

APPENDIX



a

Spring 2023 Public Survey

Spring 2023 Survey Responses - Aggregated

Spring 2023 Summarized Comments

Spring 2023 Full Written Comments

Survey Responses

245

Spring 2023 Public Outreach

What community do you live in?

Anderson/Clear	10
Healy/Stampede/June/Ferry	168
McK/Denali HQ, Carlo Creek, Sline	54
Cantwell	11
No Answer	2

Do you live here...

Year-round	218
Seasonal	26
No answer	1

Age Range

12-18	5
19-29	22
30-44	88
45-64	94
65 or older	35
No answer	1

Do you consider yourself primarily a...

Nonmotorized User	82
Motorised User	33
Both	128
Neither	2

Do you consider yourself primarily a...

Summer Recreationist	35
Winter Recreationist	4
Both	202
Neither	4

Who do you recreate with?

(Check all that apply)

Adults	190
Dogs	154
Children	111
Solo	137
Seniors	50
Horses	5
Multi-generaltions	87
I don't go outside	2

What recreation activities do you participate in?

(Check all that apply)

Hiking	221
Walking	199
XC Skiing	149
Biking	140
Snow Machining	126
ATV	111
Hunting	101
Boating/Kayaking	100
Sports	88
Snowshoeing	64
AT/BC Ski/Snowboard	53
Mushing	37
Climbing	28
Fishing (write in)	8
Equestrian	4
Foraging (write in)	4
Flying (write in)	1
View landscape (write in)	1

Why is recreation important to you?

(Check all that apply)

Enjoyment of Outdoors	233
Physical Health	227
Mental Health	219
Time with Family	159
Subsistence Activities	93
All of the above	1
Enjoying the quiet (write-in)	1
Participating in nature cycles (write-in)	1
Time with friends (write-in)	1
Spirituality (wriite-in)	1

What prevents you from partaking in recreation?

(Check all that apply)

Weather conditions	92
Lack of motivation	91
Access to local options	63
Poor conditions of existing options	55
Lack of information	44
Nothing	37
Inexperience	23
Wildlife safety	23
Level of difficulty of existing options	18

Do you Disagree or Agree with the following statements about Community & Outdoor Recreation:

Community and Outdoor Recreation is important to you.	
Strongly Agree	164
Agree	69
Neutral	5
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	6
No answer	1

Community and Outdoor Recreation can bring economic opportunity to a community.	
Strongly Agree	135
Agree	78
Neutral	19
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	10
No answer	1

Community and Outdoor Recreation improves a community's quality of life.	
Strongly Agree	176
Agree	56
Neutral	5
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	7
No answer	1

Community and Outdoor Recreation infrastructure and activities should be a priority of local government investment.	
Strongly Agree	106
Agree	83
Neutral	32
Disagree	11
Strongly Disagree	12
No answer	1

Do the following "Purpose Statements" resonate with what you think is important for recreation planning in the Denali Borough.

Plan diverse and accessible community and outdoor recreation opportunities.	
Strongly Agree	100
Agree	84
Neutral	37
Disagree	11
Strongly Disagree	10
No answer	3

Protect the unique identity of our communities and subsistence uses of wild resources.	
Strongly Agree	130
Agree	75
Neutral	27
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	8
No answer	1

Preserve our subarctic ecosystem through sustainable use and intentional management.	
Strongly Agree	121
Agree	73
Neutral	32
Disagree	7
Strongly Disagree	8
No answer	4

Does the following "Vision Statement" resonate with what you think is important for the future of recreation in the Denali Borough?

Our vision is that the Denali Borough is a vibrant place to live and recreate. It is a place where recreation creates a strong sense of community identity, supports physical and mental health, sustains a resilient economy, and safeguards subsistence uses of the land. Planning and management of recreation resources and infrastructure are done with a commitment to community engagement, and to balancing future growth with honoring the past.

Strongly Agree	96	Disagree	3
Agree	101	Strongly Disagree	8
Neutral	32	No answer	5

Do the following "Goals" resonate with what you think are priorities for recreation in the Denali Borough?

Goal: Community Identity - Ensure the unique identity of each community within the Denali Borough is preserved.

Strongly Agree	73
Agree	103
Neutral	52
Disagree	7
Strongly Disagree	8
No answer	2

Goal: Indoor and Outdoor Facilities and Parks - Support mental and physical health in the Denali Borough.

Strongly Agree	130
Agree	87
Neutral	13
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	8
No answer	4

Goal: Trails - Create and maintain sustainable trail networks throughout the Denali Borough.

Strongly Agree	100
Agree	85
Neutral	35
Disagree	10
Strongly Disagree	12
No answer	3

Goal: Education - Educate the public on the values of responsible recreation in the Denali Borough.

Strongly Agree	107
Agree	90
Neutral	31
Disagree	5
Strongly Disagree	8
No answer	4

Goal: Partnerships - Bring energetic trails and outdoor recreation partnerships to the Denali Borough.

Strongly Agree	88
Agree	76
Neutral	53
Disagree	11
Strongly Disagree	14
No answer	3

If you had to choose one, what would you prioritize for Borough investment?

Trails	99
Indoor Fitness	80
Sports	21
Nothing	11
Parks	10
Swimming Pool (write-in)	4
Shooting Range (write-in)	3

If you would NOT prioritize recreation for Borough investment, why?

(Check all that apply)

N/A - DO prioritize investment	144
Different fiscal priorities	32
Support of smaller government	30
Do not want to see increased use	24
Protection of privacy	17
No answer	38

If you had to choose one, what would you rather see for your local area:

Improve existing COR infrastructure	107
Intentionally design and build new	129
No answer	9

If you had to choose one, what would you care more about having in your community:

Winter recreation options	137
Summer recreation options	80
Neither	21
No answer	7

If you had to choose one, what would you care more about having in your community:

Trailheads and maintained trails	116
Infrastructure for sports	90
Neither	27
No answer	12

What would you hope to see available in your community?

PICK YOUR TOP 5

Fitness center	133
Highway bike paths	119
Ice rink	95
Covered ice rink	48
Indoor ice rink	47
Groomed ski trails	68
New/existing trailheads	62
Shooting range	58
Community sidewalks	52
Mountain biking trails	45
Community garden	43
Rock climbing wall	42
Apline hiking trails	42
Track & sports fields	42
Winterized pullouts	40
Wayside bathrooms	34
Archery range	28
Stocked fishing holes	28
Dog park	24
Sledding hill	23
Backcountry ski trails	21
Campgrounds	19
Disc golf course	17
Boat launches	15
Picnic areas	13
ATV trails	12
ADA trails	11
Snowmachining trails	11
Playgrounds	11
Skate park	9
Rental gear	7
Mushing trails	5
Ice climbing course	5
Pump track course	4
Horseback riding	3

CATEGORY	COUNT
Favored Amenities	
Community recreation/fitness center	17
Indoor swimming pool	14
Non motorized (bike/walk) path	8
Climbing facility	6
Groomed ski trail	5
Other amenities	9
Community activities	3
Impact Considerations	
Need for year-round wayside bathrooms	7
Increased tourism	5
Overuse and deterioration of wild spaces	5
Anti motorized trail	3
Concerns and Nonsupport	
Limited to no recreational development	8
Concern for maintenance plan	7
Anti spending	5
Perceived prioritization of Healy	2
Misc. Financial considerations	7

CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS
<p>Favored Amenities</p> <p>Most respondents are in favor of recreational development opportunities and provided input into what types of amenities they would like to see. Several comments expressed a desire for an indoor facility that provides year round recreational and fitness options, including a climbing wall, indoor swimming pool, and classes like yoga. Many advocated for a non motorized path path option for bikes and/or pedestrians, whether for commuting or for recreating, that could be groomed for cross country skiing in the wintertime. Other amenities mentioned include a soccer field , pickleball court, sledding hill, community garden/greenhouse, airstrip, sports facility, dog park, track and field facilities, disc golf course, mountain biking specific path, and community bathhouse. A small number of respondents would like to see funds be used to plan community activities that use existing recreational opportunities.</p>
<p>Impact Considerations</p> <p>Main comments focused on the impact that new recreational amenities, particularly new trails, could have on the Borough. These commenters prefer the wild, natural feel of the current area and do not want to see increased presence of tourists or change to the natural environment that trails could bring. They largely prefer the development of recreational opportunities that are intended for use by locals. A top concern is the lack of year round trash and bathroom facilities at existing waysides and trailheads, and that more trails would increase the severity of this issue. Some also specifically expressed frustration with the damage ATVs can have on trails and want more limits on ATV usage.</p>
<p>Concerns and Nonsupport</p> <p>While respondents were largely in favor of development to increase recreational options, some expressed concern for development broadly, or desire that funds be spent on other priorities. Others prefer the undeveloped aspect of living in the area, do not want to have public funds directed towards recreational development, or are concerned about the long term ability of the Borough to maintain funding for any new amenities that are created.</p>

Place to walk the dogs and bike along Spur Rd and Parks Hwy. Walk/bike paths could be used by snow machines in winter for walkers? Could we walk on them (in reference to snow machine trails)
A fitness room that can be used for dance, yoga or other classes like these is needed.
A gym in Healy is long over due!
A rec center and safe walking/biking/ATV trails would be great.
A Recreation Director to Coordinate Borough Efforts
An aquatic center / fitness center would serve our community in both the winter and summer months. Having access to a facility with aquatics for all ages is the most healthy investment I can think of for our community. It can help facilitate recovery from injury, health maintenance, cardio, and a way to recreate for people who are not as young and/or disabled, and when it is very cold out. It can also help our community stay clean and healthy.
Appreciate the inclusion of the expansion of indoor winter recreation opportunities. Also appreciate the inclusion of year-round wayside bathrooms and winterized pullouts and trailheads to facilitate use of trails-- maintained or unmaintained, formal and informal.
ATVs destroy trails into muddy pits nobody wants to use, including the ATVs, who go around the pits and create more damage. To a lesser extent this is true of horses. NON Motorized spring-fall trails is a priority for many of my Community to keep our winter and summer trails beautiful, safe, and accessible.
Best to encourage private development of things if possible instead of increasing government expense and overhead. Be careful of facilities and activities that involve high ongoing operational costs. Try to find ways for them to self-sustaining.
Cantwell and the western portion of the Denali Highway offer great backcountry recreational opportunities already, they just don't have the infrastructure (bathrooms and trash cans being the biggest) or guidance/enforcement to prevent them getting trashed every year by recreators. By the end of hunting season every pullout is full of feces and TP, which is very sad.
Collaborate and join forces with school and other community clubs. Winter is the most difficult for all. There was a community plan for development done 20 years ago inclusive of small shops and so on developed around the rink and or across the road. Town center concept.
Community bathhouse for post recreation
Community pool
Community Pool
Consider the impact on our landscape and trails by ATVs and Fat Trucks. The borough assembly must restrict trapping on our recreational trails.
Downhill ski and snowboard area
Every outdoor option dollar spent should bring returns to the borough coffers for years if thought out and built with forethought and care.
Fitness center is vital to year round physical and mental health. It also gives opportunities for fitness classes which leads to more community engagement and economic growth. It also doesn't take away any natural beauty of the area by increasing the number of trails in the area.
For a few of the questions i was unsure how to answer because the answer depends on whether it refers to winter or summer activities. For winter recreation i care about indoor fitness and rock climbing facilities. I think outdoor winter sports are fine without infrastructure or investment and that spending money on winter trails is a waste. For summer recreation i think development of hiking trails, mountain biking trails, and perhaps bike paths and other non-motorized ways to get around in town would have value to locals and stimulate the economy by making Healy a more attractive destination for visitors
For advanced outdoor enthusiasts, I believe there are plenty of opportunities to recreate if one so desires. I do see a need for more indoor spaces for those dark and cold days in winter. The impact of sedentary life in winter is generally not a good one. This is why I hope to see development of an indoor space to keep our community healthy and active.
Given the amount of foot traffic in the summer, some sort of walking path would drastically increase pedestrian safety.
Great survey! Would love to see a climbing facility in Healy.
Heated rubberized track and sand pit for long jump. And space for high jump as well.
How about a monthly community activity. Mt women comp. X country race weekend.
I am so glad to see Dog Park in this list. That would be something I could use multiple times a week.
I am somewhat leery of "improving" things for people which always seems to un-improve them for wildlife and natural ecosystems. My top priority is improving selected trails to make them more easily bikeable in the summer.

I am supportive of initiatives that improve the well-being of community members. I am not supportive of any initiative that will increase tourist use on trails or infrastructure - particularly if there is no staffing or stewardship force available to support an increase in infrastructure. I don't want to see the land I love trashed or overcrowded - that is what Denali National Park and Denali State Park are for

I generally prioritize outdoor rec but if we could have a full service rec center w/ yoga classes/equipment (not just gym sports), I'd use that. But trails and outdoor rec get my main vote.

I love all of the above recreation options, and I think a lot of them could be combined/dual purpose. Like a variable, multi-length bike pump track or trail that also functions as a maintained ski trail in the winter. Same thing for a rock wall/ice climbing wall combo.

I love the idea of supporting improved recreation opportunities but I think that affordable housing should be prioritized, especially if improved recreation opportunities will result in increase of visitors who can afford staying in area to recreate (ex: housing being used as airbnbs instead of rentals).

I love to see existing trails updated and maintained. I also feel that the need for a sports structure in our community is necessary. Winter months are long, a majority of the kids/families in our community participate in sports. Having an indoor option for winter would help grow opportunities for home tournaments in many sports. For the mental health of our youth I can see a huge benefit to having a sports structure built in our community.

I marked down groomed ski trails, but in all reality what grooms it? Usually a motorized piece of equipment (snowmachine/groomer) takes care of it. That being said, why can it only be a ski trail? All over North America especially Alaska there is a bad fight between motorized and non motorized users. I think that if we have a groomed trail there should be no reason that any winter mode of transportation can't use it. Meaning the groomed trail is open for skiers, walkers, mushers, ski-jouring, fat tire bikes, snow machines and whatever else they can think of. AS LONG AS THE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION DOES NOT RUIN OR TEAR THE TRAIL APART!

Also, being the largest town in the borough, we do not have a shooting range. Our safest option is to trespass in a gravel pit usually north of Healy where sometimes there is equipment in there, campers and other users. It sure would be nice to have a clean, safe covered spot to shoot that I can take my children and nieces to and practice safe gun management.

I think a single track mountain bike trail would be great for the community and bring visitors to the area. I believe the Borough has some land across from the RV park where it would be a great area for this. We also need some dedicated cross country ski trails that are groomed. I know the Borough doesn't have staff to do this, but you could buy a groomer to pull behind a snowmachine and let people check it out to groom, or hire someone to do it. I like the direction the outdoor rec and trails committee is going. Thank you for leaning forward and we look forward to seeing what new outdoor opportunities flourish in the coming years.

I think money should be spent in such a way as to provide access to not only a large and diverse group while protecting our environment but also focus on providing opportunity to those with less resources. We have a fair number of folks year round and seasonally who do not have the resources that a large portion of folks in the area have. Things like hokey, rock climbing, and other sports that require a fair amount of gear are not financially available to a good portion of our community and if the Borough will be supporting recreation it needs to focus on opportunities that folks from all Financial backgrounds can enjoy

I think that developing places (especially adding trails) encourages the use by the tourist population which will exclude locals from using places they have always used and loved. Also, any infrastructure that is created should also have a plan and funding for routine maintenance and upkeep. Please stop moving toward developing trails!!

I think what the Denali Borough desperately needs is indoor winter recreation facilities that include (in descending priority order) a room for community yoga classes, exercise equipment, and maybe an indoor pool.

I would add to the list above a small local downhill skiing chairlift.

I would like if the borough could team with the state and Alaska Airmen's Association to clear a small section of land beside the existing airport to serve as a ski strip for aircraft to land. There is no ski strip in the Denali Borough for aircraft to use, the closest being in Nenana. It would take minimum effort / cost and allow additional access to our community for aviators/ tourism in the winter.

I would like to add to my options above: Groomed ski trails, sledding hill, horseback riding, community garden and greenhouse.

Thank you.

I would like to express my support for a public pool as well. I was split on the next to last question so ...

I would like to see limited spending, but still paying attention to safety in our community.

I would like to see more "programs" to get the kids outdoors and that bring families together, whether it be snow machine racing, dirtbike tracks, trail racing, quartermidget racing, boyscouts, girlscouts, flying clubs, junior firefighting, or even outdoor programs that teaches youth gun and bow sports, as well as survival courses. I want all of these kids to have an appreciation for where we live. I want them all to want to stop when they see trash on the side of the road. More buildings doesn't do that, but more education and programs does allow for a better use of the existing resources. This will inspire them to want to keep it clean.

We have to get out of this risk adverse mindset that's fearful of any and all liabilities, and bite the bullet and purchase whatever insurance there needs to be in order to allow programs that safely teaches kids to be inspired by this sometimes hostile environment that we choose to live in. A school bus breaking-down in -40 is just as dangerous of a situation as any event, program, or opportunity that the borough could be required to have to purchase additional insurance for... we need to accept it and waive liabilities every chance that we get in order to have programs of actual value for these kids in the area.

I'm sure you've seen the Anderson school issues. More buildings won't help. We have plenty of buildings going to waste by being under utilized right here in Anderson. We need more programs and more access to the already existing resources.

At a minimum, we need a borough to make it as easy as possible for these programs to exist, by being supportive when they do try to occur, and to impede government actions that could prevent future opportunities... like the newer higher powered radar impeding on the general aviation airspace for Clear Airfield, causing UAF to invest in Nenana instead of Denali Borough for their new UAV hangar. Short-sighted quick gains by the government need to be impeded and curtailed. I know it's hard when there's economic value in it, but at what cost to the people that want to live here year round and keep this community alive? That needs to be thought of...at a minimum.

I would like to see some minimal maintenance of existing ATV trails, so that users are not tempted to go around ruts and puddles, widen the trail, and massively increase the impact. The existing unofficial mountain bike trails are far too scary for inexperienced riders, and there is a huge opportunity to make mountain biking a bigger part of the recreational landscape.

I'd like to see a safe trail easement from Cantwell to the start of Denali Highway in the winter for all user groups

In response to "Plan diverse and accessible community and outdoor recreation opportunities": "I think they should support recreation but not compete with local businesses, only so many people to go around."

Indoor Fitness, Trails, Parks, and "Bouldering gym, more sustained and maintained trail systems" all listed as priorities for Borough investment.

Indoor rink and shooting/trap range

Indoor swimming pool would be great!

Indoor swimming pool would be much appreciated.

Intentional planning where trails are dual purpose (e.g., groomed in winter for skis or fatbiking and function as mountain biking trails in summer) would offer high value of investment. Snowmachines and ATVs have a lot more flexibility in where they can go, so I suggest focusing on nonmotorized access initially. A highway bike path to link to Denali NP&P would be amazing for both visitors (increase tourist activity into Healy proper) and locals - commuting by bike could be great for the community. McKinley Village and Healy could host a bike race each year, alternating start and end locations (think, what the Yukon Quest used to do). Hosting athletic/recreational events are economic drivers to smaller areas (e.g. Oosik, Midnight Sun, Gold Nugget). With a trail network, Healy can host such events to drive interest in the area: trail runs, nordic events, fatbike events. Any of these could combine to make unique "triathlon" or "biathlon" events with rafter the Nenana to Tatlanika. There is so much potential in the area, we just need a network of trails as catalyst. So many people travel every year to FAI and ANC to participate in these events - a lot of that entry money and excitement could stay local.

Limit rec development to the smallest impact possible on the greater area of the borough.

Limited but sustainable development, please!

Make sure all programs are financially solvent.

NO TAXES!!!! With growth and maintenance of infrastructure comes a cost. This all sounds good but do not put this on the backs of the community. We have been doing just fine for so long. Do not open up that door to put a tax burden on this community. We live here for a reason and its not to provide entertainment for the masses. I am all for improvement and growth but not at my expense. I will spend my money on what I want to do for recreation and not be told to give a little for something I might not be interested in. Thank you for your time and effort with trying to improve the Denali Borough.

None
None of the above does not apply to me as we need to be focused on school and spending of funds out side this is a waste of time and money we don't want government spending!!!!!! That means more people and we want less government!!!!
Nothing I can think of.
Our Borough population is aging. Us older folks need a place to gather, walk safely year round and socialize
Outdoor shooting range
Pickelball court
Please consider the cost/effort to maintain any infrastructure that is built - it is usually easier to find funding for new construction than to maintain existing infrastructure. Also please consider a pool! And leave wild areas wild. Trails and campgrounds come with poop, trash, etc.
Please. Stop the development. We live here because it's undeveloped, it's wild, with little infrastructure. This is why we chose to live here. If people want managed trails, they should move to a larger community that has those options. We didn't move here because there's a covered swimming pool and trail head signs. MARK TRAPLINES
I'm wondering... do you really care about preserving our quiet, community based way of life?
Regulate ATVs on trails - they have torn up nearly all the walking trails in Healy.
Soccer field
Some of these questions are challenging for me to answer, because my own needs/desires are met with existing options, and much of what I love about those options is that they are used mostly by locals, unmaintained/minimally structured, and ever-changing due to conditions. However, I know many people who have different needs/interests/abilities than mine who would use facilities like an indoor gym, pool, sports facilities, etc that I probably wouldn't, but would improve community health overall. Except where it's a safety hazard (ie, biking on the highway, parking in unplowed/nonexistent pullouts) I am very wary of changes to existing summer or winter trails.
Start with a bike path next to the highway, please (Cantwell to Denali, Healy as much as possible).
Denali Borough should have services for the Long Trail hikers and become a cool Hub for the long trail users.
Swimming pool in rec center.
Swimming pool needed. Parking area around Carlo Creek needed.
Swimming pool
Swimming Pool; Swimming Pool; Swimming Pool. I would like to see facilities for aging in place. Swimming is healthy low impact indoor activity that could be used year-round by all ages and persons with disabilities.
Thank you for a very thorough survey.
Thank you for this survey. I hope the results create results.
Please, for the love of god!!...can we get the Parks Hwy rest stops open year round!? As of mid-may the Denali Borough was bustling with seasonal employees and visitors and on 5/15 it looked like several pit stops were going to miss their opening day. It's absurd that THE hotspot on the road system, DNP, doesn't have a public restroom and trash can available outside of summer months. This must change. The amount of diapers and beer cans that accumulate in pullouts is embarrassing. And people instead just drop their pants behind the locked pit toilets for 8 months of the year. This is my number one priority.
Thank you. We love our community because this is where we recreate. This is very important to us!
Thanks
Thanks for all that you do!
Thanks for asking!
Thanks for the good work you're doing! Please keep the focus on facilities/opportunities that will be helpful to residents, not strictly on opportunities that could be used for profit.
The sole purpose of the borough was to tax tourism and pass the money on to the schools. You have gone way beyond that. Drop assembly members to 3, no planning commission. Let Healy incorporate if they want to be controlled, zoned, whatever and go back to the reason the borough was formed.
This "plan" to grow Tri-Valley should be split across the DENALI Borough. Dont just put all this stuff in Healy and not have them pay for it. The Borough has more important things to fund.
This is the start of the end of the original Denali Borough. Telling people where they are supposed to recreate takes away from the true meaning of living here. This removes the joy of discovering your backyard and makes the Borough more of an amusement park. This will bring an unneeded burden to the local government and cause more hiring thus wasting more money and time.
Wayside bathroom open year round.

We need to prioritize improving the pullouts and rest stops. People shit at the pullouts regardless of whether or not the restroom is open and there are a lot of other pullouts that would benefit from a bathroom even if it's just for the summer. The toilet-paper-flowers are literally at every pullout.

We should make a recreation center that includes a climbing wall and indoor track. At least 200m around if possible.

We'd LOVE to see an indoor ice rink included in a Rec. Center that has maybe an indoor soccer field or community swimming pool. A softball/baseball field outside, etc. Winters are too darn long not to have some indoor facilities!

Weightlifting, Community indoor swimming pool

What a well articulated survey! For "If you had to choose one, what would you care more about having in your community:" I would love to see a new building that could house a weight room and climbing wall. Having more opportunities for exercise, especially during the winter, would be a very welcome addition to the community!

While I actually like the way things are currently, I'm supportive of improving and diversifying recreational opportunities here, especially outside the Park. There is a great deal of potential, and if it improves the economic viability of communities like Cantwell (where I live), I'm onboard!

Would love to see a track for the kids and community, new soccer field and better ice rink. Bike path and or sidewalk would be great for walking. More picnic areas with restrooms.

Yes. Disc Golf Course.

APPENDIX



b

Fall 2023 Public Survey Results

Fall 2023 Survey Responses - Aggregated

Fall 2023 Summarized Comments

Fall 2023 Full Written Comments

SEPARATED HIGHWAY BIKE PATH FROM CANTWELL TO STAMPEDE						4.32
5 Rating	4 Rating	3 Rating	2 Rating	1 Rating	No Rating	
168	26	20	6	20	1	
5s & 4s	81%	5=Yes! I support this concept and I want to hear more about how it could be developed.				
Neutral	8%	3=I'm neutral about this concept being considered for our community.				
1s & 2s	11%	1=No! I do not support this concept and I oppose it being considered.				

SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE AT ALL THREE SCHOOLS						3.87
5 Rating	4 Rating	3 Rating	2 Rating	1 Rating	No Rating	
114	42	52	6	27	0	
5s & 4s	65%	5=Yes! I support this concept and I want to hear more about how it could be developed.				
Neutral	22%	3=I'm neutral about this concept being considered for our community.				
1s & 2s	14%	1=No! I do not support this concept and I oppose it being considered.				

MULTIUSE TRAIL CONNECTIONS: BISON-ANTLER-OTTO LAKE-DRY CREEK-STAMPEDE						3.80
5 Rating	4 Rating	3 Rating	2 Rating	1 Rating	No Rating	
115	37	45	11	32	1	
5s & 4s	63%	5=Yes! I support this concept and I want to hear more about how it could be developed.				
Neutral	19%	3=I'm neutral about this concept being considered for our community.				
1s & 2s	18%	1=No! I do not support this concept and I oppose it being considered.				

DEVELOPMENT OF TRAILS ON THE EAST SIDE OF HIGHWAY AT ANTLER CREEK						3.70
5 Rating	4 Rating	3 Rating	2 Rating	1 Rating	No Rating	
100	54	37	15	35	0	
5s & 4s	64%	5=Yes! I support this concept and I want to hear more about how it could be developed.				
Neutral	15%	3=I'm neutral about this concept being considered for our community.				
1s & 2s	21%	1=No! I do not support this concept and I oppose it being considered.				

ASSESS 17B TRAIL EASEMENTS ACROSS AHTNA LANDS TO PUBLIC LANDS						3.64
5 Rating	4 Rating	3 Rating	2 Rating	1 Rating	No Rating	
90	54	52	11	34	0	
5s & 4s	60%	5=Yes! I support this concept and I want to hear more about how it could be developed.				
Neutral	22%	3=I'm neutral about this concept being considered for our community.				
1s & 2s	19%	1=No! I do not support this concept and I oppose it being considered.				

SHOOTING RANGE IN HEALY						3.48
5 Rating	4 Rating	3 Rating	2 Rating	1 Rating	No Rating	
87	36	61	19	38	0	
5s & 4s	51%	5=Yes! I support this concept and I want to hear more about how it could be developed.				
Neutral	25%	3=I'm neutral about this concept being considered for our community.				
1s & 2s	24%	1=No! I do not support this concept and I oppose it being considered.				

WAYSIDE DEVELOPMENT AND NEW ACCESSIBLE TRAILS						3.46
5 Rating	4 Rating	3 Rating	2 Rating	1 Rating	No Rating	
77	48	60	21	35	0	
5s & 4s	52%	5=Yes! I support this concept and I want to hear more about how it could be developed.				
Neutral	25%	3=I'm neutral about this concept being considered for our community.				
1s & 2s	23%	1=No! I do not support this concept and I oppose it being considered.				

CATEGORY	COUNT
Favored Amenities	
Community Recreation/Fitness Center	24
Indoor Swimming Pool	19
Hockey Rink	12
Public Showers	4
Recreation options for seniors	7
General Pro Recreation Development	5
Impact Considerations	
Trail locations and overuse	11
Maintenance and cleanup of waste at wayside outhouses.	4
Concerns and Nonsupport	
Funding Concern	6
Perceived prioritization of Healy	4
General anti recreational development	3

CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS
<p>Favored Amenities</p> <p>Several comments expressed a desire for an indoor facility that would provide year round recreational and fitness options that allow residents to exercise in the winter. Many would like to see this facility include an indoor swimming pool. There were also a significant number of requests for a covered or indoor skating rink to allow for skating even in adverse weather conditions.</p>
<p>Impact Considerations</p> <p>Commenters left specific feedback about locations and considerations for trails and paths, including whether paths should be non motorized or mixed use. Respondents also expressed concern about the cleanup of waste at waysides and trailheads, noting a desire for year-round availability and maintenance of those facilities.</p>
<p>Concerns and Nonsupport</p> <p>Some commenters raised a need for safe opportunities for the Borough’s aging population to recreate and exercise in the community, largely in support of a community recreation/fitness center. Others support the existence of a recreation/fitness center due to a need for shower access for those that do not have them in their homes. A limited number of commenters are generally anti recreational development, or feel that plans focus too much on Healy.</p>

<p>A community fitness/recreation center got the most votes from your last survey. Other boroughs in the state are able to run and maintain these facilities. Is there a way to amend/update/change the "budgetary structure and capacity of the Denali Borough" so that our borough can offer this as well? I do not see this ever happening without the borough providing it. I have lived here a long time and have seen various community efforts to try to achieve something like this, but it hasn't happened. If funding were found to build it, could the borough run and maintain it? It is hard to imagine a non-profit running a recreation center. Could the borough provide the employees and perhaps community organizations could help with funding? I would love to see an effort from the borough to do what it can to bring this much needed service to our community.</p> <p>An indoor recreation center with indoor swimming pool would be invaluable to the health and well being of our community. As indicated, I support the building of trails, but when the wind is howling through Antler creek, I think you'd find a lot more people at the rec center! An indoor swimming pool would also be especially valuable to the young and old - kids need to learn how to swim to be safe in our community, and older folks can't hike like they used to, yet still want to be active. A rec center and pool would also be a great hub for community connection - something our borough lacks outside of the schools.</p>
<p>A community fitness/recreation center w/swimming pool would fulfill a need that isn't being met by any existing infrastructure. Additionally, it would provide a year-round benefit to all ages/abilities as it would be indoors.</p>
<p>A dedicated Community Fitness/Recreation Center with a Swimming Pool would be the absolute dream. In order for more residents to stay and maintain fitness levels as they age, I feel a dedicated fitness center is needed. While we have ample access to the outdoors, weather always is an obstacle and a certain level of fitness is needed to safely recreate outdoors. I feel that a fitness center would be the link to connect Denali Borough residents with the baseline level of fitness needed to thrive and continue to recreate outdoors. Thank you to all who are helping the borough and investing your time in these planning efforts, the community is in deep gratitude, thank you!</p>
<p>A fast, and efficient surveyor</p>
<p>A fitness center would be great.</p>
<p>All of this is awesome.</p>
<p>All three listed here would be amazing additions to the Borough. Please consider where an "Alaska Trail" would go through the borough. I would like to see it east of the Nenana River in the upland hills and mountains, NOT mirroring the highway west of the river, between 249 and 274.</p>
<p>All three of the "other projects of high public interest" have been introduced to the community as an all in one project. Wouldn't it be prudent to add those votes together to rate it among the projects being considered?</p>
<p>An indoor ice rink isn't feasible. We do not have enough people in the borough, or enough people that would use it often enough to have the rink pay for itself on the monthly costs alone. If you look at other small towns (Delta, Tok, Copper River) they are either open like ours, or a structure around the rink that is cold (not heated). A cover for the current rink is very needed and more realistic cost wise.</p>
<p>An indoor rec center - heated by GVEA's waste heat - would significantly increase the quality of life in the Borough.</p>
<p>Any and all options for recreational development should be explored. We want to continue to make this a vibrant, active place to live! It will draw economic returns as well.</p>
<p>Awesome ideas! Strongly prefer a focus on winter rec/groomed ski trails. There is so much else to do outside in the summer.</p>
<p>Shooting range comment - less supportive of putting funds here due to the existence of the Cantwell range.</p>
<p>Bike /hiking trail should begin at 208.5 Parks. No more easements across private property.</p>
<p>Bike paths/walking would be awesome. As far as hiking trails, there is 6 million acres protected for this use. A shooting range/trap range is not wanted BUT needed in Healy!!!</p>
<p>Community fitness / recreation center in Healy would be nice!</p>
<p>Community fitness center is more important than school improvements.</p>
<p>Community swimming pool, actual airport, and especially a seniors center that served food conducive to seniors diets are needed.</p>
<p>The way some projects are lumped together caused me to downgrade support in some cases. Also, where are the funds to repair and maintain these trails/facilities coming from when in some cases they aren't being maintained as it is.</p>

Damn. I was waiting to see both the pool and Rex center to vote 5s on both of those. Trails are cool of course but, a rec cen would change everything.

GENERAL COMMENT: What would be the long term funding to clean outhouses at waysides? The state waysides at Chulitna River/The Canyon/Bear Creek/Nenena area are all shuttered in winter, leading to highly unsanitary conditions around the areas. I cannot support new waysides without the bathroom infrastructure and cleaning they necessitate, as much as I want these projects! We currently have roadside cleanup issues with human waste at even unmarked pullouts. :(

Comment on other projects of high public interest: I would have the least support for a community fitness/rec center, as the DB already has these in McK Village/at Tri Valley. Like a New Years resolution, most people THINK they will go to a Rec center, but after a few times, life gets busy, and they won't. (and this is coming from someone who works out every day of the week....I just know enough about humanity to be serious). An investment in EITHER a hockey rink or Swim pool would be a higher cost, but more unique investment in our school/community.

Hockey Rink, community fitness center

HOCKEY RINK, LAUNDRY MAT/FITNESS CENTER/PUBLIC SHOWERS/PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING

I am a denali borough resident and this stuff is only going to benefit the residents of Healy and do nothing for the rest of people who live in area. Anderson, Clear, and Cantwell get nothing constantly and the Healy residents take everything. Never any benefit to the rest of the borough people. Anderson needs a sewer system, we need the roads fixed more that more stuff for Healy.

I am grateful for the committee's dedication to improving our borough!

I am in favor of a covered ice rink, and support the building of a community fitness/rec center

I am in favor of an indoor hockey rink. When thinking about it, hockey is the only youth sport that we have in our community. Besides the youth there is high school hockey and 3 adult leagues. With that being said, our kids are at an unfair disadvantage when playing teams around the state. Ice and the start of the season is at the mercy of the weather, only putting our kids behind in skill and conditioning. Expanding more on high school hockey. We already have a disadvantage being one of the last smaller communities with a hockey team and most of the athletes in high school being dual sporters, by the time their regular season starts we are nowhere near laying ice. The other teams in their league all have ice well before the season starts, we could at least give our kids a fighting chance when it comes to having ice and being at the same level of the other teams when games roll around. If we were to have an indoor rink we could house more hockey games, even tournaments. Ultimately that would bring more people into the community and could only benefit us as a whole.

I am not in support of any of these projects. I don't feel they will benefit most of the Borough residents. Only the ones seasonally working and/or living near Healy. Perhaps this is something the City of Healy should be undertaking. Not the Borough.

I believe the hockey rink and the swimming pool are in the long term plans of the community center. If we are going to have these, we might as well plan them in a central location.

I fully support a community fitness/ recreation center!

I support a swimming pool and fitness center, but I think Healy Hockey already has adequate facilities and should be self-funded.

I would like the bike path to extend throughout the borough.

Indoor hockey rink is long overdue in Healy. It is the largest organized sport available during winter.

Indoor or covered hockey rink! Don't overdo by huge facility - maybe start small?

Indoor winter gym use for ADULTS, heated swimming pool,

Too many trails in and around Healy have been damaged by ATV use. We need more non-motorized trails.

We already have an ice rink. Why another?? Schools should fall under school budget. Disc golf course.

We could look into a rasmuson foundation grant for this.

Who will maintain an indoor rink or rec center. And if you had someone to maintain it, I suggest you build both into one

Yes to a community fitness center!

Strongly for an indoor hockey rink. A covered one at least would be nice.

Super windy at Antler Creek?

I love the idea of the community fitness/rec center because it truly would serve all community members regardless of age and ability. It would provide a place for youth to learn to swim in a safe environment and for older people a place to recreate in the winter without being afraid of slipping on the ice. I think it would provide a good foundation for keeping families in the area. Seems as though we lose families and our older population to towns/cities that can provide these amenities.

I think having a rec center would be the most impactful addition we could make to this community. This community isn't set up to allow people to age in place very well. Every time a retired person moves away not only are they lost from the community but they also take their life savings with them and spend it elsewhere.

I voted 5 for everything and am excited to see where this goes. I would use everything listed in this survey. My biggest concern however is getting toilets and trash cans open year round at wayside pullouts. Look how much support there is for trails at new and existing locations. Trails involve parking lots and folks need a place to take a poop before going for a hike or a ski or a place to throw out diapers and beer cans that accumulate at a rapid rate when visitors party their way across Alaska. Denali Borough is home to the best road access National Park in the state yet hosts the most pathetic year round access to toilets for all the visitors. Please make #2 the #1 priority.

I would agree that a covered ice rink would be nice. Something that would protect from the wind would make a huge difference.

I would also like a fitness center!

I would be very interested in Community Fitness/Recreation Center - especially with a swimming pool. The outdoors is wonderful in Alaska. But Denali weather can be harsh, frigid, icy, and windy. A community Fitness/Recreation Center/Pool would provide safe and healthy recreating for people of all ages and interests. I am an elderly community member who has spent over 50 years enjoying most all of the wonderful outdoor opportunities available in Denali, Now that I'm older, I have physical conditions which limit opportunities for healthy living and recreating in these harsh conditions. I would welcome a fitness center where I could continue to get a variety of healthy exercise, of which, swimming would be high priority.

It would benefit the entire community from children learning life saving swimming skills, to pre-school activities with parents and tots, to school-age, and adults of all ages.

A Community Fitness/Recreation Center/Swimming Pool would be a very healthy addition to the Denali Borough. Thank you for considering all the options that may be available in the future.

I would love to access a public swimming pool.

I'd like to see an indoor ice rink

I'd vote a 5 for a rec. center and pool if the borough could actually get the funds for construction and maintenance

Im in favor of an indoor swimming pool with a walking track around it.

In addition i would like to comment on previous questions: regarding combined motorized and non motorized useage - I don't believe they work well together. Too much chance for injury. I believe many slower non motorized folks wouldn't feel safe because motorized may go fast and be dangerous.

Thank you for the work you do. All of these projects sound great. Please keep me in the loop.

Thank you to the CORC for undertaking this project.

Is there anyway for the borough to collect income taxes from seasonal workers? As a multi-year seasonal worker it seems unfair that all of our Alaska wages year after year are taxed by Virginia and used to support Virginia infrastructure even though we are using Alaska infrastructure for nearly half of the year. Perhaps tax collection and distribution could be done through the state?

Knock it off, please! Do less. People can recreate outside already. Barely hitting 3-digits worth of support for a project that will cost millions doesn't meet the bar. Please fantasize at home, with your own money. What will you offer next? Free totem pizza on Wednesdays. People are still pooping in outhouses, not that the borough should concern itself with that, but neither should it be building swimming pools in interior Alaska. How about keep the borough office open 5 days a week, so you can serve the public without people taking off work to acquiesce to your schedule.

LOVE to have a swimming pool.

Most ideas seem to need money. I would be interested in knowing the funding plan. Ideas and improvements are good but not free. Taxes seem to evolve from someone wanting free stuff off others pockets. So thats the .ost important aspect to me.

Most of these projects only serve the community of Healy. Healy should fund their own projects. Rural residents of the Borough receive no benefits whatsoever from Denali Borough projects. If these projects go forward taxes will likely be proposed to fund them, resulting in unfair financial burdens on residents least able to pay and least likely to benefit.

My preferred highest priority would be the "Community Fitness/Recreational Center" that could be used indoors in the winter months.

Passing lane at hwy stampede intersection.
more roadside brushing for veiwscaps.

Pedestrian safety continues to be an issue in the Healy area. Most major roads throughout the Borough do not have safe routes to walk along, and most of these proposals do not address that need. Many areas currently popular for recreation are also some of the best places to find human poop and trash. Consider addressing the needs around communities rather than expanding access points to other places, without a plan (or means) to manage the impacts that this increased access would have. Don't put in trailheads unless you plan to put in, and maintain, bathrooms and garbage collection. If you don't plan to manage the impacts that increased use would bring, leave use as-is - spread out.

Pool!!

Prioritize covered hockey rink and shooting range with trap house.

Public Fitness/Rec Building with laundry and showers and a meeting space

Quit shopping for things to do. Dismantle and reduce the Denali Borough's growing costs and footprint. Job - Take money from the tourists and spend it on the schools. The end.

Regarding the Wayside Development and New Accessible Trails idea, I would fully support waysides with year-round restrooms being developed in those locations, but I don't want to see new trailheads/trails developed at those sites. I think some of the other ideas mentioned in this survey should be higher priorities for trail development (particularly the highway bike path and connecting Healy on the west side) and I want the hiking access to Sugarloaf via Dragonfly to remain undeveloped and not overused.

Roadside paths are a priority. Thanks for your work on this.

Senior citizen center needed. Our recreational opportunities are important too

Stop building things for Healy that the "Borough" will have to pay to support the "non-profit" to run.

Stop spending Borough funds for Healy, if they want to build this crap they can become a town, have a government, and get it. They can pay taxes to fund any items not covered by federal and state grants, and leave Borough funds to be used by the whole Borough.

Supporting a rec center through the administrative/organizational skills of the Borough would boost volunteer organization efforts and likely elevate opportunities for funding. Appreciate seeing it listed too.

Swimming pool

swimming pool would be awesome!

Thank you for taking the time to put out these surveys.

A Community Fitness / Rec Center with a Swimming Pool would be the best use of our funds. For our overall health, well-being, and for community building.

So many months of the year it is cold, or rainy, or buggy and not hospitable for many in our community to be physically active. I realize that many of the folks on your committee love being outside in all sorts of weather. This is not the norm. Especially not for this community. While I appreciate and support all the trail building ideas, a fitness center with pool would be the greatest benefit for us as individuals, and as a community. Trails, shooting ranges, covered hockey rinks are all for a single specific user group. A multi-use facility would have a broader benefit for the entire community.

Having a fitness center would bring people together. Fitness classes, spinning, walking, lap swim, open swim, aquatic aerobics, weights, pickle ball (yes, I said it), walking, indoor hockey, climbing, and many other recreational activities - these brings people together, in motion. Folks with different beliefs and values come together and see the humanity in each other, as they are there for similar reasons. It's community building without knowing they are community building. Side benefit - happier healthier people, physically, mentally and spiritually.

Other benefits of would be:

Jobs for community members. Volunteer opportunities.

A place to get a work out in, meet community members, and grab a shower, for the many folks without running water.

Rehab for injuries at every age level. Regular exercise to prevent many of these injuries in the first place. Overall better health for our community.

A fitness center including a pool has limitless teaching and learning activities! From aquatic yoga to all levels of climbing to palates to lacrosse basics to pack raft water polo - the options are actually unlimited.

A chance for our children to have more diverse fitness exposure and growth.

Options for our children and our parents and grandparents to recreate in a safe environment. The school is a wonderful resource, though it cannot function as a community fitness center. Nor should it.

A facility designated for community would bring people out of their houses, help them be more active, hygienic, and bring this community together.

Thank you very much for your time, thoughtfulness, and efforts.

The Borough needs to save it's money that would be put into these projects, even as a match, and put it towards road maintenance fund.

the community of Healy could benefit of a laundromat facility that is properly taken care of and that offers clean showers. I am personally thankful for Vitus and what they offer but no one cleans or maintains the place. the more trails we establish the more traffic we encourage.

The community rec center proposal included a phase for an indoor hockey rink. How many of the rec center votes were for the support of the hockey rink therein and how many were for "all other aspects" of the rec center, as proposed.

The multiuse recreation trails between Bison/Antler and Lignite/Stampede have the greatest potential to serve the greatest number of people well. I do not support 17b easements and other developments that the borough may not be able to maintain and will impact rural residents in the vicinity negatively. Concentrating on the Antler-Stampede corridor makes the most sense and will do a lot of good!

APPENDIX



c

Fall 2024 Public Survey Results

Fall 2024 Survey Responses - Aggregated

Fall 2024 Full Written Comments

What community do you live in?	
Clear, Anderson & Surrounding Communities	0
Healy & Surrounding Communities	21
McKinley Village, Denali Park & Surrounding Communities	14
Native Village of Cantwell, Cantwell & Surrounding Communities	2
Other (please specify)	2

Do you live here...	
Year-round	35
Seasonally	3
Other (please specify)	1

What age range are you?	
12-18	0
19-29	0
30-44	10
45-64	18
65+	11

What excited you the most after reviewing this plan? (write-in)	
Community Connector Bike Paths	11
Multi-use Trail System from Bison Gulch to Stampede Road	11
Having a Recreation Plan Developed for the Borough	7
Antler Creek East Trail Network	5
17(b) trail easement improvements	4
Public Shooting Range	3
School Sports Infrastructure Improvements	3
Recreation Center	2
Covered Ice Rink	1
Education about Land Ownership	1
Trail Sustainability and assessment mapping	1

What concerns do you have after reviewing this plan? (write-in)	
Cost & feasibility of developing/maintaining proposed projects	9
Maintenance of waysides and trailheads	6
Conflict between trail user types	6
Plan does not represent needs of whole borough population	5
Impacts of increased use/tourism	3
Anti improvements to 17(b) easements	2
Concerns for trail proximity to private property	2
Absence of specific location amenities	2
No concerns	2
Location of shooting range	1
Stampede trails not receiving enough use to justify investment	1
Lack of land acknowledgement in draft plan	1

Please select your level of agreement with this statement:
This plan reflects my recreation priorities for my community.

Strongly Agree (5)	8
Agree (4)	14
Neutral (3)	5
Disagree (2)	3
Strongly Disagree (1)	5
Weighted average	3.49

Full Written Comments

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Fall 2024 Public Outreach

	General Support	Ideas to Consider	Non-Support
Recommend you include in the Recreation Plan document a LINK or Reference to these NPS documents:			
Compilation of Trails Management Planning and Policy https://www.nps.gov/dena/learn/management/trails-management-compilation.htm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DNP Trails Program, Routine Maintenance, Repair, and Operating Standards December 2018 – December 2023 https://www.nps.gov/dena/learn/management/upload/Trails_Maint_Plan_2018_2023.pdf			
Thank you for the hard work and detailed report! Looking forward to the improvements!	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thanks for all the hard work!	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thank you all for all your efforts! This is awesome.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nice professional presentation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I fully support more wayside facilities. I recognize that Coyote Creek makes some sense as people already often stop there either to access the trails, or take in the vista. If a toilet is added there, along with an information kiosk, it would be a good follow up project to improve a trail over to Dragonfly Falls. I would like to have future wayside improvement projects consider a south Denali Borough wayside on Broad Pass as a welcome to visitors arriving in the borough from the south, much like at Swan Lake. There is no information on Broad Pass, which gets lots of usage with people pulling over to take in the views, pee and poop off the back of the pullouts, and then we all know the usage in springtime with snowmachiners. Much of that usages originates in the Mat-Su Bourough, but there is some skiing and light snow machine usage in spring originating on the Denali side.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would also like to see waste facilities incorporated into the boat launch facilities in the future. At the McKinley Village boat launch, there is no facility for people to use before/after boating and there are tons of commercial users who go through there, as well as individual users. The only option is the beach, or going into the lodge (which I'm sure they are not excited about). There should be a facility in partnership with Ahtna at the Number One bridge ("Windy Bridge" in the Rec Plan) put in as well for all the usage it gets there.			
This is exciting. But I would add some additional (a little) cautionary language to the plan. First, plans are necessary, but they don't actually do anything. It takes money (a lot of it), energy and effort (moving dirt, picking up rocks, cutting trees, sweating and panting, sore muscles) and time (lots of it). People really need to know this is a long-haul effort and they should brace for that. initial projects should be small enough to deliver real benefits to locals within a single work season. This will help build enthusiasm and sustain the required long term effort for the rest of the plan. Thanks a ton for all the work you all have done. The community is in your debt! Onward!!	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ferry residents/gold miners have brought vehicles to ferry using the railroad and nenana river ice crossing. The trainman's walk is adequate for narrower atvs and snowmobiles. These known access issues would not be compatible with a public recreation plan. There is also inadequate public parking on both sides of the railroad bridge. The ferry residents own their parking spaces. Ferry residents have worked hard to build homes and businesses in Ferry. We enjoy the privacy and subsistence this area has provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
You mentioned up grading school recreational facilities. I would like to see a cross country running and skiing trail system developed at Tri-Valley School. There is a lot of existing trails on school property already. This would be an easy project to complete and much needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not mentioned in this report is the creation of a cross-country running course/ski track at Tri-Valley School, on land adjacent to the school. I think this is a worthwhile project.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cantwell's hockey/ice rink is usable just not maintained as that takes volunteers. so helping communities with these kinds of facilities is important	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We have no enforcement built into our code so it would even be difficult to enforce non motorized and multi use trails. NPS has funding from the federal government and an enforcement team to make their rules functional and to built facilities and maintain them. Having said all of the above I do believe in planning and community involvement. I believe if you want something go out and get it done, personal and community buy in is how Denali Borough is set up to function.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
we need less plans and more EMS/ Firefighters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
I was surprised by the lack of an early or substantial mention of the wild creatures who are also residents of our Borough. Section 06-A would be an obvious place for this--in the first paragraph, noting the presence of wildlife among the best of Alaska characteristics, or in the third, where wildlife-viewing should be noted with other activities.			
I mention this for two reasons--first, because these living beings are the place's original residents and I think they deserve to be noted for their own sake. Also, in a Borough of very diverse user types, one of the activities that unites nearly ever resident is noticing and enjoying our non-human neighbors. When we see a bear or moose, hearing cranes, noting animal tracks, when birds come back. We talk about creatures among ourselves across all demographics. I'd love to see this unifying value highlighted more clearly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thank you to all committee members for your commitment and your efforts!			
Great work so far. I like the direction the plan is going and how it represents our communities interests.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Good job, everybody!	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another high priority for me is the multi-use trail system from Bison Gulch to Stampede. I belong to many user groups, from ATV to snow machining, skiing and walking (and in my younger years mushing). I'd love to see the local trails maintained and designated to certain user groups, but don't see any suggestion on how this could possibly be accomplished. The trails shown in your graphic on page 60 have been heavily degraded by motorized use, and I say that as someone who has loved 4-wheeling (3-wheeling back in the days) all my life. The trails north/east of Dry Creek are in parts so deeply rutted that only high-clearance ATVs are able to navigate them. Try to walk those trails without straining an ankle. This is true for a majority of trails around Healy. Unfortunately, most motorized users in and around my community have shown little or no concern for other user groups and repeatedly and purposely used the trails in wet and unstable conditions, simply for the fun of mudslinging. Now we have added Fat Trucks to the equation, to the point where the asphalt was taken out at a stretch of road up by Otto Lake. The Fat Trucks obviously tore up the chip sealing, so we did away with it altogether... How are you going to implement change?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I grew up in Healy. I like to take my family back in the summer. The new parking put in at Antler Creek is nice. We enjoyed not worrying about our small children running off toward the highway.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I live here because it is not developed. I enjoy going where ever I want. Summer and winter. I don't need any trails and encounter more tourists. There are plenty of trails in the park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The longstanding dedication, considerable volunteer effort, and age diversity evidenced by the local hockey community is a compelling reason to prioritize a better rink facility. The Lions Club rink/building in Big Lake is a possible model: heated foyer, locker rooms and upper-level observing/ event space (could even incorporate the proposed fitness center), and an enclosed, unrefrigerated rink. Developing enhanced winter opportunities seems likeliest to benefit locals, and address a time of year when healthy, active pursuits are challenged by cold, dark and wind.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thanks to everyone on the Denali Borough Recreation Committee for working on our Community & Outdoor Recreation Plan. We appreciate the time and efforts from everyone involved. We're excited to continue to be involved in the process. Thanks all!	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outdoor recreation is absolutely key to health and wellbeing in our community, especially in the winter. I would really like to see formalized and maintained winter trails. I would be willing to volunteer to help groom, something I do now for our little corner.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have mixed feelings about the shooting range, although it does probably create a safer environment for something that is happening with or without the range!	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I see that the median age is in their 40s here, why isn't there thought being given to a senior center based on the last median age of 30s?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thank you for the effort on this. It's a great vision, and there is a lot of value in a renewed focus on the outdoors outside of the Park. We have so much that is accessible, that if done right, will be another draw to our area while also catering to the community!	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1. Overall I want the CORC and Borough to know that I chose this community to be my home just the way it was when I moved here. Ultimately I feel there are things I'd like to see improved, including community and outdoor rec opportunities, but I want my local government to to prioritize and protect locals and our resources over tourism. Tourism is fiscally important to this community but we should remember that the people who live here and their quality of life are always more important than those who visit and the companies who profit from it and leave.			
2. I noticed a relatively even split on interest in "new-vs-maintaining existing" infrastructure. I think this may speak to locals being cautious about making too many changes to the place they already love.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Surveys are great but can be misleading depending on the questions and how they were asked and how the responses are tabulated and presented. I didn't see any glaring issues but it is an important distinction to keep in mind for future surveys.			
4. The CORC did a good job of identifying potential projects. I'm curious to hear if members of the public have other/better ideas for projects.			

The Denali Citizens Council Board of Directors appreciates all the work that has gone into the Denali Borough Community and Outdoor Recreation Plan. The leadership of a dedicated representative committee and the use of community surveys to inform the process have been a model for local decision-making.

The Strategies and Action Items presented on pages 34-39 are thoughtful and reasonable, but also very ambitious given the ongoing volunteer effort needed to pursue them via the CORC and subcommittees. Past experience has shown difficulties in sustaining time-consuming and systematic volunteer policy programs. How can the Borough keep up the energy and enthusiasm needed to accomplish this work? There is value in listing out all the specific items that would be approached in an ideal world, however you might also consider indicating which items are priorities in case it proves impossible to pursue them all. Also, it would be interesting and useful for the committee to contemplate how to incentivize ongoing committee and subcommittee participation.

We support the list of potential projects listed at the end of the planning document. We are particularly enthused about the community connector bike paths, the multi-use trail system, and the attention to 17(b) easements. We have a few notes about each.

- The bike paths are indicated in other plans and have long been sought. Some are already funded. Thank you for including them as a priority project!

- The multi-use trail system connecting Bison Gulch/Antler Creek all the way to Stampede is a great idea. We assume the schematic on page 61 is illustrative only, but it does raise a couple of questions:

- 1) Why wouldn't the trail system also connect to Healy and to Otto Lake, so that summer and year-round residents in these communities could access the trails directly from their homes?
- 2) To minimize possible complaints, it would be good to describe how trails would be planned and routed across public lands to avoid infringing on private property.
- 3) The plan does not speak to commercial use on community facilities such as these trails. Particularly given the growing impact of guided services in this area already – and their outsized contribution to wear-and-tear on trails – it would be nice to see a general policy statement that would be protective of local users and uses on at least some trails.

- The eight 17(b) easements indicated are perhaps the most important ones to consider for evaluation and improvement, but we see quite a few more listed in the BLM inventory at: https://sdms.ak.blm.gov/perl-bin/scanned_images/easement/get_esmt.pl. What is the rationale for focusing on these 8 easements, and could something general be said about the usefulness of the others for outdoor recreation?

Finally, much of DCC's work in the past has focused on Denali National Park and Preserve and the Wolf Townships. We offer a couple of factual corrections to the text regarding each of these areas.

- Page 15: When Denali National Park and Preserve was expanded, almost all of the original park was designated as Wilderness, but that designation excluded approximately 20,000 acres of "frontcounty" around the park entrance area and road corridor. It is not correct to say that the entire original park is "federal Wilderness."
- Page 21: The Stampede Trail and its associated RS2477 easement do not just cross federal land, but also state and some private lands. As far west as the Sushana River the trail is almost entirely on state lands.

Thank you for the great work and the opportunity to comment!



APPENDIX



d

Trail Sustainability Assessment

Denali Borough Trail Sustainability Assessment

2022

Produced by Interior Trails

Sustainable Trail Design, Construction, Training & Consulting



Sustainable Trail Design, Construction, Training & Consulting

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DENALI BOROUGH TRAIL SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT, 2022

Overview

During the late summer and fall of 2022, Interior Trails LLC (IT) conducted site visits to a variety of commonly used social trails across the Denali Borough (DB), and assessed the condition and overall sustainability of these trails. While not an exhaustive list of social trails in the region, the trails featured in this report were prioritized through conversation with Borough employees, and through the initial planning efforts of the newly formed Trails and Outdoor Recreation Committee (TORC).

This report is the first effort in building an existing trail inventory, an important step in the creation of a Trails and Outdoor Recreation Master Plan (TORM). First, DB needs to know what trails exist currently, and what their condition is. From there, DB can make plans to address lacks, and improve, or remove, unsafe or unsustainable trails. A professional trail prescription report would be part of that process.

The starting point in a useful assessment of trail sustainability is a question: What is a sustainable trail? IT has been refining our working definition over 27 years of trail design, construction, and maintenance, looking for the qualities that make a trail work, consistently, over time.

Most basically defined, a Sustainable Trail is a trail that conforms to its terrain and environment, is capable of handling its intended use without serious resource degradation, requires minimal maintenance, and focuses on maximizing the user's experience.

This definition leads directly to the Nine Elements of a Sustainable Trail. New trail construction projects should strive to meet all nine elements. For existing trails, these elements can be used as a template for identifying problems, and prescribing or implementing improvements. The basic template originated with the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA), and we have amended or added to it.

9 Sustainable Trail Elements

1. *Planned & Designed*: Guided by design documents & specifications; public comment; EA/EIS and other permitting; field recon; and professional design & layout.
2. *Contour Curvilinear Alignment*: Layout for sidehill construction following topography. Avoids straight lines, matches the curves of existing topography. Enables full bench construction, which promotes sheet flow drainage. Avoids the fall line. Conforms to, not imposed on, terrain.
3. *Controlled Grade*: Grade choices are designed and deliberate, not just responding to terrain as it is encountered. Follows “half-rule” regarding sideslope: trail grade generally not more than half the steepness of sideslope it crosses (Eg: on a measured sideslope of 20%, a traversing trail should not be steeper than 10%).
4. *Integrated Water Control*: Drainage is designed and constructed into initial alignment (via grade reversals). Reduces dependence on drainage structures, which can fail. Post-construction drainage incorporates rolling grade dips, knicks, topo-mods, etc. All tread is either outsloped (toward drainage point) or crowned (on flat ground). Avoids reliance on culverts and “water bar” style drains.
5. *Full Bench Construction*: 100% of tread surface is built by excavating from sloping terrain to native undisturbed ground; achieves maximum compaction. Avoids $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ bench (trail tread on cut & fill).
6. *Durable Tread Surface*: When bench cut isn’t possible because of low sideslopes, or when soils are fragile, use tread hardening methods. On-site material, imported material, structures, geo-textiles, etc. Implement the simplest solution first. Always begin with drainage structures before tread structures.
7. *Regular Maintenance*: Even the most sustainable trail needs maintenance. Labor, available expertise, and materials should be accounted for in trail planning & funding.
8. *Integrates Well into the Environment*: Trail does not destroy the feel, aesthetics or ecological integrity of the surrounding environment. Rather, the trail enhances natural features & draws users into surroundings. Trail is an interpreter of landscape.
9. *Satisfies the Intended User*: If a user's needs are not met, they won't use the trail or they'll use it in a way that degrades it. A good trail makes a user happy!

Discussion of Sustainable Trail

A trail that incorporates the nine Sustainable Elements has a dramatic reduction in life-cycle maintenance costs when compared to an unplanned, undesigned trail, which more than compensates for a higher initial cost. Additionally, a sustainable trail offers significantly improved public safety and transportation alternatives, higher user-satisfaction, more stringent resource protection, better environmental aesthetics, and increased adjacent property values.

In many cases, especially in low population density regions like the DB, an historically seldom-used social trail becomes a formal trail by default, as population and use increase over time. Social trails are at an inherent disadvantage in their sustainability potential because they were never planned or designed,

and often contain few, if any, of the nine Sustainable Elements. However, as mentioned above, this list is still useful in identifying where improvements can be made.

These nine elements were the starting criteria for our assessments in this report. Since all of the trails we evaluated are either social trails or old mining roads, and were “walked in” (or bladed/dozer-ed in) by users, none of them were formally designed or constructed as recreational trails. To by-pass the typical pass-fail nature of a sustainability assessment, we have included an additional designation of “maintainable.” This category may apply to a trail that doesn’t incorporate many of the nine elements, but due to one or two— like durable tread soils, a certain user experience, regular maintenance, or another factor—the trail can be made to function reasonably well despite limitations.

Terminology

For the sake of brevity, we will often use technical trail design/construction terms, or terrain feature descriptions. Some of those include the following:

Fall-line: The most direct route down a slope; a line that is perpendicular to contour lines on a topo map, such as a creek. This occurs when a section of trail breaks the half-rule, with trail tread exceeding 50% of the natural sideslope it crosses. This causes water to flow down the tread and increases channelizing, water velocity and tread erosion.

Side-slope: The naturally existing slope of undisturbed ground that a trail may cross, expressed as a percentage.

Grade reversal: A drainage feature, designed-in before construction, in which the prevailing grade is reversed for a short section, and then prevailing grade is resumed. For example, if the trail is ascending at 12%, a grade reversal descends for 5-20’ at 3-5% (depending on the user group), and then resumes ascending.

Rolling grade-dips: A drainage feature similar to a grade reversal, but added to an existing trail, or after initial construction. Because a rolling grade-dip is not part of the original design, there are usually over-steep sections.

Bench cut: Trail tread construction technique for sloping ground that requires the cutting of a “bench” into the existing slope, leaving behind a trail surface on undisturbed native soils, which requires no compaction.

Individual Trail Assessments

1. Dragonfly Falls

Property owned/managed by: State of Alaska

Parking: Small paved lot at highway pull-out,

Existing social trail: yes

Primary user group: sight-seeing day hiker, ice climber, some overnight camping

Season of use: year round

9 Elements of Sustainable Trails:

Scoring 1= yes, 0= no, .5= some/partial

Planned & Designed: No (0)

Controlled Grade: No (0)

Contour curvilinear alignment: some (.5)

Integrated Water Control: No (0)

Full Bench Construction: some (.5)

Durable Tread Surface: Yes (1)

Regular Maintenance: No (0)

Integrates Well into Environment: No (0)

Satisfies the Intended User: Partially (.5)

Sustainability Score: 2.5/9

Maintainable: Yes, but expensive technical rock work would be required.

Comments: Dragonfly Falls is a scenic destination in the Nenana River Canyon. The falls are lovely, with river access available via some short rock scrambling. In summer, the sound of the falls, Dragonfly Creek, and the Nenana River drown out the noise from the highway, despite its close proximity.

The trail itself is a multi-braided series of user-created social trails with at least one creek crossing, and significant cliff exposure with potential slip/fall hazard. Tread soils are very durable—mostly schist-y gravels and bedrock. There is limited-capacity parking in an existing paved pullout south of Dragonfly Creek. The best social trail from both a user experience and sustainability perspective lies on the north side of Dragonfly Creek. While this route is still mostly over-steep (18-30% average grades), there is a lot of full-bench, lower side-slopes, and less fall exposure.

Currently, it is necessary to cross Dragonfly Creek just below the highway bridge to reach the best route. However, there is great potential for a parking lot close to Coyote Creek to the north. From there, a very scenic, .5 mile sustainable trail (Figure 1) could be designed & built with low grades (+/- 8% average) and excellent vistas, to the same destination. This could provide a short year-round excursion for people of

many ages and abilities. In Figure 1 (below) the thicker emerald green line shows the optional traversing trail to Dragonfly Falls. This would require a new parking lot south of Coyote Creek. The thicker tomato red line shows an optional Windy Bridge-Nenana Overlook loop trail from the existing pullout.



Figure 1, Dragonfly Falls area

2. Otto Lake/Dry Creek Area to Black Diamond Mine

Property owned/managed by: State of Alaska and/or Denali Borough

Parking: Small gravel lot .6 miles west of Lion's Club Park at Otto Lake

Existing social trail: Yes, a complex network of social trails and old mining roads (not all were assessed in 2022, due to time constraints)

Primary current user group: Motorized vehicles (ATVs/UTVs, small trucks), hunters, mountain bikers, hikers, snow machines, dog-mushing, skiing

Season of use: year round

9 Elements of Sustainable Trails:

Scoring 1= yes, 0= no, .5= some/partial

Planned & Designed: No (0)

Controlled Grade: No (0)

Contour curvilinear alignment: No (0)

Integrated Water Control: No (0)
Full Bench Construction: some (.5)
Durable Tread Surface: Yes (1)
Regular Maintenance: Some (0)
Integrates Well Into Environment: No (0)
Satisfies the Intended User: Partially (.5)

Sustainability Score: 2.0/9

Maintainable: Yes, very maintainable, depending on which route is chosen.

Comments: The Otto Lake-Dry Creek Area has an extensive network of ATV trails, with fairly heavy motorized use, both by individuals and commercial tours. The major arteries get progressively farther west until tying in to Dry Creek proper.

IT focused the initial assessment on the easternmost route, which leads up to Black Diamond Mine, and on the next route to the west, with an eye toward potential connections to the alpine, including Black Diamond Peak and the Antler Ridge Trail. The most obvious alpine connector is the western-most trail branch. However, we did not have time during this assessment period to ground-truth this route. Assessing this route is the top priority for 2023.

The route to Black Diamond Mine is consistently over-steep, poorly drained, and leads to the interesting, but somewhat unsafe destination of a tailings pile with exposed pieces of rusty dragline cable. This route is unsustainable, and, because better views exist elsewhere, not worth improving.

The next route to the west, however, holds a lot of potential for a multi-use trail to a good overlook. While it, too, is mostly over-steep, with grades consistently +20%, and therefore frequently channels or holds water, there are many opportunities to create better drainage. The soils are quite durable, mostly schist-y gravels, with bedrock outcrops, and some old moraine/outwash/dry stream channels lower down. Additionally, this route tops out at a broad overlook with terrific views of the surrounding area. This route does not supply good continuing access to the alpine and a better choice for an Antler Ridge/Black Diamond Peak connection is one route farther west.

The western-most route into the foothills shows up in satellite imagery with a fairly continuous social trail to the top of Black Diamond peak. From the most accessible parking area about .6 miles from Lion's Park, this route continues along a prominent gravel road for 1.5 miles before transitioning into a narrow social trail for 2.5 miles to the summit of Black Diamond Peak. The satellite imagery indicates most of the non-motorized portion of the route is on exposed gravel along ridges, but there are some over-steep sections of the trail that cross open tundra. In those areas, trail-braiding is evident, a primary indicator of poor drainage and degraded tread soils. From the bird's eye view, the route overall looks to be 70-90% on durable tread soils, and about 10-30% on poor soils. The average grade of the 2.5 mile route from the end of the two-track is 15%. However, this masks some seriously over-steep (up to 62% in the

cliff band below the summit) and many fall-line sections (see included route image). It is very likely that professionally designed reroutes could avoid some of the less sustainable sections of the social trail, or the drainage could be improved and the tread could be hardened, if there aren't suitable route alternatives. In its current alignment this route would certainly be maintainable, if not fully sustainable. Additionally, this connection to the Antler Ridge Trail, and the new trailhead/parking lot on the Parks Highway, would create a beautiful point-to-point alpine hiking option close to Healy, as well as the possibility of trail connectivity to Dry Creek and subdivisions west and northwest of the town center.

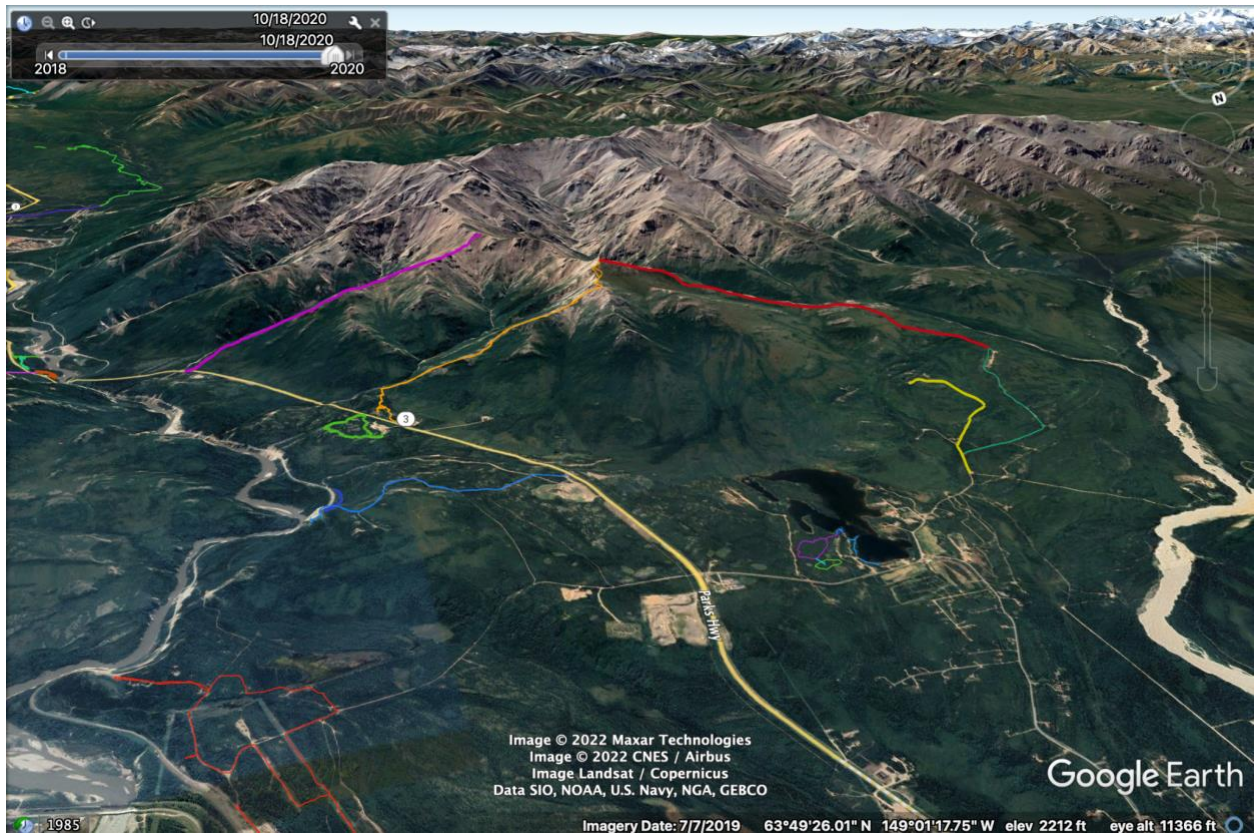


Figure 2, Otto-Dry Creek Area

In Figure 2 (above) the bird's eye view is from the north, looking south. The route to Black Diamond Mine is omitted for clarity. The yellow trail line shows the multi-use trail that could be improved to a broad overlook. The darker green line is the furthest west existing trail, and the thicker red line shows the social trail connection to Black Diamond Peak and the Antler Ridge Trail (the orange line). The pink line is the Bison Ridge Trail.

In Figure 3 (below) the view is looking north, with the social trail route to Black Diamond Peak shown in thick red, with an elevation profile. Note that most of the route is moderately graded, however, in the higher alpine area the grades reach between 40-62%.

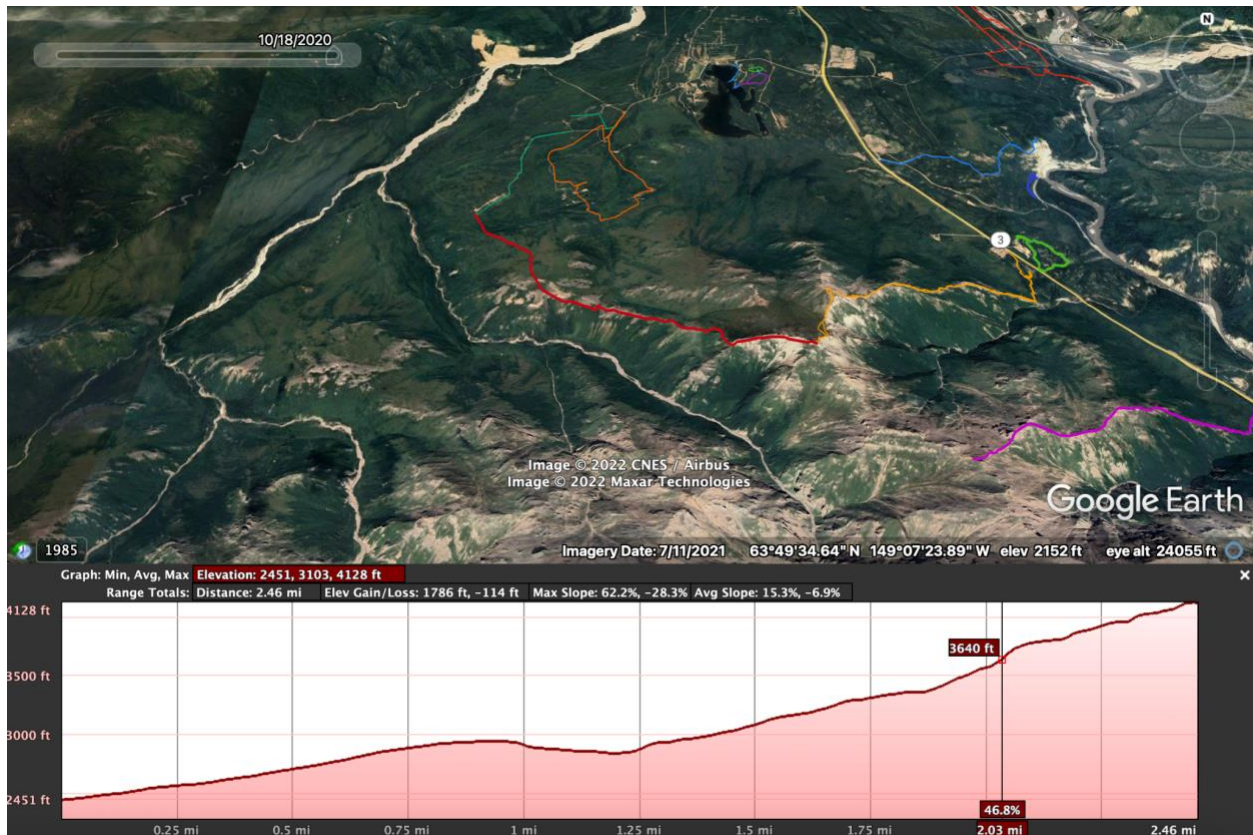


Figure 3, BD Peak

3. Carlo Creek North 17B Easement/social trail

Property owned/managed by: 17B Easement, Ahtna Corporation, BLM

Parking: Small gravel pull-out across from easement trailhead

Existing social trail: yes, a few different routes

Primary user group: day hiker, hunter, skier, limited motorized, some overnight camping

Season of use: year round

9 Elements of Sustainable Trails:

Scoring 1= yes, 0= no, .5= some/partial

Planned & Designed: No (0)

Controlled Grade: No (0)

Contour curvilinear alignment: some (.5)

Integrated Water Control: No (0)

Full Bench Construction: some (.5)

Durable Tread Surface: Some (.5)

Regular Maintenance: Some (.5)

Integrates Well into Environment: Some (.5)

Satisfies the Intended User: Partially (.5)

Sustainability Score: 3/9

Maintainable: Yes

Comments: Carlo Creek is a mixed residential and commercial area featuring a couple lodges and a hostel, as well as a few popular restaurants. The trail access point is not immediately obvious to a local or visitor without prior knowledge, and private land borders the easement trail on all sides. However, the easement trailhead and route are consistently marked with labeled carsonite posts. After a little less than a half mile, the trail forks. The more heavily-used route continues straight, onto Ahtna land, while the legal easement heads left (NE).

We explored both route options and found the legal 17B easement to have fairly poor soils (silt and organics near the surface), a mostly over-steep, fall-line alignment with grades to 40%, and one creek crossing. Before the public land boundary at mile 1.5, the soils improve with a higher gravel and rock content, and after the trail enters public land, it becomes brushy and faint, with clearly lower use levels.

The more southerly social trail is entirely on Ahtna land after the easement junction. However, this route is very clearly preferred by users, and is superior from a sustainability standpoint as well. While the alignment is mostly over-steep, with no integrated water control, the aspect is more southerly, and so the soils are fairly good. In fact, there was very little evidence of erosion during our visit in late September, despite a very wet summer and fall. On the trail sections through flat ground there are tread durability and drainage issues, in particular through a swampy area with a small slow-moving tributary stream. But as the trail steepens toward the sub-alpine, the soils, aspect and views all improve.

We noted a significant amount of “guerrilla” trail maintenance— alder brushing, primarily— which indicates a committed group of local users, whether lodge employees interested in improving their guests’ experience, or local residents improving their own. This maintenance helps offset some of the missing sustainability elements. With a little bit of input and education about best practices (and permission from the land owner, of course) this workforce could be harnessed to even greater effect.

Both the easement trail and the more popular social trail end up on a gravelly bench with terrific views of upper Carlo Creek, the north ridge of Morning Mountain, and across the Nenana River to the National Park. Intrepid hikers and skiers can continue up toward Carlo Mountain or other alpine destinations, but the bench is a lovely destination in itself.

The 17B legal easement, after the social trail junction, provides a less desirable route to public land. This alignment is also less sustainable and maintainable. Hiking on Ahtna land is allowed if a user purchases an annual permit. If improvements are made to the social trail on private land, they should be done with full knowledge and permission of the land owner. If future trail development plans include encouraging

use in the Carlo Creek north area, careful thought should be given to ensure legal user access, whether by improving the easement trail, or streamlining the permitting process (via trailhead kiosk, online method, as part of a Borough-wide trail pass, or another method).

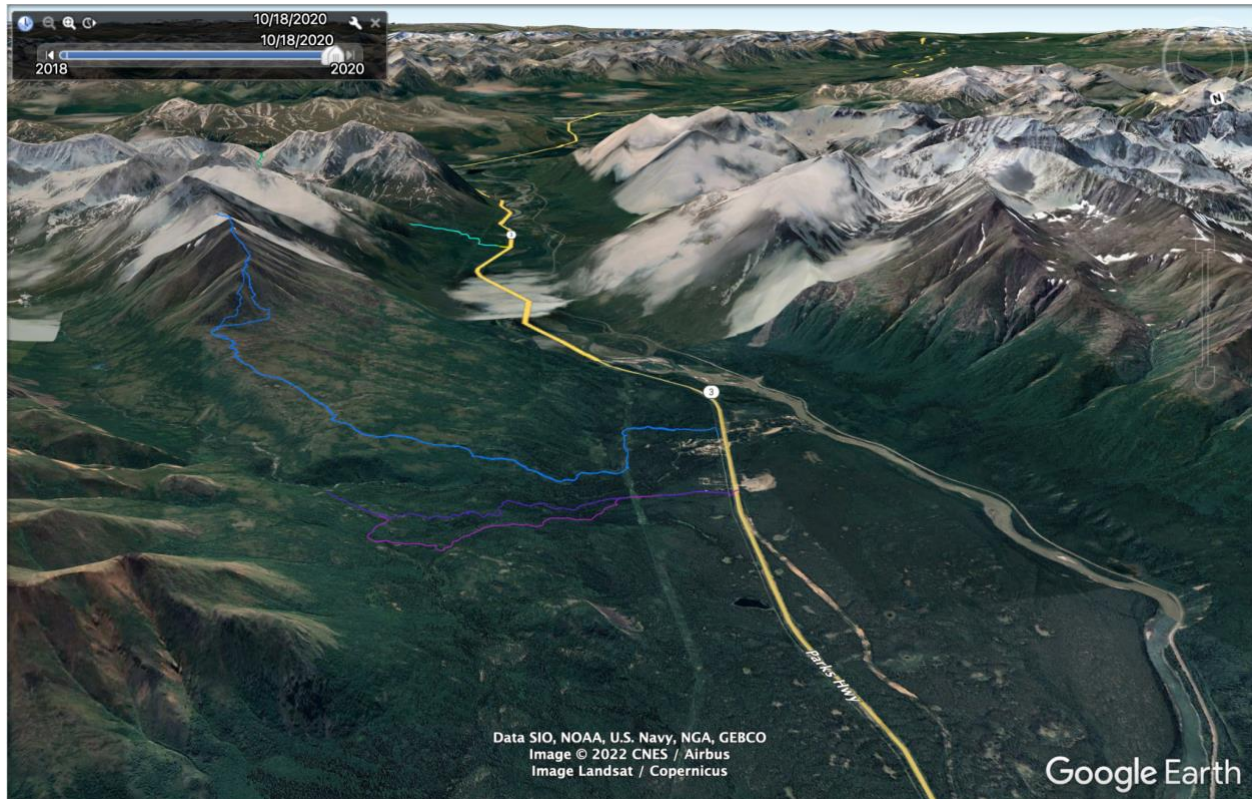


Figure 4, Carlo Creek north

In Figure 4 (above) and Figure 5 (next page) the violet-purple line shows the Carlo Creek north 17B easement trail. The darker purple line shows the more popular, and more sustainable/maintainable, route on private land. The blue line is the social trail up Morning Mountain.

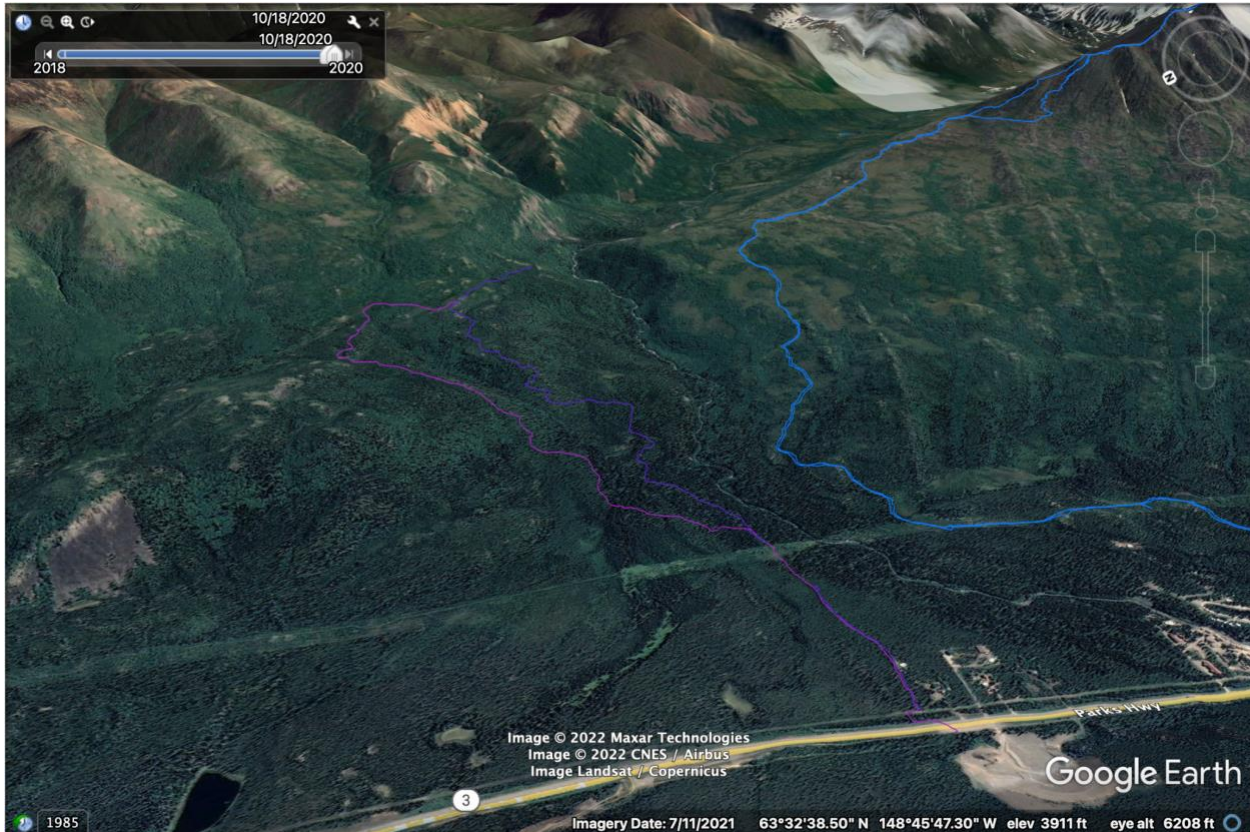


Figure 5, Carlo Creek north

4. Horse Trail (McKinley Village)

Property owned/managed by: 17B Easement, Ahtna Corporation, BLM

Parking: Large gravel parking lot/trailhead, suitable for stock trailers, not plowed for winter time use

Existing social trail: yes

Primary user group: hunting parties, skier, limited motorized on portions

Season of use: year round

9 Elements of Sustainable Trails:

Scoring 1= yes, 0= no, .5= some/partial

Planned & Designed: No (0)

Controlled Grade: No (0)

Contour curvilinear alignment: No (0)

Integrated Water Control: No (0)

Full Bench Construction: some (0)

Durable Tread Surface: Some (0)

Regular Maintenance: Some (0)

Integrates Well into Environment: Some (0)
Satisfies the Intended User: Partially (.5)

Sustainability Score: .5/9

Maintainable: No

Comments: The Horse Trail provides legal access to public land in upper Revine Creek and the Yanert Valley. In winter, this trail is a part of a network of well-loved skiing, dog-mushing, and snow machine trails, regularly used by local residents. In summer, it seems to be used infrequently. The trail receives a heavy pulse of hunting traffic in the fall, especially on horseback.

The trail stays on flat ground at least until crossing the Intertie at mile 1 and the combination of heavy organic and silt/clay-rich soils suffer from the lack of any drainage. The conditions at the time of our assessment ranged from ankle to calf-deep mud, with frequent large ponded areas. Just before the Inter-tie junction a creek flows across the trail and the user impact over the years has created a large pond with areas well over knee-deep.

Overall, this alignment, with no sloping ground and poor soils, just can't sustain the level or type of summer/fall use it receives without serious degradation. The only portion in the first mile that hasn't reached a totally degraded state is the section that went in after the new parking lot was built. After the junction with the historic horse trail route (visible on old map layers) there is a noticeable change in the mud's depth and saturation. Maintaining this trail would require some kind of tread hardening, most likely imported gravel, and extensive drainage ditching. Given the cost of this effort, the fact that the hunting traffic in the fall is undeterred by the trail's current state, and the fact that the winter users are unaffected by degraded soils, the upgrades would not be a great value.

5. Sline Creek Trail

Property owned/managed by: Ahtna Corporation, State of Alaska
Parking: Short narrow spur road to a small mostly gravel turnaround
Existing social trail: yes
Primary user group: day hiker, hunter, some overnight camping
Season of use: spring, summer, fall

9 Elements of Sustainable Trails:

Scoring 1= yes, 0= no, .5= some/partial

Planned & Designed: No (0)
Controlled Grade: No (0)
Contour curvilinear alignment: some (.5)
Integrated Water Control: No (0)

Full Bench Construction: some (.5)
Durable Tread Surface: Some (.5)
Regular Maintenance: Some (.5)
Integrates Well Into Environment: Some (.5)
Satisfies the Intended User: Partially (.5)

Sustainability Score: 3/9

Maintainable: Yes

Comments: The Sline Creek area has a small number of residential lots, but the trailhead and the first quarter mile of trail are on land owned by Ahtna Corporation. The trail access point requires a permit from Ahtna, and is not immediately obvious to a local or visitor without prior knowledge, or a map. However, after a little less than a quarter mile, the trail enters public lands, marked by a labeled carsonite post. IT explored the route to a broad gravel bench at the 2.5 mile mark, with evidence of an old hunting camp, a fire ring, and good tent pads. About 40% of the trail to that point has decent soils, with moderate rock/gravel content. There are many oversteep, brushy, and poorly drained sections of trail, but also some dry, gravelly, traversing sections, especially in the alpine.

As at Carlo Creek north, we noted a significant amount of “guerrilla” trail maintenance— brushing alders primarily— which indicates a committed local user(s). At least one local guiding service took clients on this trail during the summer of 2022, which could explain some of the maintenance. The work being done helps to offset some of the missing sustainability elements. Short reroutes to avoid the 40% grades leaving the Intertie would be a better long-term solution. But, with a little bit of input and education about best practices (and permission from the land owner, of course) the volunteer workforce could be harnessed to even greater effect.

The trail terminates at a steep headwall, at the creek’s headwaters, but it is scenic and rewarding well before this point. From around the 1-mile mark, there are terrific views of upper Sline Creek, the flanks of Panorama Peak, and across the Nenana River to the National Park. Intrepid hikers can continue to other alpine destinations, but the bench is a lovely destination in itself.

In Figure 6 (below) the Sline Creek trail is shown in bright turquoise. In Figure 7 (below) the Sline Creek trail, with elevation profile, is shown in yellow to the gravelly bench at mile 2.5.



Figure 6, Sline Creek

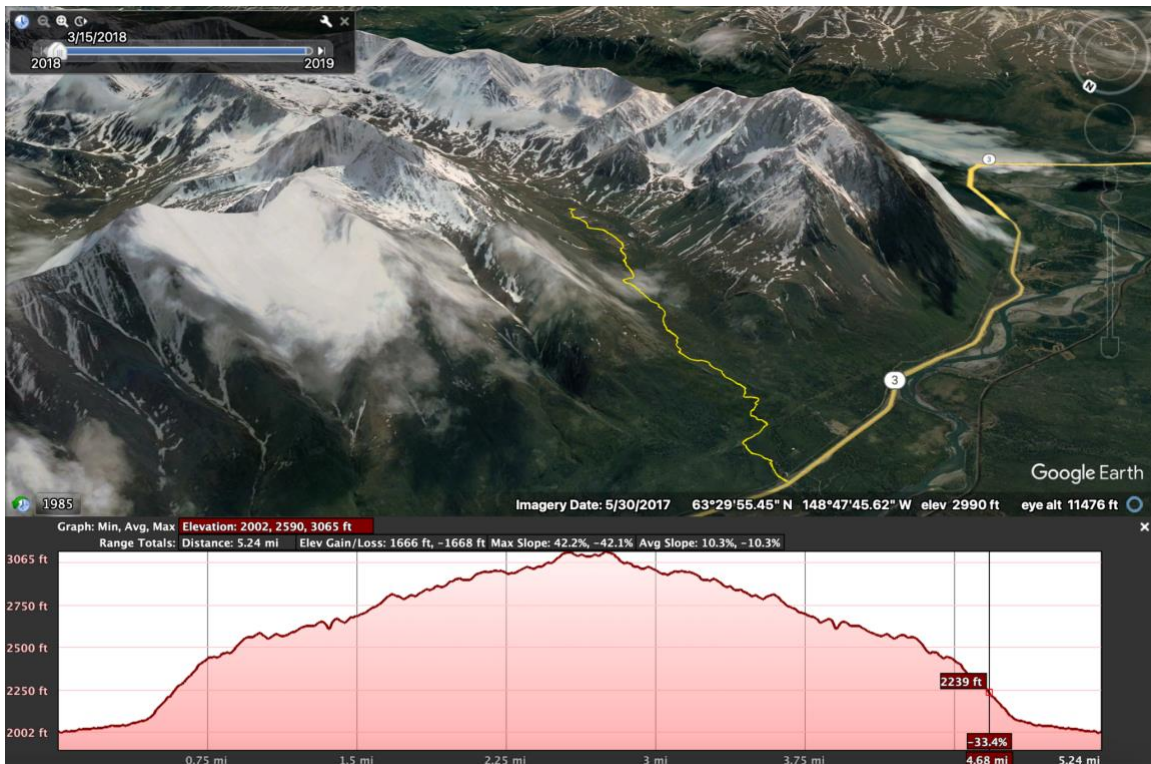


Figure 7, Sline Creek

6. Antler Creek East Trail Zone

Property owned/managed by: Denali Borough

Parking: Yes, plus gravel roads, campsites, and pullouts

Existing social trails: yes

Primary user group: day hiker, motorized, overnight RV camping

Season of use: Summer (currently)

Comments: IT's assessment of the area east of the Parks Highway, on the north side of Antler Creek, was less focused on the existing social trails and more on the suitability of the aspect, terrain, and soils for future trail building.

The aspect is principally east-southeast, with benches sloping towards Antler Creek to the south, and the Nenana River to the east. The terrain is varied and gently rolling, with small fairly broad knolls and ridges running north to south. The soils are primarily gravel, and the adjacent gravel pit provides a nice cross-section of deeper gravel, rock, and cobble layers. In between the knolls there is a slightly deeper organic layer at the surface, but the gravel is not far below.

This terrain, coupled with durable and well-drained soils, is ideal for trail building, in particular purpose-built mountain bike trails. Following the terrain contours would provide a lot of kinesthetic variety in a "flow-style" bike trail. The high-quality gravel, and adjacent gravel pit, would make building additional trail features (banked turns, jumps, and other technical features) fairly easy. The existing two-track social trails have some ponded water in the depressions and low areas, but a professionally planned and designed trail system could easily address the existing drainage issues through intentional routing. While there are plenty of scenic views, especially from the tops of the knolls, the varied terrain and intermittent spruce groves creates an intimacy that brings the focus onto the trail itself— again, well suited to mountain biking. Another positive attribute of this area is that it is owned by the Denali Borough, and so trail development would not require permissions or cooperative agreements with other agencies the way that other parcels would. Mountain-bike flow trails would also provide a variety of experience not currently present elsewhere in the DB.

7. Bison Creek East Trail Zone

Property owned/managed by: Denali Borough

Parking: Yes, plus gravel roads, campsites, and pullouts

Existing social trails: yes

Primary user group: day hiker, motorized, overnight RV camping

Season of use: Summer (currently)

Comments: Similar to Antler Creek, IT's assessment of the area east of the Parks Highway, on the north side of Bison Creek, was less focused on the existing social trails and more on the suitability of the aspect, terrain, and soils for future trail building.

The aspect is principally east-northeast, with ground sloping gently toward Antler Creek to the north, and limited terrain sloping steeply towards the Nenana River to the east and Bison Creek to the south. However, in contrast to the Antler area, the Bison area is dominated by a large flat gravel plateau/parking lot, possibly a remnant of highway construction work. The terrain around this "parking lot" is rolling, with some small knolls and ridges, but much less varied than the Antler area. The soils on top of the plateau are gravelly but as the terrain slopes down toward Antler Creek on a consistent northern aspect, there is a thicker vegetation layer, with more organics and silt.

The river canyon has steeper walls here and there are plenty of scenic views, especially from the tops of the knolls above the Nenana River and Bison Creek. This area is uniquely positioned to provide great views of Dall Sheep browsing on the steep cliffs on the east side of the river. As well as some fantastic perspectives up and downstream on the river.

This area is also owned by the Denali Borough, so trail/recreational development would not require permissions or cooperative agreements with other agencies.

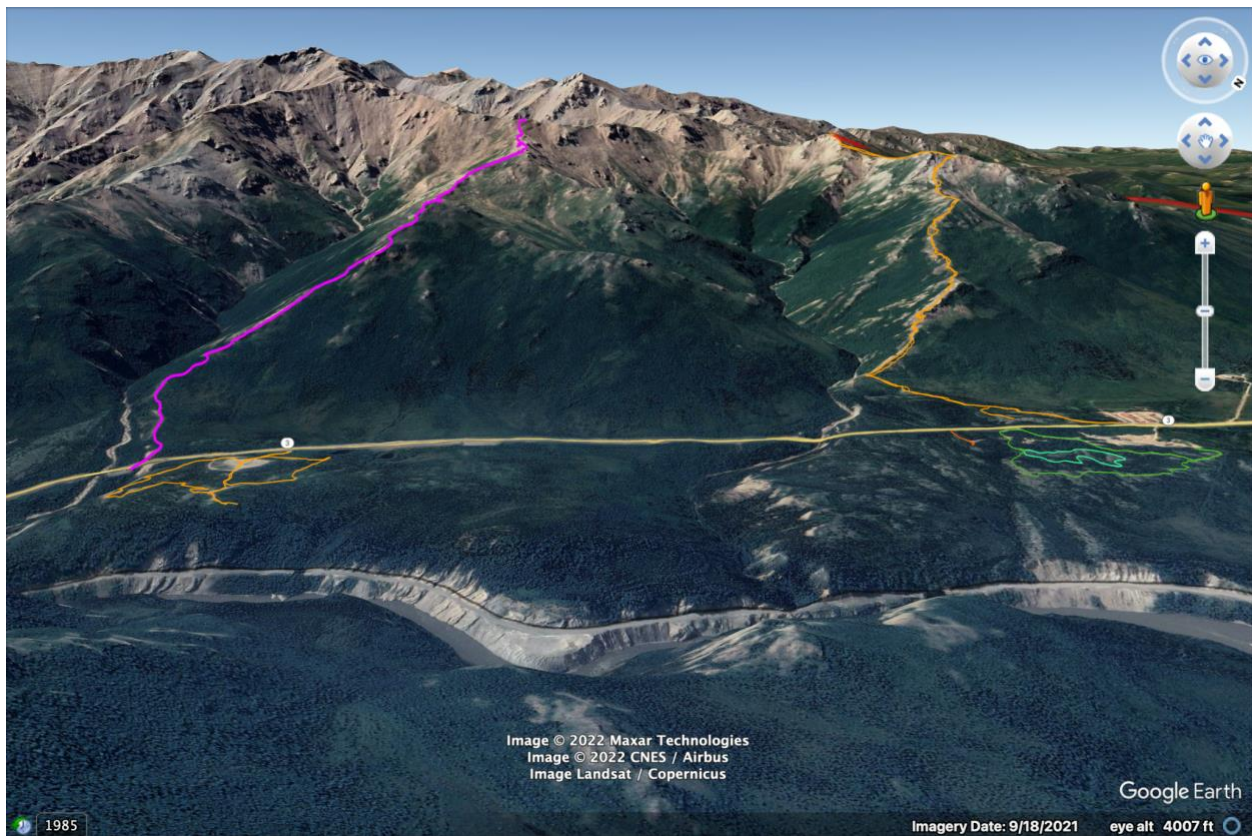


Figure 8, Antler-Bison East overview

In Figure 8 (above) the Antler Ridge Trail is shown on the right in orange, the Bison Ridge Trail is shown in pink, the Antler East area trails are shown in green, and the Bison East area trails are on the left in orange.

In Figure 9 (below) the Antler East area trails are shown in detail in green. The kelly green line shows a possible one-mile loop trail, partially utilizing some existing two-tracks. The mint green loop is a possible option for an additional ½ mile mountain bike loop.



Figure 9, Antler East area detail

Conclusion

The Denali Borough has within its borders significant opportunities for recreational trail use, and an active group of local trail users. However, poorly-aligned & unmaintained social trails make up the bulk of trail options, and with increased use, they will continue to degrade. Positioned as it is just outside the National Park, with fewer regulations, and a diversity of terrain options, the Denali Borough is well poised to become a trail user's destination in and of itself. IT commends the DB on taking the proactive step to begin the planning process, and will be available in any way we can to support high-quality, world-class trails in our neighborhood.

APPENDIX



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Past Denali Borough Plans

Comprehensive Plan

2009 (updated in 2015)

Healy Transportation & Pedestrian Safety Plan 2018

Land Use & Economic Development Plan

2019

Land Management Plan

2020

Community Health Needs Assessment

2022