any future plans to expand motorized use in the Montana Creek area?

Is there plans to move the Lake creek parking lot farther up in elevation so it can also be utilized by the Motorized user group? Or is that just for the non motorized group?

Is the plan to indefinitely keep the current year round ATV Access at Montana creek near the rifle range?

We just have a lot of concerns that need to be addressed and answered before a solid plan is put in place in my opinion and feel this is being "Rushed" through.

While I agree to expanding the area to building new trails, I would like to see more expansion for the motorized user groups and not just the non motorized group.

Hopefully part of the "Master Plan" is to improve access all user groups and not just the non motorized users.

Please take this into consideration when going forward with the new plan.

Sent from my iPhone



**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Joleen Langel <joleen.langel@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 4:30 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek

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

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I am opposed to plan revisions that diminish motorized access to Montana Creek. Specifically the 25 mile radius provision. The plan is one-sided and favors a single special interest group over all others. The entirety of Juneau's public lands are available to non-motorized users. Montana Creek should remain as available as possible to the motorized groups, they have the fewest places to go.

Joleen Langel

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Angela Williams <angelarose1236@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 4:29 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Motorized Use

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

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Hello,

The riding population has increased significantly in the last few years I've lived in Juneau making the select few spots available for riding even smaller. It would be nice to see more areas for riding. It blows me away growing up and living in Haines most of my life with endless places to ride with no judgment and/or discrimination, then moving to Juneau where the riding areas are limited and faced with such harsh judgement. Not everyone is into the same things and it's up to us to leave a town where the youth have more to do so they take better paths in their adult life. When you take away most options for the youth the chances of them taking a dark path increases. It's not just about the adults it's about leaving our kids the opportunity to enjoy life whether that is snowmachining, fourwheeling, hiking, skiing. We need to come together and quit creating such diversity between motorized and non-motorized groups, neither group should be allowed more than the other. And no one should have to go through great lengths just to ride and most definitely shouldn't be judged for what they enjoy. Out of all the places I've been in my life I've never lived in a town where I've been told over and over, no you can't ride there. We need to set better examples for the youth, having such limited access for motorized use is teaching our kids rebellion is the only way for them to have fun and that's not something I'm sure no one wants.

Angela Williams

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Tyler Ferrin <tyler99827@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 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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Although this current plan doesn't take anything away from motorized users, it's not adding much for them.

If the Forest service builds a cabin P&R might add an additional winter use only motorized trail. So the only real new trail for any kind of motorized user is based on a maybe and might.

Building new trails behind 2 gun ranges doesn't sound like the best idea either but at the meeting it sure sounded like that got a green light.

It is my opinion that P&R should put money toward improving the existing Montana creek road past the bridge and keep extending it well past the McGinnis water shed.

Thanks,  
Tyler Ferrin

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Rick Perkins <rick.perkins@sealaska.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 4:20 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan.

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

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Please consider the needs of those who ride motorized vehicles.  
There are plenty of cross country trails, and only two areas for motorized use.

Increase areas for off road use by motorized vehicles. Other communities have miles and miles of trails to ride.

Why is Juneau so set on eliminating our recreational opportunities.

Thank you,

Rick Perkins  
723-4483

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Scott Spickler <sspickler@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 4:10 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Plan

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

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It is disappointing that there is no increased access for ATV users in this plan. My old friend and former forester John Sandor always said the mission of the Forest Service was to do its best to accommodate all users to the best of their ability... I think our town can do better for the motorized users than this.

I would sure like to see better access for ATV's year round in this plan and some concessions by the skiers and hikers that have so many alternatives throughout the entire borough of Juneau that are closed to motorized use....like over 100 non motorized trails.

PS, I am a skier and hiker too.

Thank you,

Scott and Sandy Spickler  
10754 Horizon Dr.  
Juneau, AK. 99801

Sent from my iPad

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Kevin Maier <kevinkmaier@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 4:08 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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Dear Montana Creek Master Plan Team,

Please consider these draft comments on behalf of the Tongass Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Unfortunately, the TU board of directors has not had a chance to meet to confer in this uncomfortably brief two-week comment period. We would like to formally request an extension of the comment period.

Please also consider these comments in conjunction with all our previous communications on the Montana Creek Master Plan. Regarding the latest draft, these are our most salient observations:

- 1) We feel our concerns have not been properly captured in this iteration of the Master Plan, which calls for significant recreational infrastructure in the Montana Creek watershed and no change to the motorized use management in the area. We remain deeply concerned about legal and illegal motorized use, and, as we have repeatedly noted, we have several decades of public comment and monitoring to show the negative impacts of motorized vehicles in and around critical habitat for wild fish. To put this simply: we do not see built into the plan enough consideration of the impacts to habitat by any of this development, especially as the plan continues to include no change to the management of motorized use in the watershed.
- 2) We are also concerned about the routing of the proposed new non-motorized trail near the end of the existing Montana Creek Road. While the route is no doubt preliminary, it appears to travel through and around documented anadromous waters (including Little McGinnis and McGinnis Creek proper, as well as other smaller tributaries). At this time, we do not support developing a trail there unless significant concessions are made for habitat and significant effort is put into placement of this trail to avoid disruption to anadromous waters.
- 3) We would like to see fish-friendly restoration of the existing road/trail upstream of the bridge before any further development takes place. We have capacity to assist with this work, and the TU Alaska program is currently submitting grant proposals with this in mind. TU staff note there are instances of marginal fish passage (hanging culverts), on-going erosion from mass wasting events, and damaged habitat from existing infrastructure and rogue "trail building" and illegal ATV use upstream of the currently-out-of-commission bridge.
- 4) As coho returns appear to have come in below the lower bounds of ADFG escapement goals in a handful of recent years, we would like to see added protections for and restoration of critical coho spawning and rearing habitat be part of the plan. To put it even more directly: we would like to see stream restoration and conservation measures explicitly written into the plan.
- 5) Finally, we worry that ongoing efforts to replace the bridge at the end of the road, likely with a large capacity structure, may predetermine any future discussions about management in the watershed, and we would request consultation before funding proposals go forward.

In short, as the conflicts between skiers and motorized users suck all the oxygen out of the room, we worry there aren't voices for the fishery making it into the conversation. We will not be in support of this Master Plan unless we see significant provisions in the plan that explicitly prioritize habitat for native trout and salmon.

Thanks for your consideration,

Kevin Maier  
Past President, TU Tongass Chapter Board of Directors

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Darrin Crapo <darrin@crepeaux.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 4:02 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek

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

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My name is Darrin Crapo, I am a Juneau resident residing at 9347 Betty Ct.

I have some serious concerns about the proposed draft. It clearly expands non motorized use and appears to do so at the detriment of motorized users.

First, the snow seasons is locked st Dec 15 to April 15. This needs to be expanded to Nov 1 to May 1 to accommodate regional weather variation.

Second, the language defining the 25 Mile Road as primary access opens the door wide open to motorized users loosing the trail they constructed at Lake Creek. This robs them of the work invested and pushes them out with an addition 1hr round trip of driving time during a season with very limited daylight.

Honestly this draft appears discriminatory and non motorized agenda driven. This needs to be revisited and all user groups represented.

Thank you,

Darrin

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S22 5G, an AT&T 5G smartphone



**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Jeff Wilson <jwilson@wileng.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 3:53 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan Comments

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

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Dear CBJ P&R,

Job well done on getting the Montana Creek Master Plan to this point! I like the thoughtfulness of the new and rebuilding of our trail system in the Montana Creek area. My comments:

I really approve of the proposed plans to expand non-motorized trails, especially connecting Montana Creek to existing trail systems and adding a trail link to the USFS campground.

I really support safe winter access for Nordic skiing both for Spaulding Meadows and Montana Creek/McGinnes Creek basin. Motorized use and pedestrian/skiing use need to be separate for everyone to enjoy this area free from conflicts and injury.

I feel you have a realistic working plan here. Now for all of us to come together and make it happen!

Jeffrey W. Wilson  
175 S. Franklin Street, Suite 300  
Juneau, Alaska. 99801  
907-586-2100, (cell) 321-3210  
jwilson@wileng.net

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Andrew Eller <andrewseller@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 3:05 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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From: Andrew Eller  
4411 Windfall Ave, Juneau  
12.21.22

Dear CBJ Parks and Recreation,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of the Montana Creek Master Plan.

I wanted to propose breaking Options 2A and 2B into separate numbers. True, the goal of both proposals is to provide vehicle access to at higher elevation parking areas for winter motorized use. However, the grouping of the Lake Creek Road expansion and the 25-mile road as “either” leaves this reader wondering if this is an “either”, “either/or”, or “both” scenarios. Please present them as separate options, as was almost every other trail option presented in the master plan. They are completely different options.

“2A and 2B. Consider developing **either** the existing Lake Creek Trail or 25 Mile Road to the primary access for winter motorized use to Spaulding Meadows. Assess routes for topography and climate to determine the best shoulder season access to higher elevations. Consider a parking area at a higher elevation. Develop maintenance and management partnerships”.  
management partnerships”.

The extension of the Lake Creek Road is a proposal I find difficult to accept. My primary concern is based on direct impacts by increased road traffic and noise to the proposed trailhead area and along the road corridor. Our property is close to the current parking area. Winter snowmachine traffic is generally muted and generally not an issue. However, the expansion of a road opens the area to year-round vehicle traffic. Additional concerns.

- If you build it they will come – a parking lot at a higher elevation will increase traffic and will negatively impact this area. This includes on and off hardened surfaces.
- Living close to the current Lake Creek Trailhead I see the parking lot used for parties, camping and extended stays. This last summer 2 vehicles occupied the area for several weeks. (think outhouse). I envision the same events at the higher elevation parking lot – year round. Will the access be gated in the summer? Is this seasonal access only?
- 

I end up asking more questions regarding this particular proposal (Lake Creek Trail expansion) than any of the other proposals to the management plan. Please drop this particular road extension from the plan.

Regards

Andrew Eller

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Dan Fremgen <danfremgen@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 11:16 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** MT Cr rec area master plan comments

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

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CBJ Parks & Rec Dept,

We are responding to a call for comments following the Dec 7th 2022 presentation and release of the 2nd draft of the public and plan process on the Montana Creek recreation area.

Priority 1): We support and concur very strongly with swiftly moving forward with proposal #4 in the presentation, construction of a trail on the northeast side of MT Creek for non-motorized use. This proposal allows skiers to use a trail separate from motorized vehicles and would thereby relieve the current confrontations and dangers experienced on MT Cr road in the winter when 4-wheelers and snowmachines use the same trail as walkers, snowshoers and skiers. Constructing this trail would appear to be a process of moderate cost and effort that would immediately reduce congestion, conflict between user groups and the potential for collisions and injuries.

Priority 2): We support further exploring the future possibility of Proposal #3 in the presentation, construction of a new Mendenhall Glacier access trail to MT Cr road allowing continuous skiing and hiking between the two areas. This would lead to a top-notch recreational trail system used by many in winter and summer, enhancing the accessibility of the existing trails and surrounding lands while reducing issues such as vehicle parking space at the rifle range as more users hike or ski to MT Cr road rather than drive. We feel this project is valuable and important for increasing non-motorized trail use in the area but view it as a longer-term goal, as opposed to Priority 1 (above) which we feel should begin immediately.

Thank-you for the opportunity to comment.  
Dan Fremgen and Diana Paul

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Mike Laudert <mikelaudert@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 10:57 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana creek plan

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

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Parks and rec

I support the cabin and plans for an additional motorized access at the 25 mile location. I believe it would be a benefit for early or late snow conditions. Our primary access point would still be lake creek. I think there is a pretty decent size canyon between the proposed start point and lower Spaulding meadows. Will research this winter on routing.

Thanks, Mike  
jsc board member

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Corey Baxter <cbaxter907@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 7:39 AM  
**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 support the Montanan Creek Master Plan which includes having a cabin up Spaulding meadows and a new motorized trail out at 25 mile. I would also like to see a parking lot up at a higher elevation for snowmobilers so we can access the snow earlier in the year and be able to ride later in the year as well. I also support that the Montana Creek Master plan should have access to all user groups through out the year. Thanks

Corey Baxter  
907-321-4271

Sent from my iPhone

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Mark Sams, P.E., S.E. <msams@pndengineers.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 5:56 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana creek trail master plan comments

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

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1. By providing a new motorized access to spalding meadows at 25 mile, the current motorized area in Montana creek should not be banned. That is the impression that is implied with the current map.
2. Winter motorized access to spalding meadows should be provided from Montana creek.

Sent from my iPhone

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** David Summers <emailsummers@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 5:51 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan Comment

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

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Juneau P&R,

I feel the current Montana Creek Master Plan does not have remotely enough motorized use priority space or motorized use shared space or significantly respectful inclusion of motorized users.

I ask that year-round motorized use and a significantly increased inclusion of motorized users access be included in the Master Plan.

Thank you,

David Summers  
2 Marine Way  
Juneau, AK 99801

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Capt. David Summers  
Captain Summers Marine Services LLC  
2 Marine Way Ste 122  
Juneau, AK 99801  
Mobile / Text: [907-957-1152](tel:907-957-1152)  
Email: [emailsummers@gmail.com](mailto:emailsummers@gmail.com)

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Garrett Paul <gpaul99@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 20, 2022 11:00 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Supportive of motorized use opportunities in the Montana Creek Master Plan

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

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Hello,

I continue to support expansion of motorized opportunities in the Montana Creek area and inclusion of more motorized opportunities in the master plan.

There are two to three locations to operate motorized off-road vehicles in Juneau, while there are hundreds of areas to walk, run, hike, bike and ski. Montana creek is an ideal location for winter motorized use, additional motorized opportunities and access are necessary in the area.

Please do not remove any motorized opportunities from the plan. Lots of big environmental and big money companies are writing novels in opposition to motorized use. Hopefully the forest service values and accommodates the opinions and viewpoints of life-long pro-motorized Juneauites as well.

Thanks,  
Garrett Paul



**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Zach&Mutts Decker <wildlifeheritage@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 20, 2022 8:05 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master plan

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

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Please provide more ATV and UTV OHV opportunity. I have young boys that love to ride dirt bikes and have no place close to town to allow them to enjoy their sport. We need more trails close to town not 30 miles out the road. We don't ski and feel the ski clubs are working to keep those that enjoy OHV out of these areas. Please open more area and trails.

Alisha Decker  
907-321-2180  
Juneau AK

**From:** Peggy and Alex <alaskawerts@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 20, 2022 6:08 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Draft Plan

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

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the latest iteration of the draft master plan for Montana Creek. I appreciate the work that you have put into structuring a list of action alternatives to address the needs of the varied constituencies using the Montana Creek area for recreation. I will structure my comments in relation to the 10 action alternatives you have identified. One overriding recommendation that influences a number of my comments is that the road/trail along Montana Creek itself should be restricted to non-motorized use in the winter period. As is clear from a large number of the public comments that you have compiled from the previous comment period, skiers using this area are adversely impacted by motorized users, with impacts ranging from noise and air pollution, safety concerns, habitat degradation, and destruction of the ski tracks. This area in the past few years has become one of the most heavily used winter recreation areas, with thousands of skier trips and hundreds of volunteer hours to maintain the trail and the tracks. Other aspects of the Draft Master Plan can address opportunities for motorized use.

**1A and 1B. Reconstruct Existing Trails from Montana Creek Road to Windfall Lake Access Road.** This should be the number one priority, especially that part of 1A that would rebuild the Montana Creek bridge and restore the existing capacity of the old road for grooming and skiing. Extending the usable trail to the top of the Montana Creek watershed would be a wonderful addition if it is feasible given the instability of the stream slopes in some of the upper areas. Improving the trail further down to Windfall Lake would benefit motorized users, and could possibly be made wide enough that ski grooming and motorized use could share that portion. Priority on this section could be for motorized use under winter constraints.

**2A and 2B. Consider developing either the existing Lake Creek Trail or 25 Mile Road to the primary access for winter motorized use to Spaulding Meadows.** I support 2B as the new and primary motorized access route to Spaulding Meadows. Placing a cabin at its terminus would tend to focus motorized use at that end of the meadows, and contribute to better separation of the primary areas used by skiers, snowshoers, and hikers, and ORV users.

**3. Construct new Mendenhall Glacier Area Access Trail to connect to Montana Creek Rd .** This would be an excellent addition to the current cross-country ski trail system, linking the two most popular groomed ski trails. It should be a high priority, good bang for the buck.

**4. Construct a new trail on the north east side of Montana Creek.** I support the concept of a developed route, with appropriate stream crossings, into the McGinnis Creek area. This obviously would be a lower priority than Item 1, but a good goal for the plan.

**5. Construct new Montana Creek Road to Lake Creek/Spaulding Meadows connector trail.** This should also be high priority in order to provide improved non-motorized (and groomable) access to Spaulding Meadows. This may become increasingly important with climate change moving snow lines higher. It would also divert skiers from the established Lake Creek Trail that is heavily used by ORVs.

**6. Construct new John Muir- Auke Nu – Lake Creek Connector Loop trail.**

**7. Construct new John Muir Cabin to Peterson Lake Cabin connector trail.**

I would rate the development of groomable trails in the non-motorized area of Spaulding Meadows as low priority. Spaulding Meadows has a lot of appeal as a broad untracked expanse where you pick out your own route (with some help from the trail markers, of course). A highly developed trail system would diminish the wilderness aspect. Maybe that's where we should be heading, but I am not sure. I would include these as possible future considerations in the next 10-year plan. Get the other proposed trails built and operational first.

**8. Construct new Peterson Lake Trail to new cabin to Montana Creek Trail connector.** This is a good idea to keep skiers and motorized users separate in their access routes to the cabin.

**9. Construct trail extending from 25 Mile Road to connect to new cabin.** High priority as per comments for 2B.

**10. Construct University- Auke Lake – Auke Bay Elementary – Auke Nu Community connector trail.** High priority, high bang for the bucks. These trails are already extensively used, upgrading and connecting them will improve community access between facilities, businesses, and residences, and make Auke Bay much more pedestrian friendly.

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Heidi Brodersen <brodersenheidia@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 20, 2022 10:56 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

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

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Dear CBJ Parks and Recreation Staff,

Thank you for your work on the Montana Creek Master Plan. I am encouraged to see the development of new ski trails in this plan, and I encourage you to keep including them in future iterations--including a connector trail from Montana Creek to the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area, as well as trails connecting the Montana Creek valley to Spaulding Meadow.

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Roman Motyka <[rjmotyka@alaska.edu](mailto:rjmotyka@alaska.edu)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 20, 2022 8:29 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec; Michele Elfers; USFS; USFS; Trail Mix; DNR; DOTPF; George Schaaf  
**Subject:** Comments on M Cr MP  
**Attachments:** RJM comments re M CR MP.docx

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

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Dear Michele,  
Thank you for organizing the Dec. 7th meeting. Here (and attached) are my personal comments regarding the plan and your presentation.

### Comments on the Montana Creek Master Plan

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

Subj: Comments and questions regarding the December 7<sup>th</sup> 2022 presentation and publication of the "Montana Creek Master Plan" maps and PDF.

Submitted by: R J Motyka ([rjmotyka@alaska.edu](mailto:rjmotyka@alaska.edu))

December 20, 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)>,  
Joanne Schmidt, DOTPF <[joanne.schmidt@alaska.gov](mailto:joanne.schmidt@alaska.gov)>,  
George Schaaf, CBJ P&R <[George.Schaaf@juneau.org](mailto:George.Schaaf@juneau.org)>,

### Introduction

Compliments to agencies participating in the project's planning committee (CBJ, USFS, DNR, and DOTPF) for moving the M Cr MP forward. I am encouraged that many of the proposals put forward by the Juneau Nordic Ski Club (JNSC) during the previous comment period have been incorporated in the current draft. I appreciate the considerations made by the management agencies and look forward to working with you to make these recreational trails a reality!

However, I strongly protest the short time frame (two weeks!) to develop and submit comments regarding the current draft of the M Cr master plan. I appreciate the alacrity with which the management agencies wish to proceed and I too want to see the master plan finalized in a timely manner. However, I feel the short comment period does not serve well the development of a comprehensive and well-thought out plan that will govern the use of the watershed for the foreseeable future. After all, it took several months for agencies to develop the plan presented on Dec. 7th! I therefore reserve the right to continue to interact with management agencies and other orgs to refine and submit commentary as the process continues.

### Specific Comments Regarding Proposed Nordic Ski Trails

1. I understand from the plan's PDF, map, and the slide presentation that the Nordic ski trails shown and listed are in the concept stage and their locations on the map serve as placeholders, pending actual ground surveys once funding is made available. I also understand that these trails would be rock-hardened and made to Nordic ski trail specs. I advise that the respective agencies involved in ski trail development consult with JNSC and also contract a professional Nordic ski trail designer.
2. Montana Creek Bridge: A top priority is for the installation of a temporary bridge by DOTPF and then finding a permanent solution for the Montana Creek Bridge. I note that the bridge is still currently closed to all traffic due to substructure damage sustained during weather events in late September. This closure deeply affects our Nordic skier base. Since JNSC began grooming M Cr, it has become one of the most popular ski destinations.
3. "Trail 3" listed in the plan is to construct new access trail to connect the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area trails to Montana Creek Road trail system. I am glad to see it included in the plan. Development of this trail is one of our club's highest priorities. JNSC has already done a preliminary recon of a route and shared details with CBJ P&R. Most of the region that the trail would traverse is managed by CBJ. Construction of this trail would immediately increase the number of kms of interconnected ski, hiking, and biking trails.
4. "Trail 4" in the plan is to construct a new trail on the northeast side of Montana Creek with the potential for a loop extending into the McGinnis Creek valley area. Development of this trail is another high priority for our club as it would greatly expand the kms of available Nordic skiing in the Montana Creek drainage. Most of the land traversed by this trail crosses CBJ and DNR lands. I am aware that the McGuiness loop may have wildlife habitat concerns. Note that this trail would involve bridges over both McGuiness and Montana Creeks, in order to connect back to the current trail system and make a loop.
5. I support construction of Trails 5, 6, 7, and 8 in the plan, which includes a connector from the Montana Cr road to Spaulding Meadows as well as several additional ski trails within the Spaulding Meadows region as long as they remain non-motorized. Because the meadows are higher in elevation (~ 1400 ft), these trails are high on JNSC's priority list in order to help compensate for ongoing climate warming. I understand from the Peter Schneider, the USFS representative at the meeting, that development of these trails would need to go through a NEPA process because they are principally on USFS managed lands.
6. One issue that I am struggling with is how to utilize the proposed ski trails within Spaulding Meadows. I am very appreciative that the plan includes these non-motorized-use hardened ski trails, but I am in a quandary on how to groom them without road access to the meadows?
7. Is Trail 8, a non-motorized trail designed to interconnect the Peterson Lake trail to the proposed new cabin lies in a motorized zone?
8. Parts of trail 5, the interconnection between Montana Creek and Spaulding meadows also lie in motorized zones. I am concerned motorized traffic may interfere with these non-motorized trails. I presume that the layout of trail 8 as shown on the map is only approximate. Topography on trail 8 and 25 mi are crazy!

### **Additional Comments and Concerns**

1. I encourage the use of traditional Tlingit place names where available and/or solicit the advice of SHI or other native org entity to help appropriately name the new trails. For example, the Tlingit name for Montana Creek is Kaxdigoowu Héen, "going back clear water".
2. Trail 1A and 1B concerns reconstructing existing trails from Montana Creek Road to the Windfall Lake Access Road. Although in principal I strongly supports rehabbing this trail, I am concerned whether motorized traffic will also be allowed on the rehabilitated trail. Comments from the majority of individuals and several orgs, including JNSC, overwhelmingly objected to motorized traffic along the river in part because of the history of off-road damage to watershed terrain. The Tongass Chapter of Trout Unlimited commented that the plan did not alleviate the organization's concerns about the impacts of off-road ATV use in the watershed upstream of the Montana Creek Bridge. TU recommended the plan be modified to close the trails above the bridge to ATV use and only allow foot and bicycle traffic, and JNSC concurs with this recommendation.

3. I am disappointed that no cabin is included in the plan for McGuiness Creek Valley. Construction and maintenance should be no costlier than for other remote cabins such as Dan Moller, John Muir and Eagle Glacier cabins. At least provide warming huts in the Meadows and in McGuiness Creek drainage.
4. The DOT representative at the meeting indicated that the installation of the temporary M Cr bridge might proceed over the next month, depending on weather. DOT is awaiting parts and will first remove the present bridge. I hope that the project is not delayed until next summer!
5. Be 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.

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

I repeat here comments made by JNSC from last August 2022; they still stand:

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. I therefore request that any new Nordic ski trails, such as the McGuiness Valley loops, be designated for non-motorized use.

In support of this request I 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-weighed any other values. Thus, CBJ’s own survey shows the strong preference for non-motorized use of the area.

I 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 I 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.

In summary, I 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.

### **Master Plan Slides 10 -13**

***I agree with slide 10: “Additional Items Recommended in Plan (from public comments)”, namely:***

1. Consistent wayfinding and interpretive signage across land ownership. This may include speed limits or other considerations for multi-use where appropriate.
2. Warming shelters and covered structures may be added, for example covered picnic tables or warming shelters in remote areas. Consider using proposed cabin as a daytime warming shelter.
3. Bathrooms at trailheads if no public bathrooms are nearby.
4. Repair and rehabilitate resource damaged areas due to human causes. Prioritize sensitive areas.
5. Prioritize accessibility for trails, trailheads and facilities.

***I also generally agree with slide 11, “Funding and Priorities”, and hope that these tasks will be done in partnership with JNSC:***

1. Agencies set priorities for construction of plan recommendations.
2. USFS requests federal funding for proposed cabin.
3. DOT, CBJ and private groups request funding through federal Transportation Alternatives Program for Montana Creek bridge replacement.
4. CBJ develops funding plan for recommended trails on CBJ land.
5. Continue discussions and look for funding for preliminary assessments of 25 Mile Road or Lake Creek Road higher elevation parking and access.

### ***Management and Next Steps***

1. DNR and CBJ consider Cooperative Management Agreement for management of state lands around Montana Creek Road and Trail per the Juneau State Land Plan recommendation.
2. DOT and CBJ pursue replacement of the Montana Creek Bridge and transfer of ownership of the bridge and road to CBJ.
3. Agencies provide guidance in the final plan on how to apply for, fund, and construct trails or improvements per the plan on federal, state and city land.
4. Agencies develop coordinated enforcement protocols with better communication and cooperation.

### **My Priorities**

#### ***Principal near-term (1-2 yrs) priorities are:***

1. Installation of temporary bridge at Montana Creek trailhead by DOTPF ASAP. Both JNSC and Trail Mix have cadres of ready volunteers to help out!
2. Obtain funding for a permanent bridge replacement.
3. Funding for the survey and development of a new access trail to connect the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area trails to Montana Creek Road trail system. JNSC has done a preliminary reconnaissance. Land is mostly CBJ.
4. Funding for the survey and development of a new non-motorized trail on the northeast side of Montana Creek. Land status is principally CBJ and DNR.

Longer-term priorities (~ 5 yr): Development of the plan's proposed non-motorized ski trails in Spaulding Meadows region including an access trail from Montana Creek.

### **Conclusions**

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.

Respectfully,

Roman J Motyka

Roman Motyka

[rjmotyka@alaska.edu](mailto:rjmotyka@alaska.edu)

907-723-0761 cell; 907-796-6307 office

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



**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Kris Benson <kbenson722@gci.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 19, 2022 9:42 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Revised Plan

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

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Dear Parks and Recreation:

Thank you for undertaking the multi-agency planning process for this area. I cross country ski and it is very important to me in the winter for keeping my mental and physical health well. I appreciate how much thought was put into the December 2022 version of the plan, especially with an eye for developing further cross country ski opportunities. I have a couple of concerns.

If snowmobilers use Lake Creek Road (2A), if developed, and Lake Creek Trail to access Spaulding Meadows, what would stop them from going onto the ski trails 5 and 6?

Shouldn't a part of the bridge replacement include expanded and improved parking at the bridge trailhead?

Thanks,  
Kris Benson  
145 Behrends Ave, Juneau, AK

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Jim Rehfeldt <jrehfeldt@alaskaenergy.us>  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 18, 2022 10:48 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Crrrek Plan Comments

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

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I am submitting comments on the draft Montana Creek Plan. My comments are relevant to the Montana Creek Plan and I request that the Montana Plan begin the process of seeking a better balance for all Juneau winter recreation areas.

There is a significant group of people in this community who enjoy skiing, hiking, dog walking and snow shoeing in our beautiful places. We require no organization or special accommodations to have an Alaskan winter experience that makes Juneau a special place to call home.

Unfortunately, the unorganized majority has been marginalized by organized groups such as the snow machine club, which was given winter use of the traditional Dan Moller and Spaulding Meadows ski areas (!!), and the Nordic Ski Club, which has access to several areas throughout the road system. Both are thirsty for more.

For example, I have to avoid motorized Dan Moller by skiing up Mt. Troy from Eaglecrest only to find snow machines overrunning my experience there as well. The Nordic Club has reached into the Amalga Meadows, which is signed non-motorized, to further expand their areas.

The motorized recreation plan displaced non-motorized users from Dan Moller and Spaulding Meadow during the finest ski season. Funds are being spent solely to upgrade organized activities (such as at Montana Creek) while non-organized access to other areas lags woefully behind in quality of experience. This bias has been detrimental to my winter experience as I have failed to find alternatives that match the unique qualities of these two areas. I now only have fond, distant memories of uninhibited access to these wonderful areas before motorized use was given priority over the land.

The Amalga Meadows are an intimate, unique place that regularly attracts hikers, skiers, dog walkers and snowshoers. The Nordic Club set track in the Meadows a few years ago and destroyed the snow conditions for the rest of the winter even though their enjoyment is highly restricted by space and a small time period when snow conditions in the low-lying valley were suitable. Even when I tried to ski around the tracked thoroughfare, I could not escape the noise and fumes of snow grooming.

What is particularly guiling is that the Nordic Club overran the Amalga Meadows even though there are tracks set at the Eagle Beach Recreation Area right down road. I am regularly amazed at the underutilization of the Eaglecrest Nordic ski trails, especially since the ski area is actively seeking to expand use and opportunities. Eaglecrest puts amazing resources into these trails; how about working with them to develop a world-class Nordic experience rather than take areas from others.

It simply is not fair, or good recreation planning, to displace several traditional user groups by accommodating organized user groups. I recognize Juneau does not have enough space to separate non-compatible user groups, so the obvious solution is to have equal time periods for each user group throughout the winter. I am dismayed by the over-reach of organized users who do not seem to consider the rest of us. It is important that recreation planners give equal value to all users. While I share the organized user's passion for winter recreation, their tracks, noise, and fumes are incompatible with the backcountry values others cherish. I am asking that my backcountry experience be restored rather than continue to be given away to others. It is time for Juneau's recreation planning to give equal consideration for non-organized people who also crave a unique Alaska winter recreation experience.

Specific to the Montana Creek Plan, the area and trails should be managed as multi-use with time separation for those of us who crave a different experience than the organized contingent. I ask that this plan take the first firm steps toward

truly sharing the available backcountry lands so all users can fully enjoy our limited recreational areas throughout the winter.

Jim Rehfeldt  
Juneau

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Jon Kurland <jonkurland1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, December 17, 2022 1:44 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

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

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Thanks for your hard work on the Montana Creek Master Plan. This effort has the potential to make major improvements to public recreation opportunities. To be successful, it must set clear priorities and segregate motorized uses from non-motorized uses.

Top priorities: 1A (reconstruct non-motorized trail from Montana Creek Road to Windfall Lake) and 8 (construct non-motorized trail to new cabin).

Second tier priorities: 3 (construct new connector trail between glacier area and Montana Creek Road for skiing and hiking) and either 2A or 2B (improve access for motorized users that is separated from trails for non-motorized users).

Third tier: 10 (connect and improve community trails near Auke Bay).

Concepts 4 through 7 and 9 are worth exploring but should be considered lower priorities.

Also, please prioritize increased signage and enforcement to keep snow machines out of the winter non-motorized use area in Spaulding Meadows. There are very few signs currently and many violations, which greatly impinges upon peaceful opportunities for skiing, snowshoeing, and hiking.

Thank you again!

Jon Kurland  
9155 Black Wolf Way

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Josh Smith <akjoshuam@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 16, 2022 8:21 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

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

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Good morning I'm sending this to show support to further develop the Montana Creek area for motorized vehicle use year round! The area is amazing to explore both on foot and by motorized vehicle. I would love to see this area opened up to more use.

Thanks!

Sincerely Josh Smith

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** jesse ross <ross\_jesse@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 16, 2022 1:22 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana creek ORV use

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

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Please grant use for ORV users for this area...i am so against the fact that the skiers have taken over the area. Juneau needs a place for ORV users to ride.

Thanks  
Jesse Ross  
907 321 3174

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** John Howard <mr907howard@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 15, 2022 7:09 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana creek

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

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John howard  
907-957-8585  
I am in full support of opening the whole  
Montana creek drainage system to utv,atv, motorcycle usage  
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John Howard

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Michael Hekkers <mikehekkers@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 15, 2022 4:47 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan comments

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

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Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

As the originator of the Mendenhall Montana Spaulding (MMS) idea and the original author of the Juneau Nordic Trail Development Plan I'd like to add my personal comments:

- In that plan which I emphatically support is a road up (2A on your map) Lake Creek to the 1,500' to Spaulding- motorized and non-motorized split directions. Corey at the the JSC also supports a road up high. This is a key adaptation to climate change. I am not in favor of the #9 road to the proposed Northern Spaulding Cabin because Lake Creek is already a proto road and it's closer to town.
- Bring back the biathlon range at the top of the Lake Creek Road.
- The connector to the MGRA is great and should be the near term priority for the MMS.
- I do support the other hardened trails 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. I know Trout unlimited is opposed to new development in the MC watershed, per Kevin Maier, but if we could guarantee new MC trails like #4 and #5 would be non-motorized TU wouldn't have much with which to disagree.
- The hiking trail to Spaulding needs work. Many hikers, skiers, runners, snowshoers do the loop and go down by the John Muir Cabin.

I hope you are well.

Mike Hekkers

Get your elected officials to tackle the climate emergency and to reduce the plastic and waste stream!



## Eric Moots

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**From:** todd kirtley <toddk23@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 15, 2022 4:35 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Recreation Plan

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

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to comment on the proposals for the Montana Creek area.

I would personally love to see the road at 25 mile extended to access the motorized use area, as well as having a new cabin built.

A public cabin accessible to snowmachines has been sought after for many years in the Spauling Meadows area. We currently are only allowed to use Windfall Lake cabin. The access to this cabin is often extremely difficult to achieve with low snow conditions and blow downs that accumulate during the year. The Spauling area is preferred by lesser experienced riders as well as individuals who want to take younger riders up. A place to get outta the cold and warm up or stay the night would be wonderful.

The extension of the road at 25 mile could help a couple ways I believe. It would alleviate some of the congestion at the Lake Creek trail as well as allow access when snow conditions are not ideal closer to the valley. Not only does it usually snow a bit more out there, the trailhead would be at a higher elevation.

I appreciate the actions being taken with this project and hope to see improvements in the near future.

Thank you, Todd Kirtley

## Eric Moots

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**From:** wdc@cooganalaska.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 15, 2022 12:57 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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I encourage your efforts at creating a Montana Creek Master Plan. I ask you build as much flexibility into the plan as possible; allow for change and adjustment to accommodate evolving community needs. Please review the overall status of various user groups vying against each other for the same space. How do these groups compare to each other regarding existing opportunities? Do skiers currently have less, or more, than motorized users? I'm sure they both pay taxes equivalently and are both entitled to their prorata share of user space across the borough? I encourage you to take your responsibility for critical analysis seriously. Remember, its your job to identify facts to determine a fair outcome rather than simply favoring the faction submitting the most comments. I sense a lot of people are watching this process with concern. I pray He gives you the necessary wisdom.

W Coogan, Alaskan since 1957.

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Tim Crondahl <tim.crondahl@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 15, 2022 12:18 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana creek master plan

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

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There is a serious lack of land for atv/utv/side x side recreational use. It is important to have land designated for such use. Everywhere else in Alaska it's ok to use these vehicles except Juneau. Please open it up.

Thanks,  
Tim Crondahl  
907-957-0271

Sent from my iPhone

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Percy, Colton T (DFG) <colton.percy@alaska.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 15, 2022 10:25 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec; Michele Elfers  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Plan

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

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Good morning Michele,

I coordinate comments on behalf of ADF&G for municipal and borough plans, such as the Montana Creek plan. Due to the size and complexity of the plan, ADF&G staff are requesting an extension to the comment deadline as we won't have enough time to compile our comments before next Wednesday. Is an extension something we can work out? Thanks for your help.

### Colton Percy

**Habitat Biologist**

**Access Defense Program**

Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Division of Wildlife Conservation  
333 Raspberry Rd  
Anchorage, AK 99518  
907-267-2118

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Zach & Mutts <decker@glacierguidesinc.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 15, 2022 9:14 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana creek Master plan ATV Use.

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

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I would like to see increased use for OHV in the Montana creek master plan Area. Not only in the summer but winter use as well. I would like an area near EMS service that if needed would be accessible. I have youth riders that to drive to the end of the road is not an option for a few hr ride.

Glacier Guides Inc.  
Alisha & Zach Decker  
907-321-2180  
[www.glacierguidesinc.com](http://www.glacierguidesinc.com)

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Shelly\_Noah Lager <lager\_house@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 15, 2022 7:34 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana creek master plan

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

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Thanks for continuing work on the Montana creek master plan.

It's seems the plan does not include any solutions to expand atv,utv,suv/jeep access . As you may be aware this is a severely underserved group in this area.

Plan is bias to winter use for motorized use and use in general. We are missing options for 75% of the year as our snow levels continue to decrease. All winter users mention short season as a reason for their access needs. Let's use the rest of the year.

Plan unfairly favors physically able users. Motorized use can assist in allowing limited mobility access to city, state and federal lands. Access does not have to be paved sidewalk or hardened surface.

Does not encourage youth access to activities they find interesting. Outside of organized sports we lack alternative options. Youth of all social circles show interest in motorized activities. By not providing Options we are limiting their growth.

Thank you,  
Noah Lager  
Juneau, Ak

Sent from mobile device.

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Kayla Lanz <kayla.lanz@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 15, 2022 7:25 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Comment on Montana Creek plan

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

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Please increase motorized use for summer use off highway vehicles (atv,utv, suv) in this area.  
Kayla Lanz (907) 723-5903

I am a born and raised Juneau Alaskan and I truly feel this would be such a great thing for our community.

Sent from my iPhone

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** David Tallmon <david.tallmon@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 14, 2022 1:22 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** montana creek plan -2nd draft

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

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Dear CBJ-

I write to express my support for the 2nd draft of the Montana Creek Plan. In particular, I support the development of cross-country ski trails that connect Windfall Lake, Montana Creek, and the Mendenhall Valley. There is no question the number of ski trail users in Juneau is massive and that the current options for skiers are extremely limited. As a consequence, there is a great deal of overcrowding in the parking lots and on the ski trails in Montana Creek and the Mendenhall Campground. I would urge you to follow through on expanding ski trail opportunities and to separate non-motorized from motorized trails to the greatest extent possible. In addition, I would ask you to repair the Montana Creek bridge as soon as possible to alleviate ski trail congestion.

Thank you,  
David Tallmon  
4453 Mountainside Dr  
Juneau AK 99801



## Eric Moots

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**From:** Sally Donaldson <sallyanndonaldson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 12, 2022 12:39 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 CBJ Parks and Recreation Staff,

Thank you for your work on the Montana Creek Master Plan. A 76 year old person, I would like to be able to ski there in the not too distant future.

I am encouraged to see the development of new ski trails in this plan, and I encourage you to keep including them in future iterations--including a connector trail from Montana Creek to the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area, as well as trails connecting the Montana Creek valley to Spaulding Meadow.

Thank you for reading and considering this comment.

Sincerely,  
Sally Donaldson  
530 Park St  
Juneau

Sent from my iPhone

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** greg capito <gregcapito@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 9, 2022 3:30 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Plan

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

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Leave Montana Creek as is. You cannot improve upon it

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Augat, Gretchen M (DEC) <Gretchen.augat@alaska.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 9, 2022 3:17 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan report request

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

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Good afternoon. I couldn't attend the Montana Creek Master Plan meeting this week. Please send a copy of the report or a link.  
Thank you.

Gretchen Augat, Environmental Specialist 3  
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation  
Nonpoint Source Water Pollution & Prevention Section  
<https://dec.alaska.gov/water/water-quality/>

(907) 465-5023  
[gretchen.augat@alaska.gov](mailto:gretchen.augat@alaska.gov)  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 111800, Juneau, AK 99811  
Physical address: 410 Willoughby Avenue, Suite 303

## Eric Moots

---

**From:** Gretchen Bishop <gretchen.h.bishop@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 6, 2022 11:53 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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Greetings CBJ Parks and Rec Folks:

I am writing to comment about the Montana Creek Recreation Master Plan. I will state my interests and concerns in a general fashion rather than providing a lot of specifics as I have been unable to access the draft plan yet. I am concerned that:

- the quality of Montana Creek fish habitat be maintained by not greatly widening the trail,
- the quality of muskeg habitat not be further degraded resulting in soil erosion clogging the adjacent Montana Creek salmon spawning habitat,
- all of the current user groups continue to feel safe and welcomed on the Montana Creek trail system,
- the important wildlife corridor from Montana Creek to Windfall Lake stay as wild as possible,
- the peacefulness of Spaulding Meadows for backcountry non-motorized users not be any further degraded,
- the existing non-motorized recreational and commercial ventures on the Mendenhall Icefield not be ruined by allowing snowmobiles access to the glacier,
- the CBJ trail system not be expanded beyond our ability to fund its continued maintenance with dwindling borough, state, and federal budgets.

Opportunities for improvements that I see are:

- a hut to hut trail system connecting Montana Creek, Windfall Lake, Peterson Lake, and Spaulding Meadows,
- an additional cabin on this trail system.

Sincerely,

Gretchen H. Bishop  
gretchen.h.bishop@gmail.com  
907 419-0014

Sent from my iPhone

> On Nov 30, 2022, at 2:06 PM, Gretchen Bishop <gretchen.h.bishop@gmail.com> wrote:

> Greetings:

>

> I see I've missed the deadline to comment on the USFS/Nordic Ski Club/Snowmobile Club Montana Creek 'Ski' Development Master plan. Will there be any additional opportunities?

>

> Thanks,

>  
> Gretchen H. Bishop  
> Gretchen.h.bishop@gmail.com  
>  
> Please increase the number of ski opportunities presented in the Montana Creek master plan.  
>  
>  
> Sent from my iPhone



On Nov 7, 2022, at 10:30 AM, Michele Elfers <[Michele.Elfers@juneau.org](mailto:Michele.Elfers@juneau.org)> wrote:

Hi Noah,  
CBJ, DNR, DOT and USFS have been working through public comments on the Montana Creek Master Plan and we are not sure we understand this comment/question:

Can we also look at allowing OHV access to Windfall lake road to access SOA-DNR lands?

Can you provide some more description, or maybe a map of what you are referring to and the type of access (winter/summer)?

Thanks,  
Michele

-----Original Message-----

From: Shelly\_Noah Lager <[lager\\_house@msn.com](mailto:lager_house@msn.com)>

Sent: Wednesday, August 10, 2022 7:25 PM

To: Michele Elfers <[Michele.Elfers@juneau.org](mailto:Michele.Elfers@juneau.org)>; Parks Rec <[Parks.Rec@juneau.org](mailto:Parks.Rec@juneau.org)>

Cc: [megan.hillgartner@alaska.gov](mailto: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'iyeik 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

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** maciri@alaska.edu  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 17, 2022 1:58 PM  
**To:** Michele Elfers  
**Cc:** jrpugh@alaska.edu  
**Subject:** Auke Lake Rough Trail Connections  
**Attachments:** Rough Trail Connections.pdf

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

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Hi Michelle.... IT was great getting to meet with you today.

As promised... attached is my (very) rough drawing of a multiple trail interconnection that UAS would love to see happen.

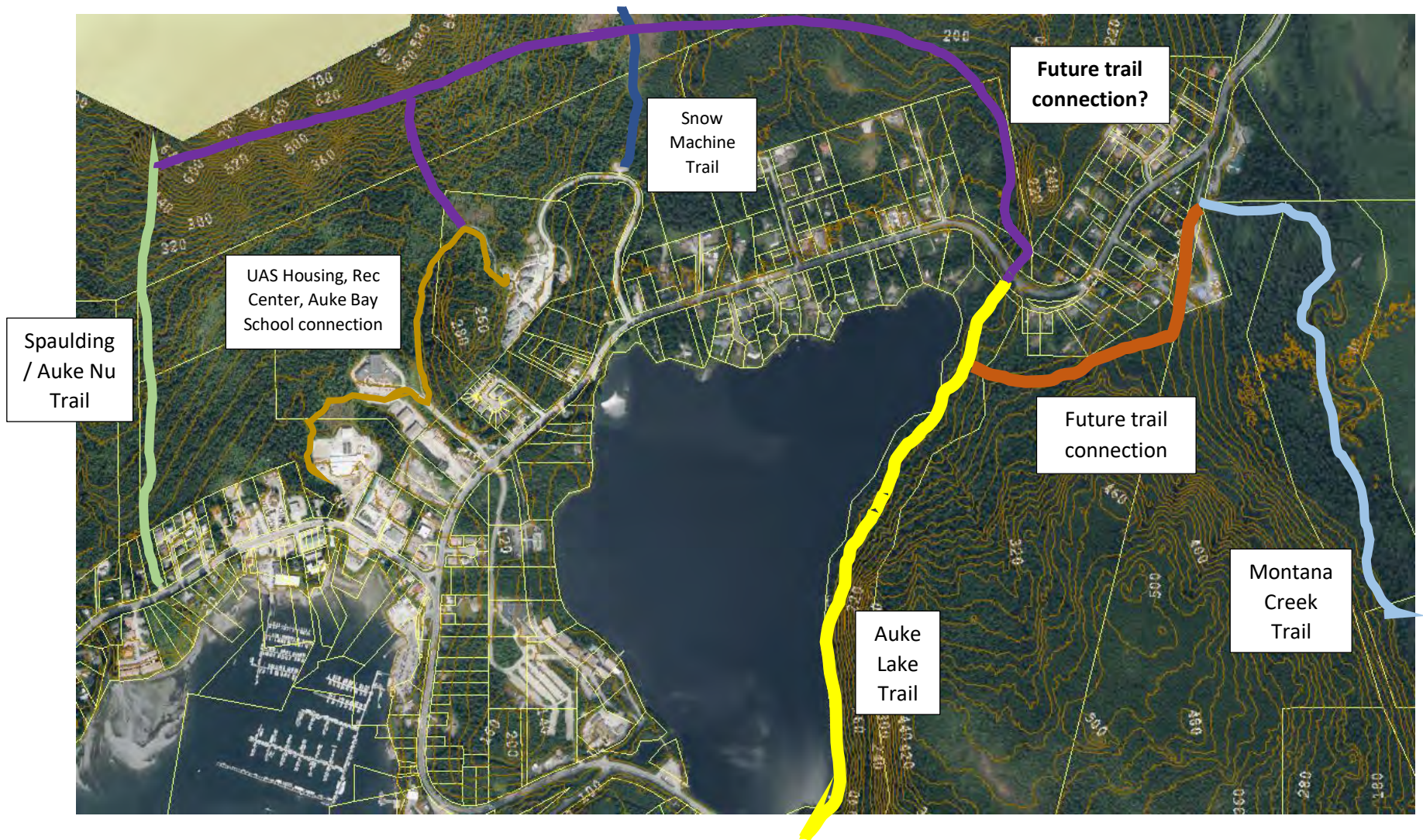
In my drawing, the trail is in purple. I have tried to mark the other mail trails/paths used by our community. I'm not sure what the original idea was for this northern trail connection... it may be that it was envisioned slightly to the south.

I also recall you indicating that folks are thinking about connecting Auke bay school to the Spaulding / Auke Nu trail. That would be great for UAS as well. I included the path taken by UAS students walking from student housing to the recreation center and from the Rec Center to Auke Bay Elementary.

Anyhow... I hope this drawing makes some sense...

Michael





**From:** [Frankie Pillifant](#)  
**To:** [Michele Elfers](#); [Frankie Pillifant](#)  
**Cc:** [JNSC Board](#); [USFS](#); [DNR](#); [DOTPF](#); [George Schaaf](#); [Ryan O'Shaughnessy](#); [USFS](#)  
**Subject:** JNSC comments to MCMP v.12072022  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 21, 2022 10:55:11 AM

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

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December 21, 2022

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

From: Juneau Nordic Ski Club (JNSC).

Re: JNSC comments to Montana Creek Master Plan draft v.December 7, 2022.

Dear Michele,

Thank you for including the Juneau Nordic Ski Club (JNSC) in this effort. The JNSC was encouraged that some of our proposals put forward during the effort have been incorporated in the current draft, specifically the new non-motorized Nordic connector trails from MGRA and into the east side of MC. We look forward to working with you to make these recreational trails a reality!

Our comments below are relative to winter snow conditions and Nordic ski grooming opportunities. The JNSC efforts rely on adequate snow cover which becomes compacted through grooming and develops a natural hardened snow surface. The JNSC long ago recognized that climate change is altering local weather patterns resulting in warmer and later winter and less snow in the usual lower elevations. If we are to continue this sport the need to gain access to snow at higher elevations is a priority.

Nordic skiers are clearly the largest winter user group in this process and the 1400+ rolling acres of Spaulding Meadows is the crown jewel of this Project Area, closely followed by the Montana Creek 'snow hole'.

The agency draft appears to be a collection of ideas from many users such as bicyclists, skiers, motorized, fishermen and hunters that lacks developed goals and objectives for the plan area, few maps, no analysis of costs, habitat impacts, or potential use. Most importantly though, management issues have not been acknowledged and resolved regarding the overarching aspects of equity and safety for all users of Spaulding Meadows and Montana Creek watershed. These must be addressed before full JNSC support can be extended on this draft.

The equity issue centers around designating approximately 90% of the meadows for motorized use in the winter. This leaves approximately a 10% sliver of the southeast corner of the prized meadows for the larger number of users. The JNSC strongly believes that it is of utmost importance to develop equity between the user groups by reallocating the division of the motorized/ non-motorized area that is the very heart of this Project Area.

The safety issue centers around the lack of safe winter access for all users on the current and proposed motorized routes. This effectively shuts out a nordic grooming program in Spaulding Meadows. This is compounded by the proposal to add an additional hardened trail for exclusive winter access by motorized vehicles, which de facto creates a motorized loop with high potential for through-traffic across the meadows between the two motorized access trails. Without additions for access to provide a ski trail grooming program, this is a big loss for cross country skiers, snow shoers, and winter hikers who make up the majority use of the area. The Lake Creek route currently under development has warning signage directed to skiers and hikers about the potential dangers of using that trail in winter. This means that trail is an exclusive motorized access route to the meadows. Without safe winter access routes for all users to the meadows as part of the plan, the JNSC cannot support additional motorized trail access to the Spaulding Meadows area.

JNSC has provided decades of winter recreation to Juneau residents. The number of Nordic skiers in Juneau

continues to grow rapidly and access to trails that are groomed for Nordic skiing are also utilized by walkers with dogs, hunters, fishermen, archery, snowshoers, ski programs and school groups. Recent years have seen dues paying membership rise to 1000. Those dues paying members help to provide safe outdoor winter recreation to thousands more families, school groups, hunters, fishermen, archery and dogs with walkers who have come to rely on the compacted and groomed winter trails.

The JNSC has been a good citizen and has always played by the rules. We have partnered with land managers and always adhered to our end of the partnership. We name the land managers with our insurance and have a board always available to address any issues that arise.

In conclusion, the December 7 draft provides an amount of information that takes time to digest, and providing comments in a rush, with a short deadline, will not result in meaningful, detailed, and specific comments. Full comments will be submitted by end of January 2023. Until that time the JNSC Nordic Ski Trail Development Plan should be used to understand the priorities of the JNSC membership (<https://jnski.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/JNSC-Nordic-Trail-Development-Plan-Jan-09-2022.pdf>).

The JNSC will continue to participate in conversations to collaborate on mitigating and refining proposed ideas and to help ensure that future development includes equitable and safe all-user access to Spaulding Meadows and Montana Creek. Thank you.

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)>,  
Joanne Schmidt, DOTPF <[joanne.schmidt@alaska.gov](mailto:joanne.schmidt@alaska.gov)>,  
George Schaaf, CBJ P&R <[George.Schaaf@juneau.org](mailto:George.Schaaf@juneau.org)>,

Frankie Pillifant,  
907-209-1960c.  
Juneau, AK.





January 13, 2023

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

From: Juneau Nordic Ski Club (JNSC)

Subject: JNSC comments and questions regarding the December 7<sup>th</sup> 2022 presentation and publication of the "Montana Creek Master Plan" maps and PDF.

The Juneau Nordic Ski Club (JNSC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Montana Creek Master Plan (MCMP) (2022). We are excited that trail planning and future trail development is being discussed in our community. With over 1000 paid members, 130 youth skiers in our 3 programs, two dozen adults in our newest program, other free events for families, women, and the skiing public, the infrastructure to groom 4 trails daily, and ~100 volunteers that groom and maintain the public trails on CBJ, USFS, and State of Alaska land; we hope to further the goals and the mission of the JNSC:

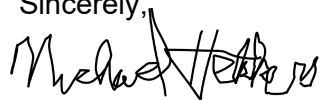
"To enhance, develop and promote Nordic skiing in Juneau."

We respectfully submit these general comments that support the Juneau Nordic Trail Development Plan, a plan that took nearly a year to write. We do not seek to rehash the pros and cons of each specific trail. Many of our members have previously submitted detailed comments on the MCMP. The Juneau Nordic Trail Development Plan generally seeks to have more interconnected multi-use, multi-season trails and trails and facilities that generally are located at higher elevations in colder areas. Please refer to this trail plan on our [website](#) for specific details.

- New interconnected, hardened trails that are designed for Nordic skiing are welcome and are our highest priority. Where possible, non-motorized access is encouraged.
- Improved access to Spaulding Meadows would allow all of our members to use this fantastic skiing area (tens of kilometers) especially as the snow line continues rising. JNSC seeks a more equitable sharing of Spaulding Meadows with the motorized users.
- New facilities like rental cabins (and their skiable trails) that could be destinations for skiers and others are welcome.
- A biathlon new facility would support this fledgling local group that has recently gained national attention.

JNSC will gladly partner with the above land owners and Trail Mix to help make these plans a reality. We do wish to see a roadmap for completion of the Master Plan process. Thank you for your time and planning efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Hekkers". The signature is stylized with a large, prominent "H" and "K".

Michael Hekkers on behalf of JNSC Board

CC:

Tristan Fluharty, USFS <tristan.fluharty@usda.gov>,  
Pete Schneider, USFS <Peter.Schneider@usda.gov>,  
Ryan O'Shaughnessy, Trail Mix <ryan@juneautrails.org>,  
Megan Hillgartner, DNR <megan.hillgartner@alaska.gov>,  
Joanne Schmidt, DOTPF <joanne.schmidt@alaska.gov>,  
George Schaaf, CBJ P&R <George.Schaaf@juneau.org>,

To: Michele Elfers, Deputy Director CBJ Parks & Recreation Dept.  
From: Odin Brudie - 512 6th St, Juneau AK 99801 [obrudie@gmail.com](mailto:obrudie@gmail.com)  
Date: January 15, 2023

Dear Michele:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the MCMP. I am providing these comments on my own behalf, and not as comments from the Juneau Nordic Ski Club or any other group that I work with. My comments come from the perspective of a long-time skier and winter user of the Montana Creek planning area. Comments are based on several of the specific scenarios you presented on December 7 at the Trail Mix shop, in addition to the additional management and “next steps” recommendations in the MCMP update.

***1A and 1B Reconstructing Montana Creek Trail to Windfall Lake.***

Reconstructing the Windfall Lake Trail could represent a safe **non-motorized** trail for accessing Spaulding Meadows on skis or on foot. It would provide a safer ski route than the snowmobile access at Lake Creek provides. A non-motorized trail here would make a **great long-distance ski trail**, which is hard to find in Southeast Alaska.

***3 Construct new Mendenhall Glacier Area Access Trail to connect to Montana Creek Rd.***

This is a good project, to build a safe, skiable and groom-able connection between the the two areas, while accommodating the shooting sports. Also, expanding ski trails here will grow the opportunities to develop the sport of Biathlon (skiing and shooting) in the area.

***4 Construct new trail on the north east side of Montana Creek.***

**This is a great project.** I have explored the area, along Montana Creek and McGinnis Creek. **There is good snow cover and ample terrain** for developing a ski trail (five to ten kilometers) that would be akin to Kincaid Park in Anchorage. A well-designed **non-motorized trail** could be developed which honors the fish habitat, natural surroundings and solitude that this fabulous area offers.

***5 Construct new connector trail between Montana Creek Road and Lake Creek/Spaulding Meadows.***

This route is pretty steep for skiing but it could be a good running/hiking connector trail from Montana Creek Road to Spaulding.

***6 and 7 Constructing new connectors between Auke Nu trail, John Muir Cabin, Peterson Lake.***

Hardened trails would enhance summer use, i.e. hiking and biking, in the meadows. In winter, when snow cover is adequate for skiing in Spaulding Meadows, skiers don't tend to follow established or hardened trails. However, clearing (and possibly hardening) a trail between Spaulding Meadows and Peterson Lake would enhance the "overland" skiing. Skiers often link cabin nights between the John Muir and Petersen Lake cabins. The going is easy from the John Muir end, but when you get to the trees heading towards Petersen, the trail is not well defined, and the snow cover diminishes as you descend. Further, the trail from Petersen Lake down to the trailhead at Glacier Highway is especially difficult skiing; at some point you have to start walking.

***8 and 9 Constructing new Spaulding Meadows access routes from Peterson Lake Trail and 25-Mile Road.***

The existing trail from Glacier Highway to Peterson Lake, like the John Muir and Auk Nu Trails, does not provide easy ski access to Spaulding Meadows. The dense forest canopy, boardwalks, deep gullies, and narrow bridges make skiing difficult at best. Making a groom-able ski trail along and extending from the Petersen Lake Trail would be a major project. 25-Mile Road could serve as a portion of a good ski and non-motorized access to Spaulding and Windfall.

***10 Construct trail connectors to Spaulding from UAS/Auke Bay School.***

**This is a good idea.** If there was a way to build a new hiking and (groom-able) ski trail (not a road) from Auke Bay to the non-motorized portion of Spaulding Meadows, hundreds of people would benefit from better access to the winter wonderland that is Spaulding Meadows. This would be a good alternative to the very difficult (skiing) Auke Nu/John Muir Trail. With proper design (and bridges) I think it could be done; a worthwhile investment.

***Management and Next Steps:***

***DNR and CBJ consider Cooperative Management Agreement for management of state lands around Montana Creek Road and Trail per the Juneau State Land Plan recommendation.***

I strongly support this management strategy. This land was originally selected from the national forest by the State on behalf of CBJ for community recreation. For DNR it remains as an isolated piece of State land. CBJ is the logical onsite recreation manager for this area.

Thank you for considering my comments.



January 3, 2023

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

Re: Comments on Revised Draft Montana Creek Master Plan

Dear Michele,

Thank you for accepting these comments on the revised version of the draft Montana Creek Plan (the revised Plan) as presented in the public meeting at the Trailmix office on December 7, 2022. These comments are in addition to those I submitted on September 10, 2022.

To be clear, my main concerns are related to ATV 4 wheeler use during the spring/summer/fall period when adult and/or juvenile fish are present and the potential for the proposed new infrastructure to damage fish habitat. I am not able to comment on the winter use aspects of the revised Plan. As I wrote in my earlier comments:

“...the Draft Plan does not 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 specific 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 ATV access.”

The above comment remains valid and has not been addressed in the revised Plan. In fact, few if any of the issues I raised in my earlier comments were addressed in the revised Plan. How does the revised Plan address the decades-long and ongoing problems with ATV’s in Montana Creek? User conflicts, off trail riding, illegal trail construction, riding in the creek, garbage, habitat destruction? It seems that these issues are to be put off to be addressed in uncertain processes to happen after the Montana Creek plan is finalized and approved. **If this is truly a “Master Plan” it should address these issues now, not later.**

Also, to host the public comment period on the revised Plan for only 2 weeks right before the holidays is simply bad process. More time should be provided for interested individuals and groups to research the issue, consult members and provide meaningful comments.

### **1. Lack of detail in the revised Plan**

To be blunt, it is more than a bit optimistic to call the revised Plan a “Master Plan.” The revised Plan consists of simply a few low resolution maps with various colored lines denoting proposed new trails, other infrastructure and some management boundaries. The way the summer use and winter use maps are presented is confusing and hard to analyze...there is no one map that demonstrates the overall Plan.

There is no plan document that explains why the new trail, cabin and other infrastructure have been proposed; there is little explanation of why the specific routes were chosen; there is no analysis of costs; no analysis of habitat effects of more trails and motorized use, effects of the cabins, outhouses and additional infrastructure, additional parking; no analysis of how much this proposal will increase use of Montana Creek and what effects that will have on habitat, on user experience. Without such information it is not possible to fully analyze the revised Plan.

In my 35 years of conservation work I have analyzed well over a hundred land management plans and EIS-type documents for projects of many types from massive open pit mines to small local projects. There are a significant number of issues normally analyzed in these processes that are not addressed in the revised Plan, including:

- alternatives;
- costs;
- environmental effects such as fish habitat damage;
- expected use of the new infrastructure;
- mitigation measures; and
- enforcement.

The effort here seems to be to obtain approval based on the current vague plan and then sort out all of the details later. This is bad process. The Plan should contain specific provisions about things like habitat restoration, rather than deferring them to some uncertain, unguaranteed future process.

**The revised plan is not a plan; it is a concept that needs to be much more fully analyzed and developed before approval and funding are sought.**

## **2. Why does the revised Plan assume no changes to motorized regulations?**

Despite asking this question at the December 7 meeting, it is still extremely unclear why the revised Plan assumes no changes to motorized use regulations. There was some vague statement about deferring this until after the plan was approved and to address it in some other process. This doesn't make sense. The ATV regulations are at the heart of some of the real problems in Montana Creek and some of the worst habitat damage. **If this is truly a "Master Plan", how can it ignore this issue?**

It has been stated that one problem is DNR land and the generally allowable for use ATV policy. First, the habitat destruction, riding in the creek and cutting of illegal trails in Montana Creek is not at all an allowable use. There is clear evidence that the ATV's use in this area is well beyond any reasonable legal definition of allowable use. Second, I haven't seen any efforts by CBJ to negotiate some kind of solution here with DNR. Is the CBJ willing to A) discuss a land transfer with DNR and B) investigate whether or not the ATV use in Montana Creek is an "allowable use"? Or is CBJ accepting that ATV riding is an allowable use in the Montana Creek DNR lands (and also the off trail riding into USFS lands)?

**The area of Montana Creek beyond the damaged bridge at the end of the asphalt Montana Creek Road should be closed to ATV use because:**

- both legal and illegal riding in this area has caused extensive fish habitat destruction;
- this access has led to illegal and destructive trail construction;
- the legal riding area here is very small and short;

--the ATV riding in the DNR land here is not an “allowable use”; and  
--there will soon be other ATV riding areas in Juneau.

### **3. Revised Plan being developed in isolation from other important and linked issues**

The revised Plan seems to be being developed in a vacuum...without any consideration of the history and current status of ATV use in Juneau...without any connection to the proposed ATV park, the consistent illegal, unsafe and destructive ATV riding in Echo Cove, the illegal and destructive riding in Davies Creek area. CBJ has the opportunity to solve a decades-long issue with ATVs in Juneau, but is only looking at Montana Creek in isolation here.

The new ATV park out the road should alleviate the need for and eliminate any justification for any ATV use in Montana creek. Has CBJ discussed this with the proponents of the ATV project and/or other state and local agencies involved? Has CBJ made any efforts to achieve a quid pro quo here...i.e. the ATV community gets a new ATV park and more (at considerable CBJ expense) but they support an end to ATV use in Montana Creek?

I find it ironic, and greedy, that some ATV riders are complaining that they need to keep Montana Creek open and even expand ATV use in the watershed because they don't want to drive all the way out to 25 or 35 mile. At the December 7 public meeting I was surprised at the nature of the comments from the ATV users including:

--ATV users said the ski club doesn't like us and wishes we would go away...the former USFS person also didn't like us...we're the victims. My response is that this isn't an issue of like or dislike. This is an issue of public safety, habitat protection, conflicts with other users and the lack of recognition from ATV users of the history of illegal riding and habitat damage in Montana Creek. Many ATV riders simply do not recognize their effects on habitat and other users.

--ATV users continue to complain about getting kicked out of areas and apparently have no recognition of why this has happened. The reasons are largely due to the various impacts and conflicts created by ATV riding.

--ATV riders continue to say this is just an issue of a few bad apples. Well, either those few bad apples are having a huge impact all across Juneau or it's more than just a few miscreants. There are areas that are simply inappropriate for ATV riding and Montana Creek is one of them.

--CBJ is working on an ATV park at 35 mile and also proposing a riding area at 25 mile. Yet apparently this is not enough. All the ATV riders did at the December 10 meeting was complain and demand more. Juneau is not Haines, Fairbanks or Nome where there is extensive land and roads for ATV riding. **The development of these 2 new riding areas should take away the main excuse for the legal and illegal ATV riding in Montana Creek, which has been that there is no other place to ride. There should be a quid pro quo here.**

### **4. Fish habitat and fishing issues need to be addressed**

There is no analysis in the revised Plan or the process that has developed it that addresses the Plan's potential effects on fish habitat, fish populations and fishing. Alaska salmon are getting hammered by poor ocean conditions and thus it is vital that we do all we can to protect freshwater habitat. I recommend that the revised Plan be changed to contain:

- analysis of habitat effects;
- analysis of effects on fishing in the watershed;
- protections for critical coho spawning and rearing habitat;
- restoration of damaged habitats.

**As the conflicts between skiers and motorized users seem to be getting all of the attention here, fish and fishing are being ignored.**

## **5. Vague Commitments to Habitat Restoration**

The revised Plan currently contains no specific discussion of or requirements for restoring habitat in Montana Creek damaged by legal and illegal ATV riding. Illegal construction of motorized trails has severely damaged habitat accessible from the road portion of Montana Creek Trail. **Restoration and rehabilitation of these areas should a specific part of the revised Plan and the highest priority during plan implementation.**

## **6. Proposed New Trails**

The routing of the proposed new non-motorized trail (project 4 in the December 7 presentation) near the end of the existing Montana Creek Road raises habitat concerns. While the route is no doubt preliminary, it appears to travel through and around documented anadromous waters (including Little McGinnis and McGinnis Creek proper, as well as other smaller tributaries). Before the final Montana Creek plan is approved the potential habitat effects of this route should be investigated and alternatives analyzed. If at all possible, no trails should be constructed on the fan to protect the high-quality fish and wildlife habitat in that area.

## **7. Enforcement**

The only mention I have heard about enforcement is signage and maybe education. Signage has been a dismal failure at Sheep Creek, Montana Creek, and Echo Cove. Signs are ignored, destroyed, removed or used for target practice. In my experience most of the illegal riders know exactly what they are doing and just don't care...which raises questions about how much education will work. I am pretty sure based on experience that the various agencies do not have the staff time or will to more aggressively enforce regulations about illegal riding and habitat damage.

How will the Plan ensure that illegal ATV use is halted? How will CBJ ensure that winter use only motor trails are not used in the summer...that illegal spur trails are not made? These are not details to be worked out later.

**From:** [Iris Matthews](#)  
**To:** [Parks Rec](#)  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan  
**Date:** Monday, December 26, 2022 9:43:57 AM

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

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Hello,

I apologize for being a bit late with these comments. Hopefully they can still be included. I am writing in support of proposed new cross-country ski and recreation trails in the Montana Creek Plan. Juneau needs more trails for skiing, particularly longer trails that this plan would support.

Thank you,

Iris Matthews

**From:** [Percy, Colton T \(DFG\)](#)  
**To:** [Michele Elfers](#)  
**Cc:** [Love, David C \(DFG\)](#); [Krull, Dylan P \(DFG\)](#); [Catterson, Matthew R \(DFG\)](#); [Lindgren, Jesse W \(DFG\)](#); [Teske, Daniel J \(DFG\)](#); [Carter, Marla M \(DFG\)](#); [Kanouse, Kate M \(DFG\)](#); [Koch, Carl H \(DFG\)](#); [Fritz, Evan \(DFG\)](#); [Churchwell, Roy T \(DFG\)](#)  
**Subject:** RE: ADF&G Comments: Montana Creek Master Plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 3, 2023 11:00:39 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)

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

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Hi Michele,

Happy New Year! Here are our answers to the questions you had.

1. The proposed trail in the McGinnis Creek area on the draft plan would be non-motorized. Is the concern that creating any trail would attract motorized use in this area? Could the concern be mitigated if enforcement and management occurred?

-We agree that good management and enforcement is the correct way to address these concerns. It should also be noted that the proposed trail near McGinnis Creek follows the alignment of a historical ATV trail that was pioneered through the area without any permitting. This demonstrated use and resource impact contributes to our specific concerns for this proposed trail.

2. Can you tell me where Upper Slate Creek is and how the proposed plan impacts it? I am not familiar with which creek it is in the project area and how it is impacted by proposed/existing roads in the project area. Is it part of Windfall Creek?

-The current upper extent of anadromy of Slate Creek (a major tributary to Windfall Lake; ADF&G stream no 111-50-10070-2004-3006-4016) is 58.482743, -113.729321. This has not been field verified; depending on the results of our survey in 2023 known fish presence could be higher or lower in the drainage. The potential impacts to Slate creek could be the installation of a stream crossing structure which could alter or block fish passage (a fish habitat permit would likely be required depending on the results of the survey) and the potential for users to drive off the established road and create additional ATV trails. We have observed this throughout the region, and it has resulted in some habitat degradation.

3. Are the concerns about increased ATV use in winter months related to specific proposals in the plan, for example the proposed trail from 25 mile road to the new cabin at the north end of Spaulding Meadows? Other than that trail, there is no proposed change to the area that motorized use is allowed. Any more information you can provide on concerns about impacts as related to specific proposals in the plan would be helpful for the agency group to be able to address them.

-Winter use is not restricted to trails and so building a winter trail substantially opens up new area to off-trail use. If winter use moves out of Spaulding Meadows and head up towards the mountains, which we are already hearing is happening, then they will be immediately traveling through winter goat habitat. Goat populations in this area are not likely to survive regular snowmobile incursions into their mountain habitat.

-While the expansion of ATV use, specifically off-trail use, is not a part of this review or the project, it is often an unintended side effect of opening areas up to ATV use. While most users do not drive off trail where not allowed, it only takes a few users to degrade the habitat in the creek or in connected waterbodies. The main concern is sedimentation which negatively impacts spawning substrate, studies have shown that concentrations of as little as 15% fine sediment (by dry weight) can result in an 80% decline in survival of embryos; at concentrations of 20% or greater, mortality is near 100% (Quinn 2018). Rutting is also a concern in small streams and wetland areas used by rearing salmon as juvenile fish can be trapped at low water. Placing barriers and signs in important areas and

enforcement of unauthorized off trail use may help alleviate these issues.

Our overall message is that increased use of an area, especially motorized use, impacts habitat and measures should be taken to mitigate this. Good management and enforcement in the area will go a long way towards addressing our concerns. We understand that this is essentially a conceptual plan which lacks specific information on how these recreational facilities will be designed, built, or managed. As such, it was difficult to provide specific and detailed concerns or comments. However, we do look forward to providing specific comments on detailed plans and proposals when they are provided for review or through subsequent permitting processes.

We cannot thank you enough for allowing us the additional time to comment on this plan. Please let me know if there are any further questions or clarifications.

## Colton Percy

**Habitat Biologist**

**Access Defense Program**

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Division of Wildlife Conservation

333 Raspberry Rd

Anchorage, AK 99518

907-267-2118

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**From:** Michele Elfers <Michele.Elfers@juneau.gov>

**Sent:** Thursday, December 29, 2022 7:15 AM

**To:** Percy, Colton T (DFG) <colton.percy@alaska.gov>

**Cc:** Love, David C (DFG) <david.love@alaska.gov>; Krull, Dylan P (DFG) <dylan.krull@alaska.gov>; Catterson, Matthew R (DFG) <matt.catterson@alaska.gov>; Lindgren, Jesse W (DFG) <jesse.lindgren@alaska.gov>; Teske, Daniel J (DFG) <daniel.teske@alaska.gov>; Carter, Marla M (DFG) <marla.carter@alaska.gov>; Kanouse, Kate M (DFG) <kate.kanouse@alaska.gov>; Koch, Carl H (DFG) <carl.koch@alaska.gov>; Fritz, Evan (DFG) <evan.fritz@alaska.gov>

**Subject:** RE: ADF&G Comments: Montana Creek Master Plan

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [michele.elfers@juneau.gov](mailto:michele.elfers@juneau.gov). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hi Colton,

Thanks for these comments. I have a few questions, just to make sure I understand them before I pass them on to the other federal and state agencies working on the plan.

1. The proposed trail in the McGinnis Creek area on the draft plan would be non-motorized. Is the concern that creating any trail would attract motorized use in this area? Could the concern be mitigated if enforcement and management occurred?

2. Can you tell me where Upper Slate Creek is and how the proposed plan impacts it? I am not

familiar with which creek it is in the project area and how it is impacted by proposed/existing roads in the project area. Is it part of Windfall Creek?

3. Are the concerns about increased ATV use in winter months related to specific proposals in the plan, for example the proposed trail from 25 mile road to the new cabin at the north end of Spaulding Meadows? Other than that trail, there is no proposed change to the area that motorized use is allowed.

Any more information you can provide on concerns about impacts as related to specific proposals in the plan would be helpful for the agency group to be able to address them.

Thanks!  
Michele Elfers

**Michele Elfers**  
Deputy Director  
Parks & Recreation  
[Michele.Elfers@juneau.gov](mailto:Michele.Elfers@juneau.gov) (note change in email)  
Ph: 364-2390

email logo



155 S. Seward St. | Juneau, AK 99801

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**From:** Percy, Colton T (DFG) <[colton.percy@alaska.gov](mailto:colton.percy@alaska.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 28, 2022 4:06 PM  
**To:** Michele Elfers <[Michele.Elfers@juneau.gov](mailto:Michele.Elfers@juneau.gov)>  
**Cc:** Love, David C (DFG) <[david.love@alaska.gov](mailto:david.love@alaska.gov)>; Krull, Dylan P (DFG) <[dylan.krull@alaska.gov](mailto:dylan.krull@alaska.gov)>; Percy, Colton T (DFG) <[colton.percy@alaska.gov](mailto:colton.percy@alaska.gov)>; Catterson, Matthew R (DFG) <[matt.catterson@alaska.gov](mailto:matt.catterson@alaska.gov)>; Lindgren, Jesse W (DFG) <[jesse.lindgren@alaska.gov](mailto:jesse.lindgren@alaska.gov)>; Teske, Daniel J (DFG) <[daniel.teske@alaska.gov](mailto:daniel.teske@alaska.gov)>; Carter, Marla M (DFG) <[marla.carter@alaska.gov](mailto:marla.carter@alaska.gov)>; Kanouse, Kate M (DFG) <[kate.kanouse@alaska.gov](mailto:kate.kanouse@alaska.gov)>; Koch, Carl H (DFG) <[carl.koch@alaska.gov](mailto:carl.koch@alaska.gov)>; Fritz, Evan (DFG) <[evan.fritz@alaska.gov](mailto:evan.fritz@alaska.gov)>  
**Subject:** ADF&G Comments: Montana Creek Master Plan

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

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Hi Michele,

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has reviewed the Montana Creek Recreation Area Master Plan in Juneau. The goal of the plan is to create a master planning document that identifies recreational facilities in the



Montana Creek Recreation Area with a planning horizon of ten years. The Plan has identified the need to reconstruct existing trails, develop new motorized and non-motorized trails, and construct additional US Forest Service (USFS) public use cabins in the planning area. ADF&G has the following comments:

### **Support**

-ADF&G supports the improved access, trail system connections, USFS public cabin construction, and recreational activities provided for in this Plan.

### **Concerns**

-ATV use along the proposed trail in Upper McGinnis Creek may result in habitat degradation and expanded recreational mining activities in both McGinnis and Montana Creek.

-Impacts to upper Slate Creek from the road alignment and ATV access. Slate Creek is Juneau's only roadside sockeye salmon fishery. Surveys will be conducted by ADF&G during the end of July/beginning of August 2023 to determine the upper extent of fish use.

-ADF&G Division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) has concerns about increased ATV usage, especially in the winter months. With extensive off-trail winter use, snowmachine riders are going to get further out and start to impact winter mountain goat and deer habitat. DWC Staff in the Douglas office are happy to help with consultation on mountain goat habitat impacts in the McGinnis Creek drainage.

- **907-465-4266** Roy Chruchwell, Area Biologist

### **General Comments**

-ATV related Habitat destruction issues should be addressed on current trails before opening new trails to ATV's. We would like to see the development of a plan to address enforcement of off-trail ATV use, especially in the Montana Creek Watershed.

-Bridges are preferable to culverts as they require less maintenance and have less environmental impact.

-Trails should not go through wetlands or parallel streams when applicable.

-Trails and bridges should be constructed to prevent ATV use on non-motorized trails.

-ADF&G Habitat Division in Juneau should be contacted early in the process of trail construction consultation and Fish Habitat Permitting.

- [dfg.hab.infodou@alaska.gov](mailto:dfg.hab.infodou@alaska.gov)

- **907-465-4105**

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Montana Creek Recreation Area Master Plan. ADF&G appreciates the additional time to be involved in the process and provide comments. We look forward to hearing from you and our continued involvement in this planning effort. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions about these comments.

**Colton Percy**

**Habitat Biologist**

**Access Defense Program**

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Division of Wildlife Conservation

333 Raspberry Rd

Anchorage, AK 99518

907-267-2118

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Jack Kreinheder <jack.kreinheder@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2023 5:03 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Juneau Mountain Bike Alliance comments on Montana Creek Plan final draft

The Juneau Mountain Bike Alliance represents the growing community of mountain bike riders in Juneau, and would like to offer the following comments on the final draft of the Montana Creek Plan.

First, we would like to thank the Juneau Parks and Recreation Department for leading this planning process, as well as the Forest Service, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and other agencies and organizations that have helped with the project. We know this has been a time consuming project, and we appreciate the good work on the plan.

The Montana Creek and Spaulding Meadows area currently receives relatively little use by mountain bikers because most of the trails in the area are not in good enough condition for riding a bike. The exceptions would be the Windfall Lake trail and the first mile of the Peterson Lake trail. However, the proposed trail improvements included in the Montana Creek Plan would greatly improve the opportunities for mountain biking in the area.

JMBA supports all of the trail renovations and new trails proposed in the plan. Our highest priority would be reconstructing the current trail from Montana Creek Road to Windfall Lake Trailhead and Herbert River Road, and making the full length of the trail rideable for mountain bikes, with a minimum of steps and other obstacles. This would create an outstanding trail for both mountain biking and hiking in the summer, and skiing in the winter, second only to the Treadwell Ditch trail in length.

Our second priority would be the construction of the new trails to link Montana Creek road to Spaulding Meadows and the network of trails in the meadows accessing the John Muir cabin and the Peterson Lake Cabin. We would again request that these trails be built in a bike-friendly manner, without steps if possible.

We also support the proposal for a new cabin to be located off of the Montana Creek trail.

Our one concern with the new trails is how they are built to accommodate winter ski use. We would oppose building 12-14 foot wide gravel trails, since that is essentially a one lane road that would not be a desirable hiking or biking experience in the summer months. Hopefully ski grooming could be accommodated with a narrow gravel trail 2-3 feet wide for summer use, and a 12-14 foot cleared width for grooming.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

-- Juneau Mountain Bike Alliance

## **Eric Moots**

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**From:** John Thedinga <jfthedinga52@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2023 4:26 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** MORE XC skiing in Montana Creek Master Plan!

Dear Parks and Recreation,

I'm a cross country skier in Juneau and strongly support the following comments that have been endorsed by the Juneau Nordic Ski Club:

**I like the following and I think these should be in the plan:**

- The connector trail from Montana Creek to Skater's Cabin.
- Rehabilitation of the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake and Herbert River Road trails.
- Replacement of the now broken bridge across Montana Creek.
- Increased access to Spaulding Meadows from the Montana Creek valley.
- Dedicated, non-motorized Nordic ski trails in the Spaulding Meadows region.
- University - Auke Lake - Auke Bay Elementary Community Connector Trail.

**Please do not include a 2nd motorized access into the plan; the status quo is good:**

- Please do not add a second motorized access to Spaulding Meadows. Either build the 25 Mile Access (as proposed) and close the current Lake Creek access, or vice versa.

Thank you for your consideration,  
John Thedinga

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Karen Wilson <kwilson@wileng.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2023 2:05 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Cc:** Jeff Wilson  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

We want to express our gratitude to all who have contributed to the Plan development thus far. We are a family of cross-country skiers and hikers, and we are SO grateful for every non-motorized, skiable, hikeable, existing and proposed trail in the Montana Creek valley and associated areas.

We depend on the existing Montana Creek road trail for our earliest and latest cross-country skiing of the season. We have greatly missed that trail this year and hope for the bridge to be replaced ASAP. In addition, we are enthusiastic supporters of the connector trail from Montana Creek to Skater's Cabin and greater access from Montana Creek to Spaulding Meadows. We want to see dedicated, non-motorized Nordic ski trails in the Spaulding Meadows area. In general, we support every potentially-skiable, hikeable non-motorized trail in the Plan, and would really like to see a ski trail on the northeast side of Montana Creek as well.

As requested by the Juneau Nordic Ski Club, please DO NOT add a second motorized access to Spaulding Meadows. Either build the 25 Mile Access as proposed and close the current Lake Creek access, or do the reverse and eliminate the 25 Mile Access.

We have skied and hiked all of these areas for over forty years, and we appreciate the opportunity for even more non-motorized trails to explore and enjoy. With great pleasure, we have watched the ever-increasing numbers of avid cross-country skiers and hikers of all ages enjoying this amazing back-country area.

With gratitude,  
Karen and Jeff Wilson

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Barbara Mason <bmason710@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2023 1:20 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** More xc skiing in Montana Creek Master Plan!

Dear Parks and Recreation,

Just letting you all know that as an avid cross country skier I am very much in support of the points that the Nordic Ski Club has made;

- The connector trail from Montana Creek to Skater's Cabin.
- Rehabilitation of the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake and Herbert River Road trails.
- Replacement of the now broken bridge across Montana Creek as access has been greatly missed this year,
- Increased access to Spaulding Meadows from the Montana Creek valley.
- Dedicated, non-motorized Nordic ski trails in the Spaulding Meadows region.
- University – Auke Lake – Auke Bay Elementary Community Connector Trail.  
It would also be nice to have;
- A ski trail on the northeast side of the Montana Creek valley (other side of the creek from currently groomed dirt road).
- Please do not add a second motorized access to Spaulding Meadows. Either build the 25 Mile Access (as proposed) and close the current Lake Creek access, or vise versa.  
Thank you all for all the work, research, and planning that into this project.

Thanks again, Barbara Mason

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Odin B <obrudie@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2023 12:30 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Cc:** Michele Elfers; Pete- FS Schneider; Megan G Hillgartner  
**Subject:** Odin Brudie Comments - Montana Creek Master Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the latest Draft Montana Creek Infrastructure and Master Plan. I have two comments to share, which represent my own views and not necessarily those of the Juneau Nordic Ski Club.

### I. North and East Montana Creek Winter Trails.

The previous version of the plan included an action item to study the potential routes for a non-motorized winter (ski) trail on the north and east side of Montana Creek. This alternative was dropped from the newest version. In essence these (new) trails would be located beyond or on the opposite side of Montana Creek from the existing trail. Please re-instate and include prospective non-motorized trails on the north and east side of Montana Creek in the final plan for the following reasons:

- The Montana Creek drainage receives adequate snow for grooming ski trails, allowing for a longer season. The existing Montana Creek Trail is groomed regularly and provides opportunities to hundreds of users for quiet near-wilderness winter recreation experiences right in our back yard.
- (New) non-motorized ski trails beyond or on the other side of the creek from the existing Montana Creek Trail, where motorized use is currently allowed, will eliminate conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users, and improve safety.
- Winter trails (i.e. non-motorized except for groomers) do not always require hardening and permanent structures (such as bridges and culverts) and they should only be groomed when there is adequate snow cover to protect the substrate, i.e. fish-rearing habitat.
- Including prospective winter trails in the master plan will facilitate proposals for a trail and allow the land managers (DNR, Forest Service, DOT&PF, ADF&G, and CBJ) and users to come to the table and initiate the process of locating, permitting, and designating winter trails that respect, protect, and perhaps enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

The prospective trails and “loops” included in the earlier plan were just that: lines on a map to show the areas worthy of consideration. Please include prospective east side winter trails in the plan. It is a beautiful area where people can enjoy safe and quiet recreation.

### II. Non-motorized access to Spaulding Meadows.

Access to the non-motorized portions of Spaulding Meadows is severely limited. Please make sure the plan addresses how users can better access this portion of Spaulding Meadows.

- The Auke-Nu/John Muir trail provides the ONLY non-motorized access to Spaulding Meadows in the winter, and the only access to the USFS John Muir Cabin.
- The tiny Auke-Nu/John Muir parking lot on Glacier Highway is crowded and often full. Cars also park on the shoulder of a blind corner of the busy highway. The lot is hemmed in by houses, and you start your climb by traversing their back yards.
- The existing 6km trails (both the John Muir and the Auke-Nu forks) are especially challenging in the winter. Too narrow to snowshoe in places, not enough snow to ski in others, you generally have to hike up with your skis (or snowshoes) on your back. While enjoyable to some, this means of access goes beyond the interest or abilities of many winter users, young and old.
- The meadows, once you arrive, provide welcoming open areas to easily ski and snowshoe.
- The Montana Creek Plan’s action item No. 4 is to Develop UAS-Auke Lake-Auke Bay Elementary Spaulding Meadows Community Connector Trail. Perhaps this alternative could be expanded to include better parking and a better trail route to Spaulding, one that is more ski and snowshoe friendly.

Thanks again for your work on planning the future for this wonderful area.

Sincerely,

Odin Brudie  
512 6th St.  
Juneau, AK. 99801  
[obrudie@gmail.com](mailto:obrudie@gmail.com)



## Eric Moots

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**From:** Roman Motyka <[rjmotyka@alaska.edu](mailto:rjmotyka@alaska.edu)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2023 11:33 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Cc:** Michele Elfers; Michele Elfers; Fluharty, Tristan -FS; USFS; Hillgartner, Megan G (DNR); Ryan O'Shaughnessy; [greg.lockwood@alaska.gov](mailto:greg.lockwood@alaska.gov); George Schaaf  
**Subject:** Comments on M Cr MP

March 29, 2023

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

**From:** Roman Motyka [rjmotyka@alaska.edu](mailto:rjmotyka@alaska.edu)

**Subj:** Comments regarding the March 2023 draft entitled "Montana Creek Area Plan: infrastructure and management"

### GENERAL COMMENTS

I would like to thank the various management agencies for this opportunity to comment on the March 2023 draft entitled "Montana Creek Area Plan: infrastructure and management", released February 27, 2023. It is heartening to have the management agencies supporting and advocating for non-motorized winter sports activities in the Master Plan. Trails built to Nordic ski standards will also likely benefit fishermen, hunters, hikers, bicyclists, school sports and other users year-around.

I helped prepare the Juneau Nordic Ski Club comments regarding the current master plan and I don't wish to repeat them here. I support development and/or rehab of all the non-motorized trails as shown in the current draft plan but wish to reiterate the need to include two key action items which would greatly alleviate equity concerns for crowd capacity on the current trails and insure safe access. The first is to reinstate the "East Montana Creek to McGinnis Loop" ski trail previously included in the (December 2022) draft. The second is to improve skier access to the Spaulding Meadows ski trails. The JNSC is struggling with how skiers can utilize the proposed ski trails (5,6,7, and 8) and other terrain within Spaulding Meadows without improving safe skier access. This omission is in stark contrast to the plan's action items #9, # 10 and #11, which would accommodate enhanced motorized access via either Lake Creek or 25-mile. I hope that we can have a fruitful dialogue on how the management agencies and JNSC can help design a pathway.

Thank you for your efforts in developing this draft Kaxdigoowu Héen (Montana Creek) Watershed Master Plan. Please see the JNSC submitted comments for further discussion of these and other "action items" in the plan. Further dialogue will help improve the plan.

Sincerely,

Roman J Motyka

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)>,  
Greg Lockwood, ADOTPF <[greg.lockwood@alaska.gov](mailto:greg.lockwood@alaska.gov)>  
George Schaaf, CBJ P&R <[George.Schaaf@juneau.org](mailto:George.Schaaf@juneau.org)>,

Roman Motyka

[rmotyka@alaska.edu](mailto:rmotyka@alaska.edu)

907-723-0761 cell; 907-796-6307 office

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

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Frankie Pillifant <frankiepillifant@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2023 11:31 AM  
**To:** Michele Elfers; Parks Rec  
**Cc:** USFS; USFS; Trail Mix; DNR; ADOTPF; George Schaaf; Roman Motyka  
**Subject:** JNSC comments to MCMP March 29, 2023  
**Attachments:** JNSC March 29 cmts. on MCMP.pdf

Dear All,

Thank you all for your serious consideration of the Montana Creek watershed, including the Spaulding Meadows. It has many good points, and we hope the Juneau Nordic Ski Club voice is heard and has weight in the future of winter use of this area. Please accept the attached JNSC comments.

On behalf of the JNSC Board and Members.

Frankie Pillifant,  
JNSC President,  
Juneau, AK.

**March 29, 2023**

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

**From: Juneau Nordic Ski Club (JNSC)**

**Subject: Comments regarding the March 2023 draft entitled “Montana Creek Area Plan: infrastructure and management”**

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

- The Juneau Nordic Ski Club (JNSC), a 501 c3 organization that serves the Nordic cross-country skiing community in the Juneau, Alaska area, would like to thank the various management agencies for this opportunity to comment on the March 2023 draft entitled “Montana Creek Area Plan: infrastructure and management”, released February 27, 2023.
- JNSC submitted comments to all previous drafts of the Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek) Watershed Master Plan. It is encouraging that the “plan” has evolved into more of an action plan with set priorities.
- We are also encouraged that several of the proposals put forward by the JNSC during the previous comment periods have been incorporated in the current draft. We appreciate the considerations for the large numbers of Nordic ski recreationist needs made by the management agencies and look forward to working with you to make these trails a reality.
- Addition of these trails (as discussed in the JNSC Nordic Ski Trail Development) will help realize the vision for an interconnected system of trails between the MGRA, Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek), and Spaulding Meadows (MMS). This is a positive step for users who enjoy non-motorized sports. It is heartening to have the management agencies supporting and advocating for non-motorized winter sports activities in the Master Plan. Trails built to Nordic ski standards will also likely benefit fishermen, hunters, hikers, bicyclists, school sports and other users year-around.
- JNSC is deeply concerned with the omission of two key action items to greatly alleviate equity concerns for crowd capacity and safe access on the current trails. Those trails are crucial to disperse numbers of skiers and to provide enhanced Nordic skiing opportunities to the CBJ community. The first concern is the deletion of the “East Montana Creek to McGinnis Loop” ski trail previously included in the (December 2022) draft. The second is skier access to the Spaulding Meadows ski trails. The JNSC is struggling with how skiers can utilize the proposed ski trails (5,6,7, and 8) and other terrain within Spaulding Meadows without improving safe skier access in the plan. This omission is in stark contrast to the plan’s action items #9, # 10 and #11, which would accommodate enhanced motorized access via either Lake Creek or 25-mile. There is ample opportunity for further discussion. It is unlikely the JNSC will be able to support without stronger indication that user equity is part of the plan.
- The sport of Biathlon has regained popularity and JNSC is active in reviving it for the CBJ community. JNSC supports the inclusion of a Biathlon facility along either Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek) or in Spaulding Meadows.

- The JNSC Youth Program has been a great success. This year, we have over 120 skiers in the program and over two dozen volunteer coaches. Expanding and connecting ski trails in the Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek) region would be of tremendous benefit to our youth programs. New, varied terrain will provide challenging opportunities for skill development and help alleviate trail congestion with other users during youth program practice sessions.
- We understand that the Nordic ski trails shown and listed in the plan are in the concept stage and their locations on the map serve as placeholders, pending actual ground surveys once funding is made available. We advise that the respective agencies involved in ski trail development consult with JNSC and also contract a professional Nordic ski trail designer.
- The plan does not address the trail head capacity issues currently experienced particularly during the winter ski season. With those capacity issues comes the need to address parking and how to deal with waste.
- We encourage the use of traditional Tlingit place names where available and/or solicit the advice of SHI or other native org entity to help appropriately name the new trails. For example, the Tlingit name for Montana Creek is Kaxdigoowu Héén, “going back clear water”.
- In our “specific comments” listed below, we use the numbering system established in the plan document and in the table of “Infrastructure Plan Priorities”.

## **SPECIFIC COMMENTS**

### **East Montana Creek (Kaxdigoowu Héén) Trail**

Conspicuously absent in the current draft is the “East Montana Creek to McGinnis Loop” non-motorized multi-use ski trail proposed by the JNSC found in the December 2022 draft. Adding ski trails in this region is particularly promising because of its cooler microclimate, with typically colder temperatures and higher snowpack. Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek) is one of Juneau’s most popular winter trails because of its dependable snow conditions.

The JNSC is strongly advocating to keep open the option of at least conceptually adding a loop up the McGinnis Creek valley as shown in the December 2022 plan. We believe that an on snow, “over-ground” winter ski trail can be groomed without impacting habitat. To minimize impact, the trail could be designed to be a “winter only” trail without hardening, or using a cut and fill approach.

CBJ noted the reason for removal of this conceptual trail location was due to concern from environmental based organizations. JNSC holds that premature removal of the concept prevents meaningful discussion to help identify project ‘boundaries’, rules, agreements acceptable routes and conditions under which it would be created.

To gain better understanding and discuss ideas of where, how and under what conditions a trail could be located within this zone, JNSC met with Trout Unlimited and Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition. Some ideas worth more follow up were put forth but with a looming comment deadline there was not adequate time to really dig into the details.

One potential route suggested is shown by the orange line in Figures 1a and 1b.; and others are possible. JNSC is strongly advocating for the inclusion of at least this modified East Montana Creek non-motorized trail in the final master plan.

The shortened trail would be ~ 2.0 – 2.5 km in length and cross Kaxdigoowu Héen (Montana Creek) at a place where a bridge had previously existed (the abutments are still there). From there, it would connect to the Montana Creek road/trail for a great ski loop of ~ 4 – 5 km. The new trail would be routed on the terrace that lies above creek on the eastside and be located at a distance far enough to minimize impacts on the creek. The trail can be gated at both ends to prevent illegal motorized access. The trail would also serve as a non-motorized corridor to connect to the USFS non-motorized section of “Montana Creek to Windfall Lake” trail, when that trail is rehabbed as proposed in Plan # 2.





Figure 1a. Modified East M Cr Nordic Ski Trail, orange line; M Cr road, red line. Landsat image.

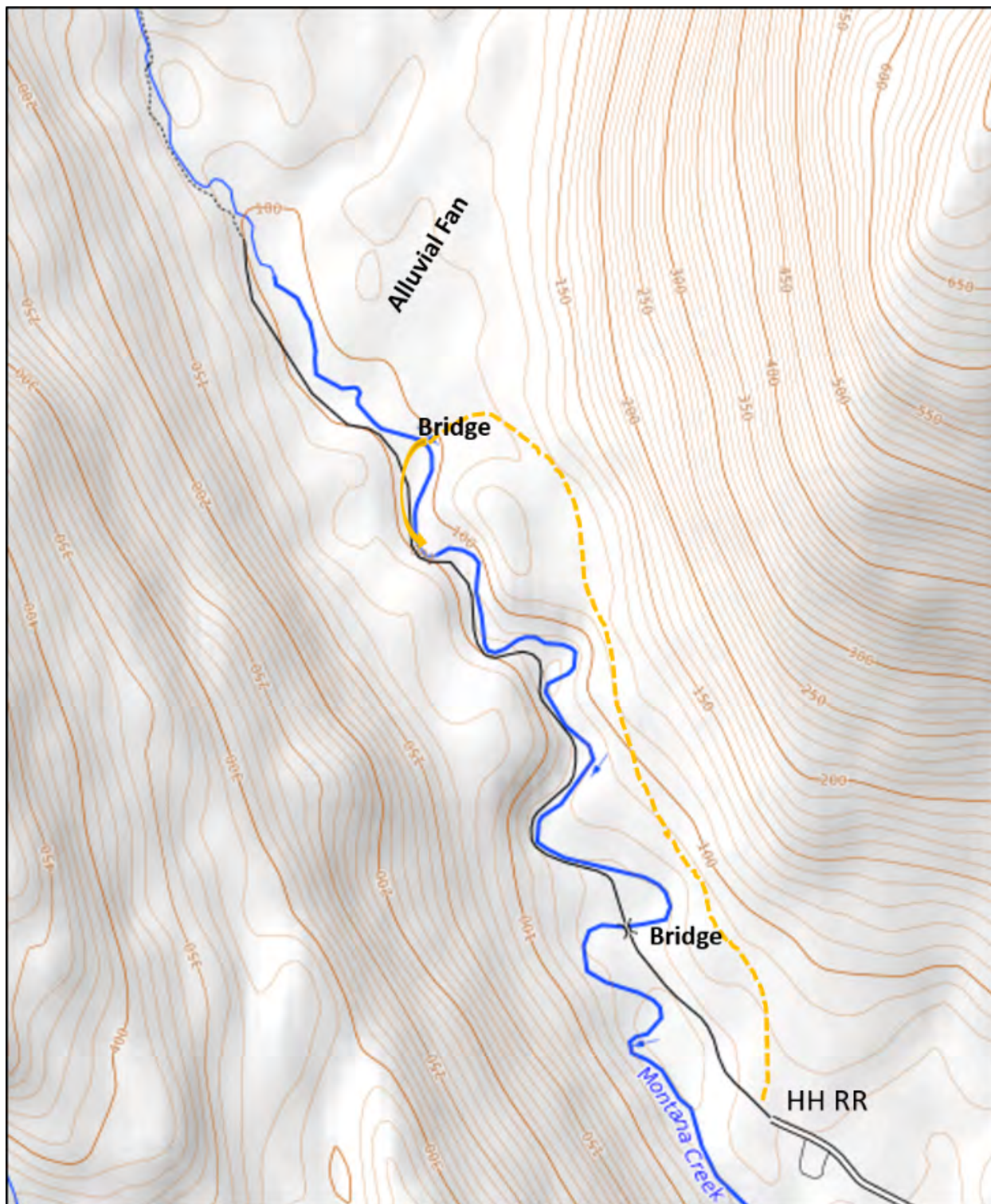


Figure 1b. Modified East M Cr Nordic Ski Trail, dashed orange line, 10 m contour interval. M Cr road is the black line.

It is also important to note that the current Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek) Montana Creek road/trail needs serious attention. Bank erosion is now affecting the trail, with a few sections becoming dangerously narrowed. Rehabilitation/restoration of this road/trail needs to be included in the plan and prioritized as 'short'.

### **Plan # 3: Develop new Mendenhall Glacier Area Access Trail to connect to Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek) Road**

Plan # 3 is to construct a new access trail to connect the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area (MGRA) trails to Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek) Road trail system. JNSC is encouraged to see it included in the plan and **development of this trail is one of our club's highest priorities**. JNSC has already done a preliminary recon of a route and shared details with CBJ P&R. Other, more direct routes are also possible but inholdings and wetlands may pose challenges. Most of the region that the trail would traverse is managed by CBJ. Construction of this trail would immediately increase the number of kms of interconnected ski, hiking, and biking trails. The youth program skiers can start at the campground for a Nordic practice, then ski to the M Cr trail via the new connector, and then zip back to the campground at the end of practice.

The plan states that *"CBJ and USFS are coordinating on a trail connection from Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area to Montana Creek Recreation Area, #3 on the plan"*.

Once the master plan is finalized, JNSC plans to approach both management agencies with proposals to jumpstart development of this trail.

### **Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek) Bridge**

A top JNSC priority is for the installation of a temporary bridge by DOTPF and then finding a permanent solution for the Montana Creek Bridge. We note that the bridge is still currently closed to all traffic due to substructure damage sustained during weather events in late September 2022. This closure deeply affects our Nordic skier base. Since JNSC began grooming Montana Creek, it has become one of the most popular ski destinations.

### **Plan #'s 1, 2 Reconstruct Existing Trails from Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek) Road to Windfall Lake Trailhead/Herbert River road**

JNSC fully supports the rehabilitation of both of these trails. We understand from email exchanges with Pete Schneider (USFS), that these trails will remain almost entirely non-motorized (except by permit for grooming). We also understand that technically a northern section of the Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek) trail (between Milepost 5.3 and 6.5) is open to snow machines (when sufficient snow levels exist) to access Windfall Lake cabin from Spaulding Meadows. We suggest that as part of any rehab, parallel trails be built along this section of the trail for safety reasons, one for non-motorized vs. motorized users. And the same, from Milepost 0.0 and 1.5 on the Spaulding Connection trail, which connects the meadows to the Montana Ck trail.

If the Windfall to Herbert River Road trail is also "reconstructed", we hope that it would be at a groomable width (even a classic-only width). JNSC could then potentially groom all the way to Windfall Lake and beyond to the Herbert River Road trailhead. With the addition of the connector trail (see Plan # 3), one could ski from the Mendenhall Campground to Herbert Road trailhead over a distance of ~ 25 km!



**Plan # 4: Develop University – Auke Lake – Auke Bay Elementary Spaulding Meadows Community connector trail**

JNSC supports this trail and hopes that it will be wide enough for Nordic skiing during the winter season.

**Plan # 5: Develop new Kaxdigoowu Héen (Montana Creek) Road to Lake Creek/ Spaulding Meadows connector trail**

JNSC supports this non-motorized trail from the Montana Creek road, although the 1000'+ climb to Spaulding Meadows may be challenging for many skiers. The trail's location as shown on the plan's map traverses steep terrain. Several switchbacks will be necessary to maintain a low enough grade for Nordic skiing and moving grooming equipment (Figure 2). However, the trail would provide skier and grooming access to the meadows and trails 6 and 7.

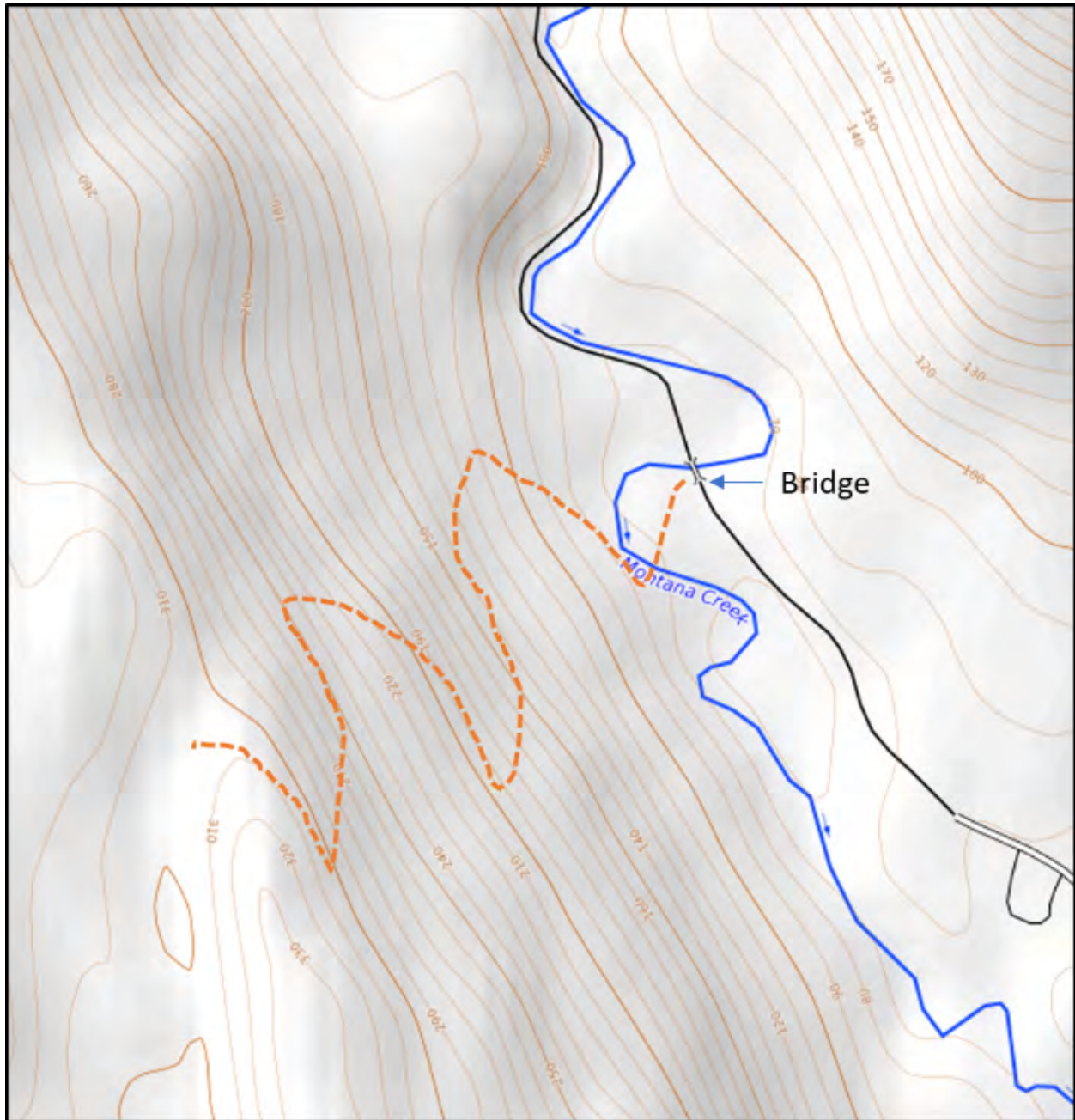


Figure 2. Possible routing of Trail 5 from M Cr bridge to SM, dashed orange line, 10 m contour interval.

As shown in **Appendix i** of the plan, the upper part of trail 5, would traverse a motorized zone of Spaulding Meadows. JNSC is concerned motorized traffic may interfere with these non-motorized trails. The map also shows trail 5 continuing to the Lake Creek Trail and then to John Muir cabin; is that correct?

**Plan # 6: Develop new Auke Nu to Spaulding Meadows Trail to Lake Creek Connector Loop trail**

Because the meadows are higher in elevation (~ 1400 ft), non-motorized trails 5, 6, 7, and 8 are high on JNSC's priority list in order to help compensate for ongoing climate warming. However, JNSC winter trail grooming doesn't require hardened trails for grooming in the Spaulding Meadows region. The natural snowpack is generally deep enough that JNSC can groom these trails without hardening and the wild-land character of the meadows could then be maintained in the summer – essentially doing away with any footprint of our winter activities. However, if the trail is hardened, it would be great to have it wide enough for grooming equipment.

#### **Plan # 7: Develop new John Muir Cabin to Peterson Lake Cabin connector trail**

A flagged route already exists in the winter on a natural snowpack and the JNSC supports this non-motorized trail. If meant to be also a summer trail, then hardening would likely be required with a width to accommodate at least setting a classic track during winter.

#### **Plan # 8: Develop new Peterson Lake Trail to new cabin to Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek) Trail connector**

The JNSC definitely supports this non-motorized trail. Again, if it is meant to be also a summer trail, we ask that the trail be wide enough to accommodate at least setting a classic track during winter. Addition of this trail would make for an excellent hut-to-hut ski tour loop.

#### **Plan # 9: Develop trail extending from the end of 25 Mile Road to new cabin.**

JNSC does not support adding yet another avenue of access to Spaulding Meadows for motorized users. The plan should choose either Lake Creek (Plan # 10) or this trail for motorized access, not both! Also, topography may make this option prohibitively difficult.

#### **Plan # 10: Extend Lake Creek Road**

This project location should be centered around the goal of safe access for all users on these public lands. Whether a road or a trail, the JNSC supports improved safe access for people and equipment to the Spaulding Meadows. If a road is proposed to go to a mid-elevation level then the JNSC cannot support its construction. Additionally, there are many voices who have expressed environmental and safety concerns should a road be constructed. The details are very important on this project. As currently proposed this project is seen as a half-measure and would be the very worst outcome for skiers allowing increased motorized access during early and late seasonal periods, when skiers can enjoy the meadows without noise from snowmobiles.

If this is actually a project to extend the current snowmachine club initiated hardened trail access then it needs to be constructed with grades low enough on the last half mile to allow grooming equipment access.

#### **Skier Access to Spaulding Meadows**

Spaulding Meadows presents an important opportunity as the climate continues to warm for maintaining accessible Nordic ski trails for the general public in the near future. An issue that JNSC is struggling to understand is how this plan can improve skier access to the proposed ski trails (5,6,7, and 8) and other terrain within Spaulding Meadows. We are very appreciative that the plan includes these non-motorized-use ski trails, but we are in a quandary on how to groom them without suitable access to the meadows. Improved skier access to the meadows is fundamentally needed if we are to have equity of access.

JNSC thus advocates for a meeting between the management agencies preparing the M Cr MP and our club as well as environmental based organizations to strategize how best to provide improved access for skiers and grooming equipment. .

### **Plan # 11 Extend 25 Mile Road**

As previously discussed, JNSC is opposed to having two motorized access points to Spaulding Meadows. If you build the 25-mile motorized access, close Lake Creek to motorized access and vice versa. In any event, topography may make an extension of the 25-mile road totally unrealistic.

### **Additional Infrastructure Plan Priorities**

We support all of the following priorities:

Develop new Cabin

Develop Covered Picnic Areas

Expand Parking and Trailhead Improvements Auke Nu

Develop signage

Perform Habitat Restoration

Replace Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek) Road Bridge

Work towards DNR Cooperative Management agreement

### **SUMMARY**

The JNSC, and our members, are very grateful to the management agencies for our mutual decades-long partnership in the Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek) watershed. Together we have provided tens of thousands of winter user days of recreation to Juneau residents and visitors. We are eager to cooperate with CBJ, DNR and the USFS in developing these new trails. The expanded trail system will accommodate the growing numbers of year-around users of the watershed for the decades to come and is integral to establishing a connected trail system between the MGRA, the Kaxdigoowu Héén (Montana Creek) trails and Spaulding Meadows (MMS) (<https://jnski.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/JNSC-Nordic-Trail-Development-Plan-Jan-09-2022.pdf>).

Thank you on behalf of the Juneau Nordic Ski Club board and members.

Frankie Pillifant, President

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)>,  
Greg Lockwood, ADOTPF <[greg.lockwood@alaska.gov](mailto:greg.lockwood@alaska.gov)>   
George Schaaf, CBJ P&R <[George.Schaaf@juneau.org](mailto:George.Schaaf@juneau.org)>

## Eric Moots

---

**From:** Percy, Colton T (DFG) <colton.percy@alaska.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2023 11:26 AM  
**To:** Michele Elfers; Parks Rec  
**Cc:** Catterson, Matthew R (DFG); Teske, Daniel J (DFG); Carter, Marla M (DFG); Love, David C (DFG); Churchwell, Roy T (DFG); Fritz, Evan (DFG); Koch, Carl H (DFG); Lindgren, Jesse W (DFG); Krull, Dylan P (DFG); Kanouse, Kate M (DFG)  
**Subject:** RE: Revised Montana Creek Area Plan Public Comment Period through 3-29

Hi Michele,

I wanted to pass along comments from ADF&G Sport Fish on the revised draft.

*ADF&G Sport Fish has reviewed the March 2023 Draft Montana Creek Area Plan and support the removal of the previously proposed trail on the northwest side of Montana Creek extending to the McGinnis Creek area. That trail would have been difficult to construct and may have impacted fish habitat in the area.*

*Additionally, we would recommend that action item #1 include provisions to restore any existing aquatic resource or fish habitat damage and be designed purposefully to protect these important resources from future impacts. This may be implicit in the draft plan, but this is an important opportunity to specifically address impacts to the high value fish habitat of the Montana Creek watershed and strengthen future protections.*

*Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this process, we look forward to continued involvement in this work as the plan progresses.*

Thank you again for your assistance in this process.

### Colton Percy

#### Habitat Biologist

#### Access Defense Program

Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Division of Wildlife Conservation  
333 Raspberry Rd  
Anchorage, AK 99518  
907-267-2118

---

**From:** Michele Elfers <Michele.Elfers@juneau.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 27, 2023 2:36 PM  
**To:** Michele Elfers <Michele.Elfers@juneau.gov>  
**Cc:** tristan.fluharty@usda.gov; Schneider, Pete- FS <Peter.Schneider@usda.gov>; Hertel, Maxwell - FS, AK <maxwell.hertel@usda.gov>; Ryan O'Shaughnessy (ryan@juneautrails.org) <ryan@juneautrails.org>; Hillgartner, Megan G (DNR) <megan.hillgartner@alaska.gov>; Lockwood, Gregory K (DOT) <greg.lockwood@alaska.gov>; George Schaaf <George.Schaaf@juneau.gov>; Dale Gosnell <Dale.Gosnell@juneau.gov>; Colby Shibler <Colby.Shibler@juneau.gov>  
**Subject:** Revised Montana Creek Area Plan Public Comment Period through 3-29

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside the State of Alaska mail system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Afternoon,

This email is being sent to you because you participated in a meeting or provided public comment on the Montana Creek plan.

The revised draft of the Montana Creek Area Infrastructure and Management Plan is available for review and public comment. The plan was further developed this winter with the input received from comments and discussion during and after the public meeting in December. Written public comments for this draft will be accepted through Wednesday, March 29 at 5pm. CBJ, USFS, DNR, DOT and Trail Mix will then review the comments and make final revisions to the plan. A public meeting will be held to answer questions on the final plan and discuss next steps. This meeting date will be determined in the next few weeks.

The plan can be found [here](#) or on the project webpage with all associated documents: <https://juneau.org/parks-recreation/project-list/entry/77110>

Email comments to [Parks.Rec@juneau.gov](mailto:Parks.Rec@juneau.gov) prior to Wednesday, March 29 at 5pm.

Thank you for your continued participation in this plan!

**Michele Elfers**

Deputy Director  
Parks & Recreation  
[Michele.Elfers@juneau.gov](mailto:Michele.Elfers@juneau.gov)  
Ph: 364-2390



**Eric Moots**

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**From:** jonheifetz <jonheifetz@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2023 10:11 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Cc:** Michele Elfers  
**Subject:** Comments on Montana Creek Master Plan  
**Attachments:** Montana Creek Comments March 2023.pdf

Please see the attached comments from the Tongass Chapter of Trout Unlimited



Tongass Chapter of Trout Unlimited #581  
Juneau, AK 99801

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Dear Montana Creek Master Plan Team,

Thank you for all the effort that has gone into developing the Montana Creek Master Plan. Please consider these comments from the Tongass Chapter of Trout Unlimited in conjunction with our previous communications on the Plan. These are our most salient observations from the current draft.

1. Habitat Restoration is listed as a short-term priority in the plan yet there is no information in the text on pages 9 and 10. **We suggest adding a number 12 which gives some details about habitat restoration and recognition of what has caused the need for restoration.** For example, as stated by us previously over the last 20 or more years, illegal construction of motorized trails has damaged tributary streams and other habitat accessible from the road portion of the Montana Creek trail. Successful restoration of damage caused by motorized vehicles (i.e. ATV's during summer) will require that access be curtailed. Restoration will be futile if these vehicles are allowed continued access. The simplest and most cost-effective way to accomplish this would be to construct a gated entry near the bridge. We believe this would not require any change in regulations. There are examples of such gated access in the CBJ such as the Pioneer Road. Alternatively illegal trail building could potentially be curtailed using rock or wood barriers near the areas of damage. These barriers would likely not be as effective as a gated entrance. We recognize that specifics concerning restoration need to be worked out, but some details in the Plan's text should be included in the next draft.
2. A minor comment is that all maps should include the location of the Montana Creek bridge. Given that many of the maps are of different scales, having a reference point such as the bridge would be very helpful.
3. We are aware of the Juneau Nordic Ski Club's desire to develop groomed ski trails in the McGinnis Creek area and that these trails have not been included in the Master Plan. We met with SAWC and the JNSC to get a better understanding of what would be required for these trails and the habitat issues. We recognize that such trails would enhance recreational opportunities in our community. At this point however we are not supportive of formalized development of trails because of potential impacts to habitat. For example, there are heavily timbered sections in this area that may need to be modified to "open the canopy" so adequate snow can fall on a trail. There is also uncertainty regarding whether such trail development would encourage ATV use in the area under current land use regulations.

Sincerely,

Jon Heifetz  
President, Tongass Chapter TU  
jonheifetz@yahoo.com



## Eric Moots

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**From:** Rob Cadmus <rob@sawcak.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2023 9:00 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec; Michele Elfers  
**Cc:** John Hudson  
**Subject:** Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition comments on Montana Creek Area Plan- Infrastructure and Management (March 2023)  
**Attachments:** 2022 Dec Mt Creek Mast Plan SAWC Comments03.27.23.pdf

Dear Michele,

Thank you for the effort placed into the development of the Montana Creek Master Plan. CBJ, AK DNR, and the USFS have put sincere effort into the process, and the large number of comments and huge range of viewpoints on the plan show how important this area is and how diverse the uses are.

Please find below comments from the Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition on the most recent version of the Montana Creek Area Plan- Infrastructure and Management (March 2023).

Sincerely,

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

March 29, 2023

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

Subject: Montana Creek Area Plan

Dear Michele,

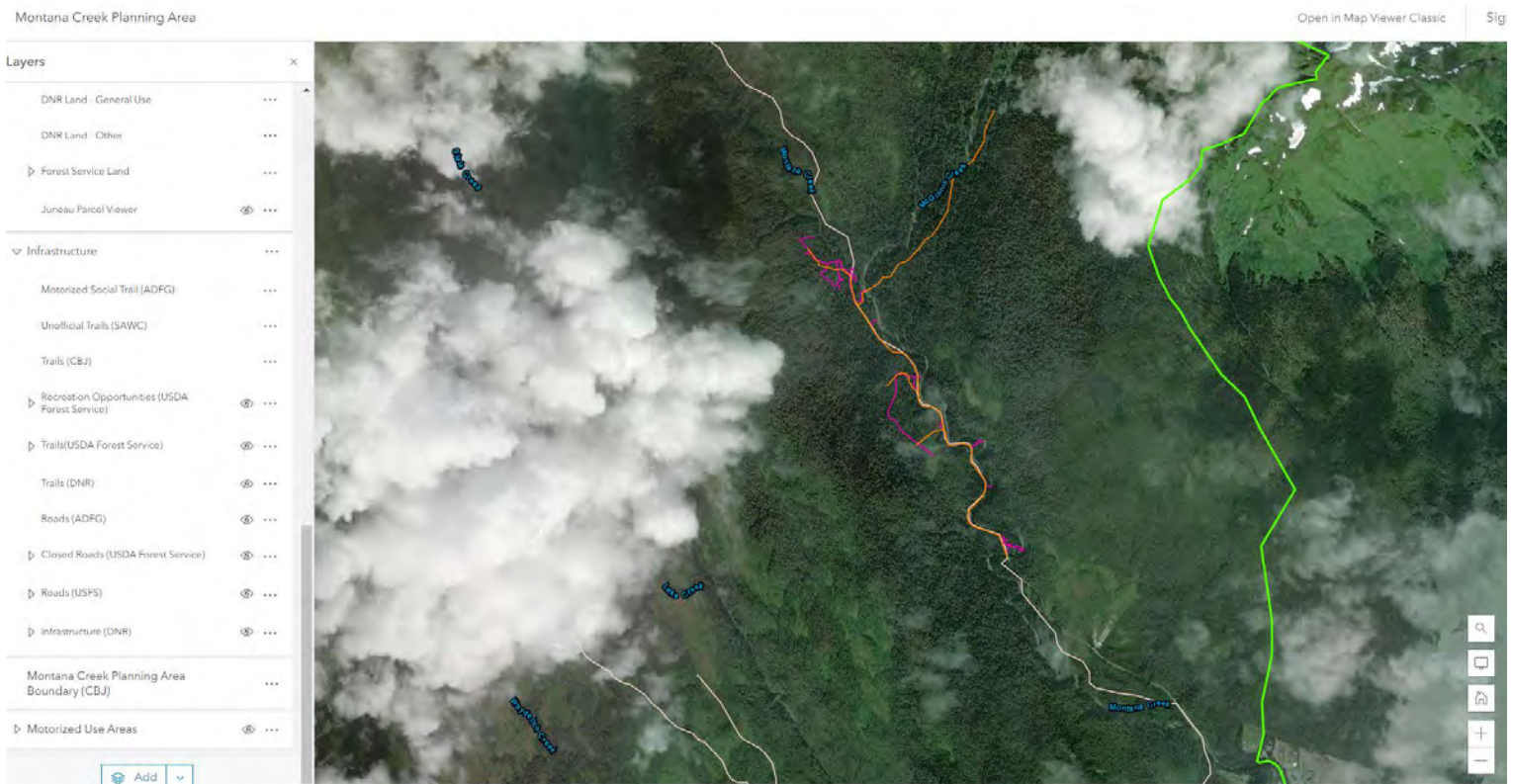
Thank you for the effort placed into the development of the Montana Creek Master Plan. CBJ, AK DNR, and the USFS have put sincere effort into the process, and the large number of comments and huge range of viewpoints on the plan show how important this area is and how diverse the uses are. Please find below comments from the Southeast Alaska Watershed Coalition on the most recent version of the Montana Creek Area Plan-Infrastructure and Management (March 2023).

*Stream Conservation Corridor-* We strongly support the concept of a 500ft stream conservation corridor proposed in the plan and recommendation that new trails should be 300ft from the stream. A stream buffer that protects natural vegetation, prevents disturbance and infrastructure development, and allow for natural channel migration is the most effective way to ensure that Juneau's most loved salmon stream stays healthy and intact. While the concept of the stream conservation corridor is suggested on page 7 of the plan, the description does not detail what authority it will be created under and what activities will and will not be allowed in the 500ft corridor. We would support a CBJ ordinance and amendments to the DNR management plan & Tongass National Forest Land Management Plan are most durable and binding. We would be interested in meeting with CBJ, DNR, and USFS to discuss the type of protection a conservation corridor could have, and we suggest placing a map in the appendix that shows the location of the stream conservation corridor.

*Montana Creek Trail/Road-* In previous comments, SAWC recommended a long-term plan to remove and rehabilitate Montana Creek Road upstream of the multi-use bridge crossing to reduce impacts to Montana Creek. While the plan does not make this recommendation, the plan does call for rerouting trail/road 300ft away from the road where feasible. We suggest that during the implementation of infrastructure plan projects 1 and 2 there should be a mapping exercise to document problem areas and make recommendations for rerouting along the entire stream corridor. This exercise will not

only inform trail reconstruction plans but should result in a geospatial map that can be used for future projects should circumstances allow road closure and habitat restoration of the Montana Creek Road upstream of the multi-use bridge in the future.

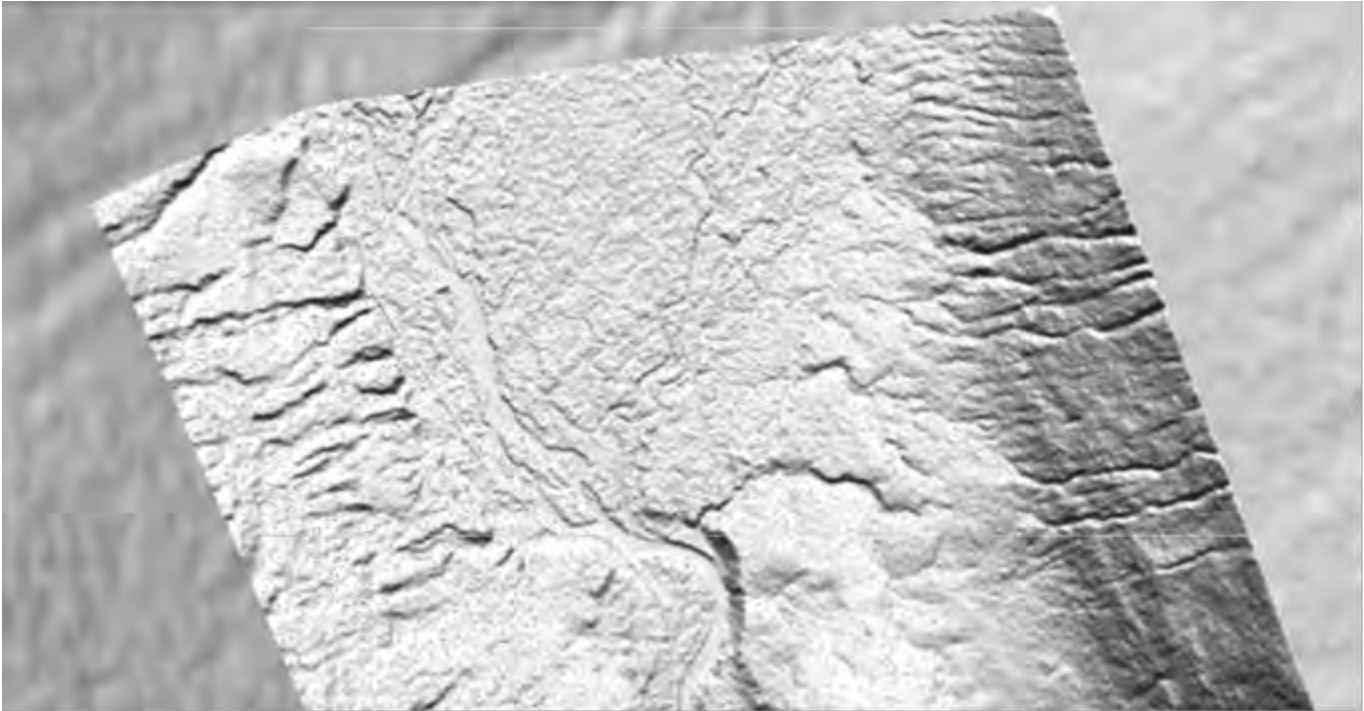
**Habitat Restoration-** We appreciate that “perform habitat restoration” is listed as a priority project in the short term. Illegal motorized trails have damaged habitat accessible from the road portion of Montana Creek trail. We propose using hand tools to fell and manipulate trees and large wood to block access to illegal trails. Rocks or other natural barriers could also be used. Local native plants could then be transplanted into the trails (including sourcing moss/vegetated mats that are naturally growing on fallen trees/stumps or locally grown native plants). In some places where illegal trails have captured water and caused rutting, some light digging and filling may be necessary. Such activities will benefit habitat, reduce erosion and discourage more illegal motorized use. SAWC would be excited to help with a project like this and would be interested in involving volunteers from the motorized use groups, local TU chapter, Trailmix, and/or the Juneau Nordic Ski Club. ORV trails mapped by SAWC and ADF&G can be found on the Montana Creek Mapper (*Clipped below*), and all these trails are candidates for restoration.



*Above: Clip from the Montana Creek Mapper that shows illegal ORV trails in need of restoration.*

**McGinnis Creek Valley-** We support keeping the McGinnis Creek valley and alluvial fan trail and road free as currently proposed in the plan. This area contains a network of floodplain stream channels that provide high quality fish habitat. The area is an active geological formation called an alluvial fan. Substrate being moved from the upper

McGinnis Valley settles out as the gradient lessens and causes the stream to braid, migrate, and change course over time. This dynamic environment results in large old growth trees (*stream sediment left high and dry is well drained and a good growing material*) and diverse fish habitat (*the stream migrates and bumps into living and dead large trees which forms a complex series of pools, riffles, and hiding place*). This type of landscape is also extremely challenging to build trails on because the channel changes so much, leaving expensive fish passage culverts high and dry and washing out the trail in other locations. **For these reasons, we propose that the Stream Conservation Corridor include all the McGinnis Creek alluvial fan.**



*Above: LiDAR derived elevation model of the lower portion of the McGinnis Creek alluvial fan (Center, high resolution cuts fan in half because of lack of data) shows a large flat area with numerous active and abandoned stream channels. This dynamic landform characteristically has excellent fish habitat, large trees, and is a challenging place to build trails and roads.*

We understand that the Juneau Nordic Ski Club is interested in grooming ski trails in the McGinnis Creek area during winter when snow and ice cover is deep enough to allow machines to safely cross over the streams and not impact vegetation or ground cover. Our understanding is that the current land use designation already allows this type of activity if stream crossing structures and clearing of vegetation are not needed. The majority of the McGinnis Creek area is managed by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources and motorized use of snowmachines and ski grooming equipment is currently allowed without an AK Habitat Permit for crossing anadromous streams when the ice and snow is at a sufficient depth. We note that most of the formalized winter snowmachine

and groomed ski trails that are build without a hardened surface (*Eaglecrest upper loop, upper Dan Moller Trail, and Mount Jumbo Snowmachine trail*) generally require removal of vegetation and use bridges and culverts for crossing structures or discarded slash and debris to facilitate snow build up over the streams. This type of formalized winter trail is not appropriate for the McGinnis Creek alluvial fan.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Cadmus", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Rob Cadmus  
Executive Director

**Eric Moots**

---

**From:** Stephen Kocsis <shiva8128@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2023 8:54 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana creek access

Sir/Madam

I would like to see non-motorized access to Montana creek, Windfall lake and Skaters cabin for hiking and nordic skiing. This has less impact for users.

Especially important is to open the Montana creek bridge to non-motorized users.

Steve Kocsis  
retired,  
25 year valley resident..

**Eric Moots**

---

**From:** thomascd@gci.net  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2023 8:39 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

Michelle Elfers & CBJ Parks & Recreation Board, U.S. Forest Service, Alaska Departments of Natural Resources & Transportation, & Trail Mix,

Thank you for this opportunity to voice our opinion on the proposed Montana Creek Master Plan. We appreciate all the work you have done on this plan.

We have been enjoying Nordic skiing in the Juneau area for 60 + years. About 30 years ago a small group of enthusiastic cross-country skiers bought a small track setter for grooming ski trails. With consistent groomed ski trails the Nordic ski community has grown to over a thousand skiers.

We support the Juneau Nordic Ski Clubs position on the Montana Creek Master Plan. Please continue to expand the cross-country ski opportunities and options in the Juneau area.

Thanks again for working together to build a a strong Nordic plan for the skiers of Juneau.

Sincerely,  
Don & Chris Thomas  
9220 Gee St.  
Juneau, AK 99801

## Eric Moots

---

**From:** Elizabeth Flory <lizflory@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 28, 2023 10:45 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** More xc skiing in Montana Creek Master Plan!  
**Attachments:** Blank.pages

Hello!

I have attached my comments on the Montana Creek Master Plan.

Thank you for all the work put into the plan

Liz



## Commenting in the Montana Creek Master Plan

March 29, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the use of the Montana Creek area including Spaulding Meadows.

As a nordic skier and user of the area for over 20 years, I feel there is a strong need for separate non-motorized and motorized access trails to Spaulding Meadows for hikers and skiers to feel safe. On steep hill sections snow machine users must keep their speed up in order to keep moving so there is little time for hikers and skiers to get out of their way especially with newer and quieter electric models. For a hiker or skier to get out of the way of a snow machine they must sometimes climb out of a deep snow trench with slippery snow and ice, which cannot always be done quickly. Some snow machiners seem extremely upset to find walkers or skiers near the trail they use, even when they are off to the side to let them pass.

There is a huge need to keep non-motorized and motorized areas of Spaulding Meadows separate. While snow machines can easily glide over ski tracks in the snow, there are times when skiers cannot pass over the frozen deep ruts and lumps of ice left by snow machines. There were times this past season when the non-motorized area was completely covered in frozen snow machine tracks and completely unusable by skiers.

Many hikers and skiers want a peaceful nature experience, not one impacted by the noise of machines or by strong smelling exhaust fumes left in the wake of snow machines. Skiers should also have a safe place to ski away from snow machiners being aggressive and yelling at skiers. Unfortunately it only takes one snow machiner to ruin the experience of hundreds of skiers therefore a non-motorized area must be maintained.

It should be remembered perhaps that it is the machines that are excluded, not the people - everyone is welcome in the non-motorized area, just not with a machine.

I oppose the building of a road up to Spaulding Meadows at 25 mile. If this is built then please close Lake Creek Trail to motorized use (except for any slow-moving ski trail grooming equipment).



There is a huge need to keep non-motorized and motorized areas of Spaulding Meadows separate. While snow machines can easily glide over ski tracks in the snow, there are times when skiers cannot pass over the frozen deep ruts and lumps of ice left by snow machines. There were times this past season when the non-motorized area was completely covered in frozen snow machine tracks and completely unusable by skiers.

Many hikers and skiers want a peaceful nature experience, not one impacted by the noise of machines or by strong smelling exhaust fumes left in the wake of snow machines. Skiers should also have a safe place to ski away from snow machiners being aggressive and yelling at skiers. Unfortunately it only takes one snow machiner to ruin the experience of hundreds of skiers therefore a non-motorized area must be maintained.

It should be remembered perhaps that it is the machines that are excluded, not the people - everyone is welcome in the non-motorized area, just not with a machine.

I oppose the building of a road up to Spaulding Meadows at 25 mile. If this is built then please close Lake Creek Trail to motorized use (except for any slow-moving ski trail grooming equipment).

Please keep all motorized access to winter use only. If road access to muskeg areas is allowed it will quickly be destroyed and churned into quagmire that nobody can use.

I do support the proposals to add more Nordic ski trails including a dedicated ski trail alongside Montana Creek and near West Glacier trail. There are more skiers every year and more ski miles are always welcome especially in years when Mendenhall Lake does not freeze over.

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment.

Liz Flory  
Juneau, Alaska.





**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Suzanne Peschier <suzpeschier@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 28, 2023 8:27 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

Thank you for all your hard work on the Montana Creek Master Plan.

I think it is important to note that some of the trails in the area are currently in very poor shape. Spaulding Meadows trail is very rough and the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake trail is difficult to follow and in need of new bridges. I would prefer to see Juneau's existing trails be improved for year round use before any new trails are built. It doesn't make any sense to add more infrastructure to a system that is not being maintained. I also think it's important to leave some areas in Juneau available for individuals who enjoy backcountry skiing/camping in places with no trails. The Spaulding Ridge is a perfect place for that and provides a lot of skiing opportunities without any additional infrastructure.

Adding or upgrading roads to the area seems unnecessary and cost prohibitive. The road to Windfall Lake TH was closed several years ago due to vandalism, garbage dumping and illegal behavior. I would anticipate similar problems if a road and parking lot were to be built at Mile 25. Keeping two access roads plowed and maintained for year round use would be very expensive.

Thank you for considering my comments,  
Suzanne Peschier

## Eric Moots

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**From:** David Tallmon <david.tallmon@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 28, 2023 9:10 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Cr Master Plan

Dear CBJ-

I write to support several features of the draft Montana Creek Master Plan. I would urge you to include the following features as proposed....

- replace the bridge out at Montana Creek that limits access to the trail.
- the connector trail in the University-Auke Lake-Auke Bay Elementary area.
- the rehab and improvement of the Montana Cr - Windfall trail.
- non-motorized ski trails in Spaulding Meadows.
- the new cabin

I would also do everything you can to separate the motorized from non-motorized trail use. They're simply incompatible. I, and many of the skiers I know, will not use trails that have motorized use because they're noisy and dangerous to navigate on skis. Motorized trails need to be separate and put in places where their noise does not affect the experience of non-motorized trail users.

Thanks for your work on this. Its a very exciting draft plan.

Sincerely

David Tallmon

4453 Mountainside Dr

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Heidi Brodersen <brodersenheidia@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 28, 2023 9:04 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** more xc skiing in Montana Creek Master Plan!

Dear Parks & Rec,

Thank you for your ongoing inclusion, and further development, of non-motorized cross-country ski trails in the Montana Creek Master Plan.

Please keep the following items in the plan:

- The connector trail from Montana Creek to Skater's Cabin.
- Rehabilitation of the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake and Herbert River Road trails.
- Replacement of the now broken bridge across Montana Creek.
- Increased access to Spaulding Meadows from the Montana Creek valley.
- Dedicated, non-motorized Nordic ski trails in the Spaulding Meadows region.
- University - Auke Lake - Auke Bay Elementary Community Connector Trail.

Please add the following items back into the plan:

- A ski trail on the northeast side of the Montana Creek valley (other side of the creek from currently groomed dirt road).

And finally:

- Please do not add a second motorized access to Spaulding Meadows. Either build the 25 Mile Access (as proposed) and close the current Lake Creek access, or vise versa.

I appreciate your ongoing work on this important plan and the ability to weigh in.

Sincerely,  
Heidi Brodersen

## Eric Moots

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**From:** peggycowan@mac.com  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 25, 2023 9:12 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Public Comments on MT Creek Area Plan  
**Attachments:** MT CRK Cmmnts Cowan.pdf

18005 Point Stephens Road  
Juneau, AK 99801

March 25, 2023

Dear Montana Creek Area Master Plan Developers,

Thank you for your invitation for comments on the Montana Creek Area Plan, Infrastructure and Management. I appreciate your thoughtful review and involvement of the multiple stakeholders and agencies and responsiveness to public comment.

I am generally in favor of plan as proposed, but have some questions and recommendations that your planning can address in the future. I think the plan accomplishes your project goals and addresses the project themes, especially as you balance needs of various groups.

My questions are about the designations around motorized and non-motorized trails. The map, Montana Creek Infrastructure Plan, p. 15 of the Appendix, indicates whether the new trails are motorized or non-motorized, but not the existing trails. For instance, the Lake Creek Trail, which to my knowledge, is motorized use is brown and the adjacent Auke Nu Trail, which to my knowledge is non-motorized, is also brown. I did try to visually overlay the map on p. 17 of motorized areas, but I'm not sure of my interpretation. So, I'm basing my comments on my understanding of current use. I suggest you clarify those uses for existing trails as you do for planned trails on the plan map.

I am supportive of all the non-numbered improvements listed on the bottom of the Action Items on p. 12 IX Infrastructure Plan Priorities. My thanks to the agencies for these priorities. My only question is where are the CBJ picnic areas going to be developed?

I am enthusiastic and supportive of the non-motorized connector and loop trails to connect the route from Montana Creek Trail to Peterson Lake Trail via 5 from Montana Creek, 6 to Auke Nu and 7 on to Peterson Lake. With trail 5, you have a non-motorized trail crossing a winterized motorized use area. I am generally reluctant to mix motorized and non-motorized users for both safety and quality of the experience. I think this trail 5 is vital for the completion of the connection, but I can see that signage and management will need to be very clear. I think connector 6 is in the non-motorized area from the maps in the plan, but this also will need to be clear on the ground.

My next two comments are about what is not articulated in the plan, first the non-motorized trail in the Montana Creek valley and then the definition of "trail." At the public forum at the



Trail Mix building, there was a proposed non-motorized trail on the other side of Montana Creek from the current road. I can see that that could be a long-term priority, rather than an immediate need, but I think it should be left in the vision for the long term plan described for the future.

For your future planning and development, I urge you to take a modest approach to the definition of a trail. For instance, I was taken by surprise in the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Plan, as they call a fourteen foot, paved thoroughfare a "trail"; by common understanding, that is a one-lane road. As you seek public input in the future, please articulate the development dimensions and materials for the trails and please keep them the same character and development dimensions as the current Auke Nu and Peterson Lake Trail, thank you.

Thank you for allowing us to comment. I hope your final plan minimally mixes motorized and non-motorized uses, has modest trail dimensions, includes the new trails described in this draft and adds the additional trail along Montana Creek valley.

Sincerely,



Margaret Cowan

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Hoag Stephanie <stephaniehoag52@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 25, 2023 8:23 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

Thank you for the extensive work that you have put into the Montana Creek Master plan.

I especially like the plans for new connector trails between Skaters Cabin and the Montana creek area, the University-Auke Lake Connector trail, the rehabilitation of the existing trail between Windfall lake and Montana Creek, and would like to see summer hiking trails in Spaulding Meadows and a connection to the Windfall/Montana Creek Trail.

I am concerned about the development of shared use trails.

As a former snowmachine owner I get it that motorized users do not mind sharing trails with other users, But, I don't think that shared use works well for most of those other users: hikers, walkers, snowshoers, skiers, birders, dog-walkers or fishermen who want to recreate in nature and value a quiet, peaceful experience in fresh air, or who seek aerobic exercise without breathing fumes that linger in the air.

I would prefer that motorized and non-motorized users be accommodated in separate areas.

I am not in favor of a second motorized access into the Spaulding Meadows area.

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** ksd@alaska.net  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 25, 2023 12:48 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** montana creek comments

Hello, please add my comments-----I have heard rumors for years that there will be a refurbishment of the trail from end of montana creek road to windfall lake. This is long overdue! One of best things that ever happened was when they cut the bridge in half and closed the road to motorized traffic! The road was a dump run and shit show until then, period. So I used the trail for many years, mostly for mountain biking, until the washout that occurred regularly made it too dangerous to cross, even with a rope. Now the boardwalks in the meadows have mostly fallen into ruin as well. SO, I say please redo the trail and somehow deal with that washout section, and then redo the meadow boardwalks---I say do Not put gravel in the meadow!! it is just too much new boardwalks will work just fine!! Regarding the road and cross country skiing, some lady yelled at me and friend for riding our bikes there on the snow, because it messed up the ski tracks....yeah, I get it, but with snowbikes getting more popular, there should be space to ride them too! Cheers!

Kurt S. Dzinich, Jr.

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Selina Finley <selinarosemary@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 25, 2023 9:22 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

Good Morning!

I am writing in support of the Nordic ski trail improvements proposed at Montana Creek. In particular I am excited about the prospect of a trail to the Skaters Cabin area as well as increased access to Spaulding Meadows from the Montana Creek Valley including a dedicated, non-motorized trail system within the Spaulding Meadows region.

Thank you for your dedication to the management and further development of our trails here in Juneau!

Warm regards,

Selina Finley  
502-767-8651

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** cbaxter907@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 23, 2023 2:11 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan  
**Attachments:** SKMBT\_C22023032315300.pdf

Hi,

In the attachment is comments from the Juneau Snowmobile club for the Montana Creek Master Plan.

Corey Baxter  
JSC President



JUNEAU SNOWMOBILE CLUB

March 23, 2023

Re: Montana Creek Master Plan

To Whom It May Concern,

After reviewing the Montana Creek Master Plan, the Juneau Snowmobile club is in support of the general outlook of the plan. As stated in previous comment periods we like the idea of more cabins being added in the Spaulding meadows area for motorized users, adding additional access at 25 mile, and looking into extending the parking lot up to a higher elevation for earlier access to snow during minimal snow years.

We as a club also want to stress that even though we support the 25-mile access route, it should at no point during the winter months be a substituted access point from the original Lake Creek trail access for motorized use. Meaning we don't want to see Lake Creek Trail closed due to other access points.

As we have stated many times before we believe the Montana Creek area should be open to all user groups through out the year and want to thank you for drafting this plan and keeping all user groups involved in the planning process.

Sincerely,

Corey Baxter  
JSC President

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** mmasuda@gci.net  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 7:15 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** comments on Montana Creek Master Plan

Dear CBJ Parks and Recreation Staff,

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

1) Please restore in the MCMP a ski trail on the northeast side of Montana Creek valley for non-motorized use. At a modest cost, construction of the trail would provide an immediate reduction in dangerous interactions between motorized and non-motorized users on the Montana Creek Road past the rifle range. Alternatively, motorized use on Montana Creek Road past the rifle range could be restricted seasonally: Nov.-April.

2) I support the construction of a nordic ski trail from Montana Creek to Skater's cabin, allowing continuous skiing (and hiking) between the two recreational areas. Connecting the areas would lead to an all-year, high-quality recreational trail system for locals and visitors.

3) The damaged bridge across Montana Creek should be repaired or replaced.

4) I support increased non-motorized access to Spaulding Meadows from the Montana Creek valley.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Michele Masuda

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Iris Matthews <alaskaniris@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 11:57 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek master plan

Hi Parks & Rec!

I just wanted to comment on the proposed plan. I appreciate all the repairs, increased access, and new trails that have been included in the plan, particularly the non-motorized trails.

I would like to see the ski trail on the northeast side of the Montana Creek valley added back in. Juneau really needs more accessible winter recreational trails.

I am not in favor of a second motorized access to Spaulding Meadows, I'd prefer the 25 mile access point.

Thank you! I appreciate the opportunity to share my comments as a frequent winter skier.

Iris Matthews



**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Sam Steensland <sam\_steensland@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 1:52 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** More xc skiing in Montana Creek Master Plan!

Dear Juneau Parks and Rec,

Thanks for taking the time to evaluate and plan the best options for Montana Creek. I really appreciate your foresight and time. As you work on your final draft, I'd like to list some of the aspects that I find most valuable to the community:

1. Replacement of the broken Montana Cr. bridge
2. A road and higher elevation parking area in Spaulding Meadows
3. A connector trail from Montana Cr. to Skater's Cabin
4. More trails that are designated non-motorized

Thanks again for your time and effort. I look forward to using the improved Montana Cr. for years to come.

Sam Steensland

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** farrington-porter@gci.net  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 1:02 PM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** proposed Montana Creek Master Plan

This is a public comment on the proposed Montana Creek Master Plan (MCMP).

There are a lot of good concepts in the MCMP: the connector trail that goes from Montana Creek to Skater's Cabin, rehabilitation/improvements to the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake trail, the rehabilitation of the Herbert River Road trail, the replacement of the now-broken bridge across Montana Creek, increase in access to Spaulding Meadows from both the Montana Creek valley and from the Peterson Lake Trail (both the improved trail from the Peterson Lake Cabin to the John Muir Cabin, as well as the connector trail from Peterson Lake Trail to the Windfall Lake Trail), and the many dedicated, non-motorized trails in the Spaulding Meadows area.

There is one concept that I don't want to see: the lengthening/extension of the current Lake Creek Trail into a road. Why? It will do nothing to the motorized-use access of Spaulding Meadows and in summer will serve as an entry point to Spaulding Meadows and comes with concomitant environmental damage and potential vandalism. Keep the Lake Creek Trail motorized access as-is, and do not extend it into a road.

Thank you to the CBJ for all the hard work on the MCMP and the opportunity to provide comments on this plan, and thank you to all the management agencies for further development of non-motorized trails in the Spaulding Meadows region.

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Malou Peabody <mdewolfpeabody@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 11:23 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

Greetings,

I wish to thank everyone for the hard work on the most recent draft of the Montana Creek Master Plan. I use the area involved at least once a day every winter to ski and walk, and can often be found on the same trails twice a day. I live on Back Loop Road and cannot be more proud of this special area in Juneau.

I donate regularly to both Trail Mix and the Nordic Ski Club and support everything they stand for.

I have copied the recommendations here that I fully support and hope that all of Juneau will be able to enjoy this area as much as I do:

**I like the following for daily xc skiing:**

- The connector trail from Montana Creek to Skater's Cabin.
  - Rehabilitation of the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake and Herbert River Road trails.
  - Replacement of the now broken bridge across Montana Creek.
  - Increased access to Spaulding Meadows from the Montana Creek valley.
  - Dedicated, non-motorized Nordic ski trails in the Spaulding Meadows region.
  - University - Auke Lake - Auke Bay Elementary Community Connector Trail.
- 
- A ski trail on the northeast side of the Montana Creek valley (other side of the creek from currently groomed dirt road).

Thank you,  
Malou Peabody  
907-723-8776

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Mike Justa <mikejusta@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 10:22 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** More xc skiing in Montana Creek Master Plan!

Hi there!

I just wanted to make a comment in support of the plans for the Montana creek ski area. I am in favor of fixing the bridge, expanding ski-able trails and access, and would love to see a ski train in the northeast side of the valley.

I think motorized use access is acceptable if it comes hand in hand with public safety outreach including right-of-way on trails and enforcement of safety equipment checks.

Sent from Mobile

Stay Curious  
Mike Justa

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Cris Waste <criswaste@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 9:33 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** more xc skiing in Montana Creek Master Plan!

I am writing in support of the Montana Creek Master Plan

What I Like (Keep it in and skiable!)

- The connector trail from Montana Creek to Skater's Cabin.
- Rehabilitation of the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake and Herbert River Road trails.
- Replacement of the now broken bridge across Montana Creek.
- Increased access to Spaulding Meadows from the Montana Creek valley.
- Dedicated, non-motorized Nordic ski trails in the Spaulding Meadows region.
- University - Auke Lake - Auke Bay Elementary Community Connector Trail.

Put It Back In (Please!)

- A ski trail on the northeast side of the Montana Creek valley (other side of the creek from currently groomed dirt road).

I Want Less Of (No thanks, status quo is fine.) • Please do not add a second motorized access to Spaulding Meadows. Either build the 25 Mile Access (as proposed) and close the current Lake Creek access, or vise versa.

I appreciate your efforts and inclusion of all our requests!

Cris Waste  
(907) 723-6124

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Katie Miller <kathryn.flett.miller@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 9:03 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

Thank you for all the time and effort put into this plan. I am a big fan of the new connector trails, rehabilitation of existing trails, and increased access to dedicated, non-motorized Nordic ski trails in Spaulding Meadows. I'd love to see a dedicated, non-motorized use ski trail on the northeast side of the Montana Creek put back into the plan.

After reading the master plan draft and narrative comments, it is more clear than ever that motorized and non-motorized users coexisting on the same trails is a recipe for disaster, especially in winter. This is not a Juneau problem either - I grew up in the interior and Valdez, where snowmachining is extremely popular (as a kid I Nordic skied, snowmachined, snowboarded, and used a four-wheeler in the summer) and I have never seen both user groups peacefully coexist on the same trails anywhere in the state. Each robs the other of enjoyment. A motorized vehicle is most fun when you can go fast, access backcountry, and not have to anticipate pedestrian traffic. Skiing is most fun on a quiet, well-groomed trail which doesn't smell of exhaust or hold a potential life-threatening collision around each blind corner.

As concerning as the carbon emissions are from these motorized users, their activities are legal and can provide wilderness access to people who lack the mobility or athleticism required to ski/snowshoe/walk. Despite the fact they represented a minority of the survey respondents (and likely total users), we need to ensure they have designated trails to use, otherwise they will feel marginalized and behave irresponsibly. Let's put our resources toward ensuring neither user group has to use a shared-use trail.

Thanks again,  
Katie Miller

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Melissa Robinson <mj.robinson318@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 8:27 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Nordic skiing in Montana Creek Master Plan

Thank you for all your planning work and presentation of the Montana Creek Master Plan.  
We wholeheartedly support:

1. The connector trail from Montana Creek to Skater's Cabin.
2. Rehabilitation of the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake and Herbert River Road trails.
3. Replacement of the now broken bridge across Montana Creek.
4. Increased access to Spaulding Meadows from the Montana Creek valley.
5. Dedicated, non-motorized Nordic ski trails in the Spaulding Meadows region.
6. University - Auke Lake - Auke BThe connector trail from Montana Creek to Skater's Cabin.
7. Rehabilitation of the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake and Herbert River Road trails.
8. Replacement of the now broken bridge across Montana Creek.
9. Increased access to Spaulding Meadows from the Montana Creek valley.
10. Dedicated, non-motorized Nordic ski trails in the Spaulding Meadows region.
11. University - Auke Lake - Auke Bay Elementary Community Connector Trail.

Please do not add a second motorized access to Spaulding Meadows. We would prefer to see the build-out of the 25 Mile Access (as proposed) and the closing of the current Lake Creek access.

Thanks for the opportunity to present these comments.  
v/r Melissa & Jamie Robinson (1960 Glacier Avenue, Juneau)

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Annie Albrecht <anniemaefox@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 8:07 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** More xc skiing in Montana Creek Master Plan!

Hello!

I just wanted to put in the comments that our family really supports the Juneau Nordic Ski Club and we'd love to see MORE SKIING in the Montana Creek Master Plan.

### **What We Like** (*Keep it in and skiable!*)

- The connector trail from Montana Creek to Skater's Cabin.
- Rehabilitation of the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake and Herbert River Road trails.
- Replacement of the now broken bridge across Montana Creek.
- Increased access to Spaulding Meadows from the Montana Creek valley.
- Dedicated, non-motorized Nordic ski trails in the Spaulding Meadows region.
- University - Auke Lake - Auke Bay Elementary Community Connector Trail.

### **Put It Back In** (*Please!*)

- A ski trail on the northeast side of the Montana Creek valley (other side of the creek from currently groomed dirt road).

### **We Want Less Of** (*No thanks, status quo is fine.*)

- Please do not add a second motorized access to Spaulding Meadows. Either build the 25 Mile Access (as proposed) and close the current Lake Creek access, or vice versa.

Thank you, thank you!

My oldest participated in the middle school nordic ski team this year for the first time and it was such an amazing experience for her. We look forward to more opportunities for her and our younger kids as well.

Sincerely,

Annie Albrecht



**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Jen and Pat Malecha <jenandpat@gci.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 7:54 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Comment on the Montana Creek Master Plan

Dear CBJ Parks and Recreation ,

Thank you for your hard work on this important matter. Montana Creek is a Juneau Treasure.

I smile when thinking about a recent late spring day when my family loaded up the car for an afternoon at Montana Creek. I skied while my son and husband did some target practice at the range. My son is an avid fisherman and after we walked down to the creek so he could wet a line. Not a lot of fishing action in April but he was just happy to get some casts in and we all enjoyed the walk down to and along the creek.

I agree with Nordic Ski Club vision below.

Please include the following:

- The connector trail from Montana Creek to Skater's Cabin.
- Rehabilitation of the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake and Herbert River Road trails.
- Replacement of the now broken bridge across Montana Creek.
- Increased access to Spaulding Meadows from the Montana Creek valley.
- Dedicated, non-motorized Nordic ski trails in the Spaulding Meadows region.
- University - Auke Lake - Auke Bay Elementary Community Connector Trail.

Please put back a ski trail on the northeast side of the Montana Creek valley (other side of the creek from currently groomed dirt road).

Please do not add a second motorized access to Spaulding Meadows. Either build the 25 Mile Access (as proposed) and close the current Lake Creek access, or vise versa.

Thanks so much.

Best,  
Jenny Malecha

907-957-0801  
18224 Point Stephens Road  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Shelly Deering <deeringak@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 20, 2023 7:50 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Montana Creek Master Plan

Dear Parks and Rec,

Thank you for considering Juneau community comments in the Montana Creek Master Plan. I have lived here for over 25 years and the Juneau trail systems are a big part of my life for hiking and skiing. With an aging population and increased tourism I appreciate having improved trails that are non-motorized and specific for use in summer and winter. Please consider the following as you finalize this plan.

### **Great ideas (please keep trails such that they can be groomed for skiing)**

- The connector trail from Montana Creek to Skater's Cabin.
- Rehabilitation of the Montana Creek to Windfall Lake and Herbert River Road trails.
- Replacement of the now broken bridge across Montana Creek.
- Increased access to Spaulding Meadows from the Montana Creek valley.
- Dedicated, non-motorized Nordic ski trails in the Spaulding Meadows region.
- University - Auke Lake - Auke Bay Elementary Community Connector Trail.

### **Please consider**

- A ski trail on the northeast side of the Montana Creek valley (other side of the creek from the currently groomed dirt road).

### **Please do not add a second motorized access to Spaulding Meadows.**

- With the proposed 25 Mile Access the snowmobilers/4-wheeler riders will have access for their sport leaving quiet, safe trails for the skier/walkers.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Shelly Deering

## Eric Moots

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**From:** Marinke Van Gelder <vangelderm@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2023 9:46 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** comments on final draft of Montana Creek Area Plan

A few comments on the Montana Creek Area Plan:

1. I didn't see any reference to improving or maintaining the Spaulding Meadows trail. I think this trail needs work, and it's better to maintain existing trails before developing new trails. I saw that maintenance of other existing trails is in the plan.
2. I'm in favor of keeping the non-motorized areas at least as large as they are. However, there is currently no enforcement of the non-motorized boundaries. I've seen an increase in violations of the boundaries in winter over many years, with evidence of motorized users going far into the current non-motorized area. I see violations of the boundary almost every time I use the Spaulding Trail, when there is snow. I often see snow machine tracks more than half way from Spaulding Trail to the John Muir Cabin. In winter this doesn't necessarily hurt any habitat, but I've also seen 4-wheeler tracks in Spaulding Meadows that are still there, several years later. There needs to be a viable way to curb motorized use in non-motorized areas. It would help to have maps showing where the non-motorized areas are at every trail head. Increased signage may assist motorized users in knowing where the boundaries are, but it's not enough.
3. I'm against extending any roads or building a new public use cabin. It will likely lead to more violations in non-motorized areas, and also to degradation of the fragile muskegs when there is little or no snow. For this same reason I'm against adding new trails in Spaulding Meadows, other than the already more heavily used connection between the John Muir cabin and the Spaulding Meadows trail.

What I value the most about the terrain encompassed by the Montana Creek Area Plan is the opportunity to be in a relatively undeveloped place that I can get to on foot from the existing road system.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Marinke Van Gelder

**Eric Moots**

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**From:** Peter Flynn <flynn.peter@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 7:44 AM  
**To:** Parks Rec  
**Subject:** Re: Montana Creek plan

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

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I am in full support of the current draft the Montana Creek plan as it stands. This stands that you are able to build all of the components. Of particular concern ensuring that the snow machine access is completed to help relieve that pressure from the non motorized sections. I firmly believe in improving the existing infrastructure before building new roads and trails and this plan reflects that.

Thank you,

Peter Flynn