



# Chugach State Park Update on Planning Effort



**SUMMER 2008**

**Newsletter #2**

## **DEAR INTERESTED CITIZEN,**

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has completed the first phase of the planning process, which will result in the revision of the Chugach State Park Master Plan and Trail Plan, and the development of a joint DNR and Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) Chugach Access Plan. During the scoping phase, the planning team learned quite a bit about the issues, concerns and ideas the public has regarding the park. This input helps form the basis for the scope of work and focus during the remainder of the planning process. Although the scoping phase of the public process is complete, the planning team will continue to gather information and identify issues in the months to come.

The public scoping comment period ended on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008. During the scoping period the Chugach Planning Team held three public workshops at the beginning of April. The purpose of these workshops was to solicit public input on uses, resources, and issues within and adjacent to Chugach State Park (CSP). Over 170 people attended the workshops. We learned a great deal about how the public uses the park and would like it to be managed in the future. For a summary of the comments heard during the workshops, please see Newsletter #1 on the project website: [www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach/](http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach/).

In addition to the input received at the scoping workshops, over 135 written comments were received during the comment period from individuals, groups,

and organizations. A summary of the scoping comments is also available for review on the project website.

The planning team continues to meet with community councils, stakeholder groups, agencies and individuals, as well as work closely with the park's Citizen Advisory Board to assemble resource information, analyze issues, and identify possible solutions. This detailed information-gathering portion of the planning process is crucial for the planning team to be able to fully understand issues and begin drafting preliminary alternatives and management actions. Because of the size of the park and the complexity of issues, this process will be very labor intensive and time consuming so it may be quite some time before you receive another update from us. Rest assured however, that we are working hard on addressing the concerns that have been raised.

We would like to thank all of you who took the time to attend a workshop or submit scoping comments. Your participation in this process will certainly help us develop a shared vision for the future of CSP.

The Chugach Planning Team

## **OVERVIEW**

There are a few exciting developments in the park this summer that we would like to highlight because they benefit the planning process. Also, we are pleased to release a preliminary project schedule. During the scoping phase, we were often asked about



the timeline for this project. At that time we were reluctant to release a timeline without first knowing the extent of the issues that would need to be addressed. Now that we have a better understanding of those issues, we feel more comfortable with providing a rough schedule that identifies the timeline for each step of the process. This timeline will be further refined as we move through the process.



**TRAILS**

We are pleased to report that the park has secured funding to continue the trail inventory mapping project that was initiated last summer. The results from last summer’s work have already proven to be helpful to the planning team and park users. We are lucky that CSP was chosen as the pilot park for this project and we hope that it provides a great model for parks statewide. State Parks is also finalizing a Trail Policy that includes new trail sustainability policies, management objectives and trail classification standards. The revised CSP Trail Plan will be the first to reflect the concepts of the State Parks Trail Policy.

Perhaps the most exciting trail-related news is that the park has also secured funding and the positions necessary to hire a trail crew. The trail crew has already been hired, trained and is actively working on projects.

**ACCESS**

Providing for additional access to CSP is one of the greatest challenges of this planning project. The planning team is

learning a great deal about the difficulties associated with some of the existing and proposed access points. The CSP Access Inventory, completed in 2002, was an important step towards identifying where access was occurring and needed to be formally established. We want to make park users aware that many of the access points being used are not legal or formally established. Often people may be accessing the park by trespassing on private land. It is important that park users become aware of these issues and be sensitive to private landowners. We will continue to work with user groups, neighboring communities and the MOA to responsibly provide for additional access.

**INTERESTING PARK FACTS**

CSP established.....	1970
Size of park.....	1/2 million acres (third largest state park in the U.S.A.)
Percent of MOA land area made up by CSP.....	40
CSP Master Plan adopted.....	1980
CSP Trail Plan adopted.....	1986
Percent of Alaskans that live within 30 minutes of CSP.....	53
Number of CSP Park Rangers.....	4
Number of full-time CSP Maintenance Workers.....	2
Average number of volunteers in a year.....	328
Number of commercial operator permits issued in 2007.....	22
Number of latrines.....	80
Number of fee stations.....	26
Highest peak, Bashful.....	8005 ft
Number of lakes.....	70
Number of distinct drainage basins...	27
Percent of Anchorages water that comes from Ship Creek and Eklutna drainages.....	90



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## **PLANNING PROCESS SUMMARY & TIMELINE**

### **1. Scoping & Issue Identification (April - June 2008)**

Through a public involvement process, identify issues and concerns in the area.

### **2. Gather Information (Current Step)**

Throughout the planning process collect information about natural resources, present and past land use, land ownership, and the local economy.

### **3. Prepare and Evaluate Land Use Alternatives (Early 2009)**

Describe possible choices for park management based on public interests, local resources, and state policies. Describe the effects of each choice on goals for the management of an area.

### **4. Prepare Draft Plan (Spring 2009)**

The planning team and advisory board create a draft plan that reflects resource values and public and agency goals. The agencies review the first draft and settle any land use conflicts that remain, or propose the best alternatives for public review.

### **5. Public Review of Draft Plan (Late 2009 or Early 2010)**

Hold public meetings to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the draft plan and to identify parts that need to be changed.

### **6. Prepare Final Plan (Summer 2010)**

Review agency and public comments and revise the plan. Prepare the plan for publication.

### **7. Approve Plan (2011)**

The Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources approves and signs the plan.

### **8. Adopt and Implement Plan (2011 and beyond)**

The plan guides management decisions for state lands in the planning area.



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## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

You can visit the project website:

[www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach/planning](http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach/planning)

The following is available on the project website:

- Newsletter #2 (this newsletter), Summer 2008
- Public Comment List, June 2008
- Newsletter #1, April 2008
- Planning Process & Preliminary Project Schedule
- Chugach State Park Access Inventory, Analysis and Recommendations, October 2002
- Chugach State Park Trail Plan, January 1986
- Chugach State Park Master Plan, February 1980

You can also contact:

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## ***HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?***

Public involvement is one of the most important parts of the planning process in order for the agencies to choose land management alternatives that provide the greatest benefit for all Alaskans. You can get involved by:

- Visiting our website and reviewing existing documents and the planning process steps;
- Receiving newsletters and plan updates or notices; and

- Attending future public meetings and submitting comments on future documents.

As we continue to gather information and work on plan alternatives, we will keep you updated on the progress of the planning effort through newsletters like this one. If you received this newsletter by mail or email, you are on our mailing list. If you did not receive this newsletter directly from us, please contact us so that you will receive future planning process updates. We will contact you again early next year to notify you of upcoming meetings and the release of draft documents.

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Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation  
*Department of Natural Resources*  
**Chugach State Park**  
**Planning Update**



*Newsletter #2 Summer 2008*

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