

Nordic ski area comes into focus

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Written by Administrator

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MAT-SU —The Nordic ski side of the proposed Hatcher Pass Ski Area has gained the primary focus of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

“We’re focusing on the south side, so we can get a road and transit facilities built and let people go skiing,” Manager John Duffy emphasized to the Assembly Tuesday night.

The Borough Assembly heard an update on the project, given, in part, that some members of the Assembly are new.

Now there is a push to get the less expensive Nordic project built first.



The original \$19 million regional ski area includes phase 1 of an Alpine ski area on the northern side of Government Peak and on the south side of Government Peak, 20 kilometers of Nordic trails, a restroom, parking, road access, and a warming area.

Both sides of the mountain ski project are part of an ongoing Environmental Impact Statement, EIS, with a public review and comment draft scheduled to be available by April.

The project was awarded \$5.9 million in funding, most of it in Federal Transit Administration dollars, to provide access to the recreation opportunities of Hatcher Pass in the Talkeetna Mountains. Some \$2.9 million is expected to go toward the EIS and permits. The FTA requires that access roads, parking areas, and transit facilities be built with the remaining federal funds.

To date, the EIS and permitting process are under budget and a month ahead of schedule, Steven Noble of DOWL HKM told the Assembly.

Building a one-mile road from Edgerton Parks Road to the parking lot of the Nordic trails will require a lot of that money. Noble told the Assembly that a preferred route has been selected following much research.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly member Ron Arvin asked Noble if any adjacent property owners are opposed.

“I’ve never had a project that had 100 percent support but this project comes pretty close to that. ... if you polled the residents there probably would be some people who are not in favor of the project, but the vast majority of comments would be, get it done faster, it’s not soon enough,” Noble said.

For comprehensive information visit the project web site www.hatcherpass.com

For more information call Brad Sworts at 746-7430.

Photo by Ted Bell.

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