

## Chapter 4

# SKI AREAS CONCEPTUAL PLAN And PHASED DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Recreational area planning for Hatcher Pass involves the design of integrated systems of ski lifts, trails, lodges, grooming equipment, parking areas, lighting maintenance and service facilities, and access roads that are all interrelated to each other.

The key driving factors are what the mountain and area can provide as far as skier experiences. Fortunately, both the proposed Alpine and Nordic ski areas at Hatcher Pass have natural terrain to meet all levels of skier abilities. For alpine skiing the type, size, and location of the ski lifts are an additional factor. These two factors combined control the size needed for a day lodge, mountain support facilities (ski lift maintenance, trail grooming, trail maintenance, lighting, snowmaking, restroom facilities, etc.) and eventually the staff needed to operate and maintain the facilities.

Another consideration, or third factor, is what is the ultimate vision or goal of the end product.

It is important to have an overview of the completed project so that facilities can be balanced and capital effectively invested. This is especially important when two separate areas are being developed for different purposes. This must be done in a way that each areas development complements each other, not only for the various users, but for the owner/operator as well.

It is a rare occasion however, when a recreation area is “built out” to its full potential from the outset. There are a variety of reasons for this. The most important is a predicted but untested market, and immediately available capital. Options are given in the following chapters of this report to utilize phases to eventually achieve the desired conceptual plan.

### **Ski Area Conceptual Plan**

As was done by Ecosign in 2002, RWS Consulting and those cooperating and contributing to this report and its recommendations have taken into account the following objectives for developing the various recreational venues at Hatcher Pass:

- Minimum set of facilities that can be expanded to meet anticipated demand over a period of time.
- The ability to grow with market demand and add more user-requested trails, lifts, and support services as needed and confirmed by operational experiences.

- A facility that is designed primarily to serve the local and regional markets.
- General terrain balance that satisfies the skier market including all ages, abilities, and special population groups.
- Balanced lift and trail capabilities.
- Provide base staging and congregation areas that are in balance with mountain access requirements and social and competitive event needs.
- Provide adequate skier and guest services.
- Ensure efficient mountain, terrain, trail, and base area circulation.
- Utilization of new equipment with turnkey installation.

Chapter 5 describes the conceptual and recommended phase plan for the Northern (Alpine) Area, Chapter 6 for the Southern (Nordic) Area, Chapter 7 provides the expected capital costs for developing both the Northern and Southern Areas in either a phased or complete build out approach.

## **Phased Approach**

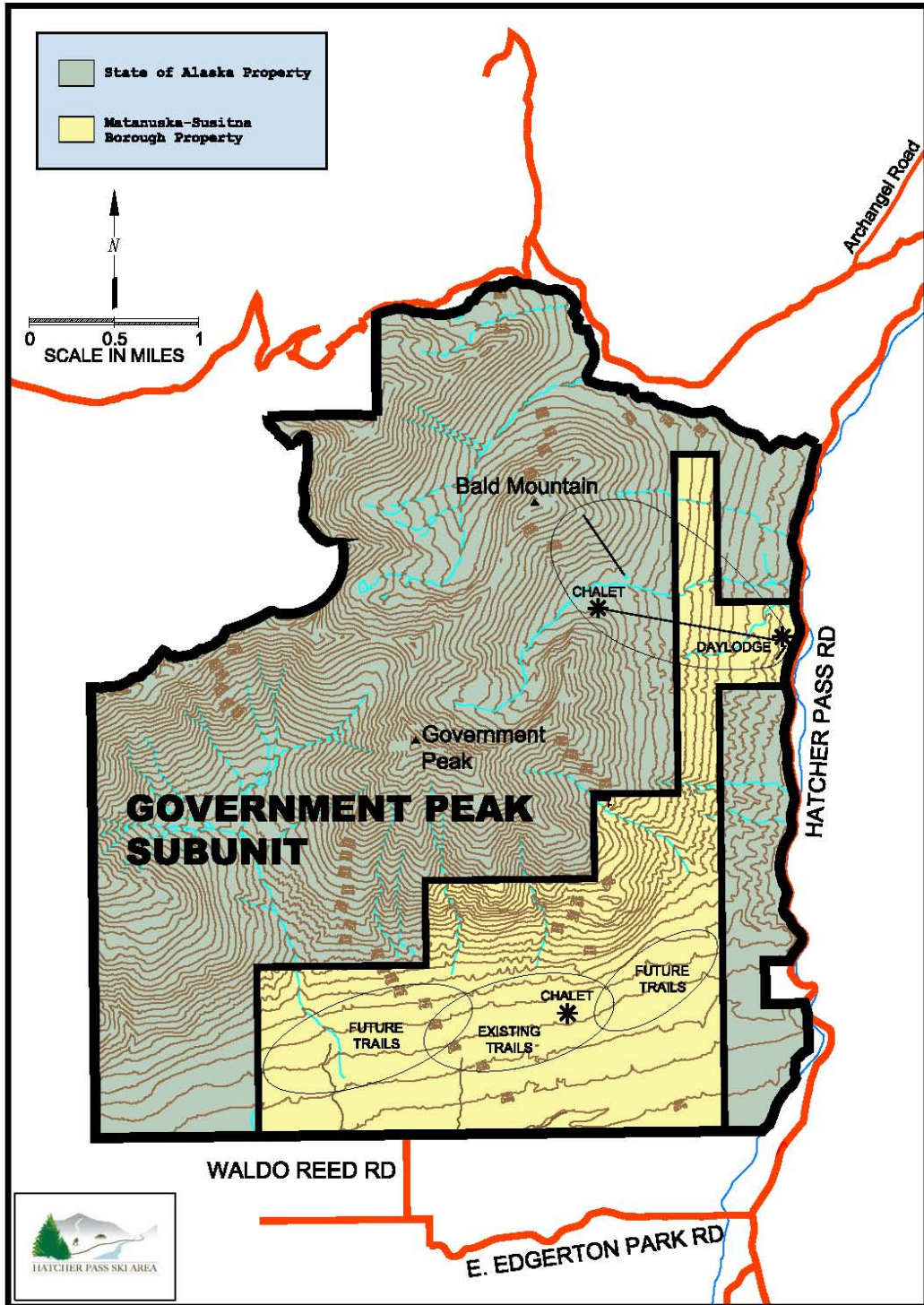
A phased development approach, outlined below and detailed in following chapters of this report, has been prepared to meet market dynamics and enhance the project's economics, while providing adequate facilities to serve primarily a local market.

Both the Northern (Alpine) and Southern (Nordic) sectors have four possible stages of development. While these phases could be developed in each sector independently of each other, it is recommended that the phases be developed concurrently. In some cases, such as parking and maintenance equipment, there is a capital cost and ultimately a operational cost saving by eliminating duplication. On the practical side, developing both areas concurrently will satisfy a variety of user demands, increase overall user numbers, increase revenue, and make consolidated management and marketing easier.

The first three phases provide for the majority of the skiing and other outdoor recreational facilities. The fourth phase provides for other tourist amenities, principally a conference center, that can be the beginning of increased amenities for all season revenue-producing use of the area.

The Northern (Alpine) area has been designed to accommodate business levels of initially 1,300, skiers per day (initial estimate) increasing to 2,400 skiers per day over a 5-10 year period that will meet predicted market demand. Initially this will include two lifts that will serve beginning and intermediate terrain. These two lifts and the initial trail system will provide the necessary "bread and butter" facilities for the majority of users. At least two of the trails and the beginner area will have night lighting and snow making.

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A third upper mountain lift that will serve intermediate and advanced terrain would be added in Phase II. Lift 2 would be upgraded from a fixed quad lift to a high-speed detachable quad in Phase III.

A day lodge will be provided in Phase I that will accommodate ski sports equipment retails, food and beverage service, and provide lockers for clothing and equipment storage. There is also room to house the ski patrol, medical facilities, and administrative offices.

In the Southern (Nordic) Area, Phase I will include 10 kilometers of competition (International) trails and 10 kilometers of recreational (family) trails. Road access and parking to the center of the Nordic trail systems will also be provided in this phase.

Phase II will see the addition of a day lodge that will provide room for ski tuning and waxing, limited food and beverage service, and a general congregation and meeting area that can be used for community events and private events such as weddings and birthdays. Storage for grooming and trail maintenance equipment will also be included in this facility.

Also during Phase II, 10 kilometers of additional competition, recreational and multiple-purpose trails, and a sledding hill will be added along with additional parking and development of a natural amphitheater viewing area.

During Phase III, the skiing trails will have night lighting installed along with a biathlon shooting and penalty loop.

### General Summary of Facilities by Phase

	NORTHERN (ALPINE) AREA	MARKET	SOUTHERN (NORDIC) AREA	MARKET
Phase I	Two lifts, Day Lodge, Snow Making, Night Lighting	Beginner Intermediate Students	10 km Family Trails 10 km Competitive Trails	Families Ski Teams Students Organizations
Phase II	1 Lift (3 total) Mid-Mountain Chalet	Beginner Intermediate Advanced Students	5 km Family Trails (15 km total) 5 km Competitive Trails (15 km total) Day Lodge Sledding hill	Families Ski Teams Students Organizations
Phase III	High Speed Detachables Quad	Beginner Intermediate Advanced Students	Night Lighting Biathlon Range	Families Ski Teams Students Organizations
Phase IV			Conference Center	Multiple Users