

DFFP Scoping Discussion: Haines Borough

HSF RMA MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT 2026

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION



14 January 2026

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Framing the discussion
- Group Expectations
- Group discussion
- Identify next steps

Project Background

The Haines State Forest (HSF) Resource Management Area (RMA) planning team has received feedback requesting information about the directives and circumstances leading to the changes the Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DFFP, the Division) has proposed in this management plan amendment. Since 2014, the Division has received consistent direction across administrations to take actions in support of the statewide timber industry. In the Northern Southeast Area, including the HSF RMA, direction has been focused on contributing to the timber industry by managing the Haines State Forest RMA according to its purpose as described in Alaska Statute (AS 41.15.300) and according to the principles of multiple use that apply to all state-owned lands.

While the timing of this management plan amendment is connected to the passage of legislation requiring carbon offsets to be addressed in state forest management plans, the Division received additional direction late in 2024 to include the long-standing directive to support Alaska's timber industry by updating policy that had previously prohibited timber harvest on Habitat and Recreation classified units of the Haines State Forest RMA. The primary classifications for these lands will remain Habitat or Recreation, respectively, and any forest management activities proposed in those areas in the future would be required to reflect those primary classifications.

The scoping period is intended to provide members of the public and interest groups such as this one with an opportunity to weigh in on how the directives received by the Division should be implemented. We acknowledge that this change in management approach is a big departure from the way the HSF RMA has been managed for decades and with that in mind, one goal for this meeting is to provide a discussion opportunity that's focused on questions and topics that the Division is able to reflect in the management policy that will be distributed for public review in the next phase of the planning process. Considering this background on the proposed changes to the management framework, the DFFP would like

to invite this group to discuss what it would look like to include timber harvest and other forest management activities in the balanced management of multiple uses allowed on lands with primary classifications of Habitat and Recreation.

Purpose:

- 1.) To demonstrate consultation with the Haines Borough as part of the development of an updated Haines State Forest Resource Management Area Management Plan Draft (mandated by AS 41.15.310).
- 2.) To provide the Haines Borough with an opportunity to contribute to the Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection considerations and recommendations regarding the management of forest resources within the Haines State Forest Resource Management Area. To include Haines Borough staff in the development of a management plan draft prior to the public review period.

Expected outcome: A summary of recommendations and considerations related to forest management within the HSF RMA boundary from the perspective of the Haines Borough. This discussion is intended to capture the perspective of a local government entity (Haines Borough) on management of land and resources as well as the individuals, groups, or uses that the Borough understands to be important in this area.

Topic: Haines State Forest Management Plan amendment. What solutions or concepts can facilitate the co-existence of forestry activities and other uses within the Haines State Forest RMA?

Group Expectations

- The moderator will guide the discussion but refrain from participating.
- Everyone is encouraged to participate. Once you have shared, wait for two others to contribute before weighing in again.
- The discussion stays focused on the issue at hand (forest management policy within Haines State Forest RMA).
- Maintain an atmosphere for discussion and analysis of our options. This is a discussion, not a debate.
- Ask questions to gain understanding/clarity.
- Give constructive feedback. We are here to talk about ideas, not people.
- We will work together toward describing balanced resource management within the Haines State Forest Resource Management Area.
- We may not make it through all the discussion questions today. Is the group open to following up virtually, if needed?

Discussion Questions

1. **Introductions:** What is your name, and how does the management of natural resources affect your role with the Haines Borough?

- a. **Chen Wu:** planner of Haines Borough. Management of NR is part of job via land use and how resources impact ownership, how residents use the local resources. Wanting to learn more about how plan amendment will impact this role
 - b. **Alekka Fullerton:** HB Manager. Effectuating policy from the Assembly. Haines Borough property “belongs” to the assembly. Representing the interests of residents: recreation, habitat, fiscal concerns, environmental concerns and other opportunities for residents.
 - c. **Brad Jensen:** Public facilities director. Mgmt of natural resources impacts this role thru need to maintain a balance between resident desire for access, resource extraction, opportunities for financial gain. Emphasis on access and maintenance of roads and public areas that residents want to use.
2. **Identify Concerns:** How has the Haines community been impacted by past forest management activities in the HSF RMA?
- a. **CW:** Haines has a unique topography, somehow suffered greater environmental vulnerability in recent years. Concern with emergency response and mitigation. Hopes for plan to account to environmental vulnerabilities in drafting policy describing these changes. Relying on state to describe how those changes would impact climate change (ability to adapt) response and emergency response.
 - b. **AF:** Many residents that are very vocal on both side of the spectrum with respect to forest management. Aesthetics are a high concern (timber sales and “denuding the forest” and effects on recreation uses) Perceives fear around losing some of that values. Referenced Baby Brown timber sale and concern over how rec uses would be impacted. Other ppl concerned that the area is not maximizing potential resource values in a community that has historically been timber-based. Some changes are difficult for some to accept appreciate, or feel comfortable with. Fatal landslide in 2020, perceived increase in avalanches, increase in severe weather. Fear around increased timber harvest area contributing to that kind of change.
 - c. **BJ:** Less than 2 years in the community. Haven’t been confronted with any negative comments on this topic. Acknowledges the perspective is out there but hasn’t “come to my office” recently. Areas that have been open in the past have allowed access to residents for hunting, foraging, firewood, trails, allows local operators to harvest timber that is sold locally for firewood.
3. **Identify Concerns:** How is the Haines Community impacted by current forest management activities in the HSF RMA?
- a. **CW:** More than 30% of land within HB jurisdiction is state lands. Believes the state is managing effectively, but planner desires to see increased opportunity for Haines residents to benefit from State owned property. Recreation is a huge portion, but desire for increased economic gains and job opportunities.

- b. **AF:** Impact of current management activities could be best characterized as “out of sight, out of mind.” Residents don’t spend a lot of time thinking about these policies until proposed activities affect them directly, or they believe it will. Observations that this is a fear-based or change-based reaction.
 - c. **BJ:** Don’t see a lot of impact from management activities that can be summarized right now. Concurs with AF on “out of sight, out of mind” characterization. Some residents might say that a lack of activity is an impact to the economy.
4. **Planning Considerations:** What resources, uses, or areas within the boundary of HSF RMA would Haines Borough like the division to be aware of and consider as updates to the management policy are developed?
- a. **AF:** Consideration of areas that are already being used (trails, berry-picking areas, hunting). Observations of some comments in the community about DFFP can do whatever they want away from my preferred area for use. More discussion about how to identify areas “already in use.” More discussion of how areas are selected and the evaluation process in timber sale design. Discussion of slope and topography parameters for timber harvest design. Extremely educated community wants to understand the cost-benefit analysis proposed activities.
 - b. **CW:** Agree with AF. Advocate more for trails systems. Local users are using and developing trails independently. Talking to local organizations and individuals about what trails are available for public use. Many trails are present, but not recorded. See DFFP include analysis of trail use in an area as timber sales are designed. Concerns are coming from safety perspective and maintaining legal rights of the public to use trails recreationally. Maybe even partnering organizations in developing and maintaining trails. Doing everything legally correctly benefits the HB office. Legal documentation opens more opportunity for collaboration. Easements can be a big challenge from planner perspective.
 - c. **BJ:** Haines is an extremely active outdoor recreation community. People care about access and aesthetics for recreation purposes. This needs to be considered as an area is selected for timber harvest. What is “Habitat” classification? DFFP forester gives some history of how land classifications were developed in HSF RMA during creation of the state forest. How does DFFP use that classification? Would a study on impacts be a part of timber sale planning? DFFP involves DEC, ADFG in the process. These agencies provide input in design of timber sales. Concerns over moose, fish, and goat populations and reflected the importance of those resources to the community. Anticipates greater pushback on timber activities in habitat areas than recreations. Reinforces idea of DFFP awareness of areas that are actively used by the public.
5. **Recommendations:** What does it look like for forest management activities to be conducted in HSF RMA in a way that includes meeting the needs of the Haines Borough and its constituents?

- a. **AF:** Primarily the way this concept is introduced to the community is important. Thought process, works supporting why these changes are being proposed in the ways they are. There is a proprietary (resident sense of ownership) feeling around Haines community and surrounding lands. Any time activities can be distilled into describing how that will benefit and opportunities the public, chances of success are higher. Examples: perhaps more access to trails, access to other uses, and economic benefits to the state, view vistas (opening scenic view sites). Linking the activities to the direct benefits to the community. It is reasonable and should be acknowledged that an analysis of economic benefit is part of the decision process. An acknowledgement of non-economic benefits.
- b. **CW:** most community members have the capacity to make decisions based on evidence. But when residents are not provided sufficient evidence, more likely to jump to fear and emotional reaction. How might lands be used after the timber sales. Emphasis on snow machining and xc skiing, summer trails.
- c. **BJ:** Just find a way to do this (in jest): balancing economic opportunity and access without completely destroying the aesthetic, maintaining current recreation uses, and without harming the wildlife populations.

6. Questions from the Borough Staff:

- a. Does DFFP have information about the timber volume within the HSF?
 - i. Current inventory estimates approx. 26 MBF per acre
- b. Is the DFFP intent for a large, commercial harvest that might attract businesses from out of town?
- c. Is part of this planning how to transport harvested timber out of the Haines Area?
 - i. SOA has other goals that are relevant outside of the HSF RMA with intention to increase access and transportation opportunities across the state.
- d. What's the main reason to open the habitat and recreation areas for harvest as opposed to maintaining the current (2002) system of management?
- e. Recommended policy: encourage local processing of timber, emphasizes job opportunities that can be brought to the community.
- f. If state opens some areas for harvest, the state contracts the harvest activities with private entities.

Next Steps

If we could not address all the questions in this outline today, the Division will coordinate a follow-up meeting, provided the group agrees to do so. If members of this group would like to share additional information that was not captured by this discussion opportunity, please feel free to share those comments in writing by email to dnr.dof.haines@alaska.gov or by mail to:

Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection
ATTN: Forest Planning

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Anchorage, AK 99501-3566

A date has not yet been established for release of the plan draft for public review. At the time the plan draft is available for public review, the Division will accept comments in response to the draft plan and public meetings will be scheduled in the communities of Haines and Klukwan.

In the meantime, more information is available on the project webpage:
<https://forestry.alaska.gov/HSFamendment/>

Please share your comments or questions with the planning team by sending a message to: dnr.dof.haines@alaska.gov