



Category: Parent

Issue Statement: ---

Which Phase: General Comment

The genesis of this lease was the public's desire for a downhill ski area. According to the Hatcher Pass Management Plan all other uses of the area are contingent on the development of a downhill ski area. This should be born in mind as an EIS is developed and if priority of uses is an issue. While in past studies ski area engineers and designers have noted the site is a natural ski mountain requiring little terrain modification they have noted that base area developments will require substantial terrain modification. As a result two issues should be born in mind: One, the EIS should fully encompass the terrain modifications needed for the allowed developments and two, any improvements to the site anticipated in the current grant should bear in mind the base area terrain modification needed by future developments. Past studies have noted the potential for the development of a water reservoir mid mountain in the downhill ski area. The EIS should encompass this potential and other associated developments. Finally the EIS should encompass all anticipated and allowed uses in the lease area.

Where are the comments? I know several individuals, including myself have submitted them.

Has the center line stakings on the 3 proposed routes into the southside Nordic Development been completed or will it be completed by late May so that the archeologists can do their work?

The new version of the Hatcher Pass Management Plan should clearly allow development of a Nordic ski trail system on the south side of Government Peak without any link to development of an alpine ski area.

Please consider requiring darksky type exterior lighting for all future development (housing, nordic trails, parking lots, alpine ski areas, etc) on lands in/near Hatcher Pass. Dark-sky lighting has the following advantages: Energy efficiency. Safety (vision not blocked by unnecessary glare). Looks attractive. Disadvantages: Initial installation can be slightly more expensive.

Alpine Area: According to the Map it is in an area where not many people currently use, but the rest of the area is still open for recreation as it is currently. It wouldn't affect Snowmachine areas. Also an addition of a tubing hill would be a plus. Nordic Area: I use this area for hunting and other recreation activities, but I also see that more people moving in on Edgerton and limiting who travels behind their property. Several property owners have let people cross with permission, but some just pass over it thinking it is open land. Also according to the Boro, the south side of Gov't Peak is already non-motorized, why isn't this enforced? Also, if volunteers are going to put in the trails, are they also going to maintain the trails, such as Anchorage? Development Timeline: There are studies and studies for this area, why can't we do some action NOW!!! Other Nordic Areas around the valley: The Mat-Valley winds limit what can be used for Nordic skiing. Business Development: Right now, the Mat-Valley has a limited income base, ie property owners, sales tax, why can't we diversify the Boro's income while at the same time increase tourism, that benefit the Valley and keep dollars here in the Mat-Su rather than Girdwood or Anchorage. Road Access: Keep the access away from Edgerton, Add a road from Palmer-Fishhook. Ski Area size: Keep it small then see how things go, and the profits (if any) can be used to expand/upgrade the ski areas such as lighting/ snow making.

The reason I sent those to you and the others was to make more real for you the nature of backcountry skiing at Hatcher Pass. It is a unique sport and different from Nordic skiing or resort alpine skiing. It has both the component of uphill ascent and touring with the use of skins attached to the bottom of the skis as well as the downhill component once you get to your destination descent line. Most backcountry skiers/snowboarders enjoy the "skin-up" as much as the descent. Backcountry skiing/snowboarding is currently of three varieties: telemark skiing (free-heel), alpine-touring or (AT) also referred to as randonee (hell free to climb, locked down to descend), and snowboarding. "Backcountry" snowboarding technology was revolutionized 2-3 years ago with the advent of split-boards, snowboards that can be disassembled into two lengthwise pieces like a pair of skis for the ascent. On to the bottom of these ski-like pieces go skins allowing the snowboarder to access the same backcountry as the skier. Once onsite, the two pieces are reassembled, and you have a snowboard for descent. It is important for land-use planners to appreciate the nature of "backcountry" skiing/snowboarding. The area that is proposed for the Hatcher Pass ski area is an area that is already prized for backcountry skiing. I am sure that the well-established backcountry ski community at HP hopes to be able to continue their traditional use of the area when and if the proposed downhill area becomes a reality. This would involve the use of a lift, if desired, to get up high and then the option to ski the backside north faces. This would also involve the option to just skin-up the ski-slope from the base without purchasing a ticket. There are existing examples. I understand that Snow King ski-area in downtown Jackson, Wyoming is like this. This small local ski-area predated the larger (by a long shot) Teton Village. Jackson, before it became glammed over, was just a small resort village with a long and established tradition of climbing and backcountry skiing, if you will. Their community found a way to allow the traditional non-mechanized use continue alongside the lifts on the same local village slope. I suspect there are other small village ski-areas sprinkled throughout the Lower 48 where this is true.

I thought you might be interested that I have seen bears on two occasions in the Government Peak area within the last five years and just last week on Thursday, I believe I saw bear activity as well. The actual sightings were in October of what I would approximate to be five years ago. Myself and friends made a hike from the HP Road N of the bridge up Frostbite Ridge, the NE spur that extends from the true summit of Government Peak. As we topped out on the ridge, we observed what we determined to be a brown bear wander up the drainage that starts at the MSB ski-area parking lot and curves around to the SE to the N face of Government Peak. The bear then did what I consider to be an extraordinary thing. He/she climbed directly up a couloir on the north face of Government Peak exiting very near the summit and dropped over onto the south side. The north couloir the bear ascended was still snow-filled in October from the previous winter. I estimate the couloir to be 45 degrees. Four feet, each with a crampon-like set of claws no doubt assisted. Personally, I would want a rope, ice-axe, and crampons. We speculated that the bear was seeking a den on the southern aspect of Government Peak. The second sighting was the following October from the same vantage point. This time, it was a black bear and he/she was just up slope from us on Frostbite Ridge. The bear dropped over Frostbite Ridge into the same drainage as the brown bear from the previous year. We then lost sight of the bear. Last Thursday (April 30) with a friend, I made a ski-descent from a peak at the head of Bear Den Valley (backcountry skiers call this Sin Valley). This valley contains a tributary that flows from the SW into Fishhook Creek just below the Fishhook parking lot. From our vantage point we were able to look across to the SW face of the immense Government Creek bowl. Between 3500 and 4000' ASL, we saw what we thought to be bear foraging activity highlighted against the snowcover. Lots of tracks and digging activity.

Which Phase: Pre Scoping Comment

One of the best ski areas I have skied is Bridger Bowl, a smaller community owned ski area near Bozeman, Montana. Please consider this model for the ski area as an alternative to the large year-round resort model. I think this model has many advantages: requires less initial capital, more compatible with the location, and would probably be preferred by the majority of the users - residents of the Anchorage and Matsu area. My guess is that an economic analysis of the potential skier use would show that there is limited potential as a destination resort.

I hope this project can be completed before I die. I think all moms and now grand moms are with me on this; we want to see the lift in so we do not have to spend our weekends doing the drive around and drop off. Enough money has been spent studying this project lets get something done already. I cant think of a healthier form of entertainment for our kids than skiing. Geez they had a lift there is the 60's Please don't tell me we can have a manned space station and yet not get a lift at Hatcher pass in 2007.

To Whom it may concern, I find the proposition to put chairlifts at Hatcher Pass a little unsettling. I am a 16 yr old Palmer High School Student who uses the recreates at Hatcher Pass daily. To put in lifts at Hatcher Pass would mean the long standing users of the area would have to begin to pay to recreate. It is certain that nothing is free these days but I would rather only pay the 3 dollar parking fee instead of a pricey lift ticket. I also am a member of the Palmer High Nordic Team. I like the idea of making new trails and such. But for us skiers and snowboarders I think marketing the area will take away from the backcountry feel as you drop into endless snow near the summit lake area. If any of my interpretations of this proposal are incorrect I would like to be notified. I just want to get the facts straight. Thank You For Your concern

When you see the children in the photos in the news papers or on the television sledding in the segments about Hatchers Pass, I am one of those kids. I love to sled and ski resorts will not let you sled, the only place I can go to have a good time sledding is Hatchers. Also if you turn it into a ski resort it will be crowded constantly because easier access up the mountain. What I've read online on A.D.N or saw on the news there's quite a few people who would not like it if you made a ski resort, so please listen to those few people who do not want this and consider their opinions.

I would like to see that somehow the Nordic area is treated as a sole entity and not tied to the timeline of the alpine development. It seems to me that the process for developing the alpine because of its unique setting extremely time intensive whereas the Nordic area not so much. If we could punch a road into the south side and at the very least get gravel hauled in for parking we could have an area available for near term use and with volunteer work from the local Nordic ski and hikers and bikers we could have some of the proposed trails usable in the short term.

We have studied private sector investment in Hatcher Pass on the Willow side. Cross country skiing is a financial loss. If you would like a financial winner minimize XC skiing and maximize Snowboarding/Tubing/ half-pipe's/terrain park. No brag just fact. Do not use this opportunity to exclaim preservationist skinny ski declarations. Use this opportunity to build a moneymaker someone will want to buy from the Borough. Do your research, the only features ski resorts are improving and expanding are snowboard and tubing features.

How long will the lifts be? where at on the hill? There are too many reasons to put it there and yet no info for the public to get excited about. Everyone wants it. This will give the Matsu public a closer place for winter fun instead of driving to Hill Top or Alyeska.

I'm a long time backcountry traveler and a world class snowboarder. I have thought for years that Hatcher pass is a prime location for ski area development. It's nice to see that I'm not alone, and that others share my vision. A ski area is the best way to encourage healthy outdoor activities while creating financial stability and income for the area. "build it, and we will come." more to follow...

There are many aspects to the recreational development of the Mat-Su Borough's Hatcher Pass land: Skiing - both downhill and Nordic; Access issues concerning trails, trailheads, roads, motorized and/or non-motorized uses; Environmental impacts; Commercial and/or Housing Development as well as Financing issues. Each aspect generates its own set of questions and concerns. Many of these questions and concerns were discussed and incorporated into the Hatcher Pass SPUD currently before the Assembly. I recommend that the Assembly look at the SPUD as revised by the Planning Commission, get public input and then adopt the Hatcher Pass SPUD. If there are areas of the SPUD that prove inadequate, they can be addressed and amended as needed.

Here are some of my thoughts on things mentioned above.

Skiing

☑The downhill ski area will be expensive. So far no one has stayed with this project in spite of the sweetener of getting land in the Southside to sell. I don't know if a large ski resort will ever pencil out as profitable. Maybe a smaller downhill ski area is more practical as a first phase. If it works out then the ski area can be expanded in later phases.

☑The Nordic area can be developed for much less than the downhill ski area and should be moved forward regardless of what happens with the downhill area. The layout of the trail system is already finished. Development of the Nordic area will enhance the future development of the downhill area because the Nordic trail system in the Southside area can become a world class course due to the area's excellent snow, varied terrain and easy access.

Commercial and/or Housing Development in the Southside

☑This has proven somewhat controversial mainly because of unanswered questions.

...What is the surface and subsurface water situation? What type of soils are there and how thick are they? What will be the impact of all the additional septic systems in the area? What should the housing unit density be? What is meant by "cluster type" housing? What size should the lots be? ... and lots of other questions.

Environmental Impacts

There are many possible problems that can be avoided if a thorough environmental assessment is completed before commercial and/or housing development is allowed in the Southside. Concerns about water, soils, sewage, noise, roads, traffic (especially motorized), views, lighting and animal habitat need to be addressed.

Please keep cost to the end user in mind. Lift revenues normally only cover operation & maintenance of the lift itself, grooming & other expenses are supported by concessions. If concessions are not large enough prices are driven up.

It has been over twenty years that the Borough has talked about the ski area at Hatcher Pass. I think enough time has been spent on studies, it is time to get some kind of facility completed. If we can put a man on the moon- we can get a lift at Hatcher Pass. Issues have been added to this project that are pitting neighbor against neighbor. No one asked for zoning, snow machine trails behind residential areas, bans of hunting or firearms. All the people want is a lift and a day lodge and a Nordic facility to host events. Why is this so hard to accomplish? After all even Cordova has a lift. Chugiak has a Nordic facility. We have a resource that will be in greater and greater demand. This area is going to have increased usage no matter what. I believe people in the Borough are tired of seeing the funds for projects getting gobbled up by studies and being buried in political issues that just do not pertain to accomplishing the job at hand. I doubt the Mat-Su Borough will continue to have the opportunity to get funds, if the funds keep disappearing into endless studies. Surely someone will notice that the money isn't buy anything tangible. Like maybe the tax payers or the State Legislators from other districts.

Where are the maps for this project? Where are the EIS (environmental impact studies) done on the Little Susitna River Watershed that the Hatcher Pass area drains into? My well could be affected. More study needs to be done because we ALL live down stream and this recreation area could bring tremendous visitor impact, sewage, air pollution from travel, littering and other impacts that will affect those of us who are local residents. Do NOT do this in a quick, easy and slipshod manner. Please think long range, for everyone's continued enjoyment of clean water, clean air and scenic beauty.

I believe building a ski resort in Hatcher Pass would be a huge mistake. For years people have had the opportunity to enjoy Hatcher Pass without having to pay money or deal with crowds. I've lived here all my life and it would sicken me not to be able to play in the pass without buying lift tickets or eating at a fancy restaurant. I live in Alaska because of the opportunity to live next to places like Hatcher pass, not to stand in line and have my ticket punched. Not to mention the eye sore that would result from building a resort. When tourists come to Alaska they want to see an untouched land, not ski lifts and condos. If a resort was built it would ruin the pass for many people including myself. If people want to pay to ski let them go to Alyeska, but don't turn Alaska into another Colorado Please leave the pass as it is and abandon the project.

As a member of the original planning team of 86, we never envisioned a 4 season ski area, we envisioned and compromised the area to always be open to all user groups, and a small ski slope area was planned for below the Motherlode lodge. At no time was allowing any housing development ever considered. We encourage any developers to just move down the range another valley or two and build whatever you need, Roads included...But leave the centerpiece of the Valley alone, as we planned it in 86. We don't want another "Hillside" facing us...Thank you.

Hi Kristi Stuller, my neighbors told me that there might be a skiing resort at Hatcher Pass area within the next years. I moved to Wasilla in 1980 and since that time there was always some rumors going on concerning this idea. As a downhill skier I would enjoy to have a skiing area close by for me and my family. I would appreciate if I could get more detailed information about this project from you.

Why aren't comments available to view. I know that some have been sent including my own?

Referencing Proposal #07-059 Amendment #1, I would like to see a copy of the "revised Phase 1 services" that will be provided by DOWL to the Borough along with the Attachment that gives the additional costs for these services. I would also like to see the scope of the environmental field work. I am especially interested in the Southside and the criteria for stream identification; the assessment methods of surface and subsurface water; and the identification criteria for possible access roads into the Southside. I would also like to know what will be mapped? Will the Nordic Trails laid out by Bill Spencer be mapped during DOWL's survey work? Will other routes for non-motorized trails be mapped? Will secondary roads within the Southside as proposed by JL Properties be mapped? I would also like to know what the work schedule for all the parts of the environmental field work in Phase 1 i.e. Will it continue through the winter? The map used to show the two possible eastern access routes to the Southside does not show the subdivision roads in the private property between them. The map used is not current!

Which Phase: Public Meeting No. 2

The Nordic and Alpine should be separated into separate projects. Concentrate on the Nordic first because it will be far cheaper to build.

Of importance to me as a user of areas, I would like to see use of many groups and have access. To have access hurt by one group, hurt all the other groups from use, access is of concern since it only takes one group to mess it up for all others, we need to consider what groups can use this area w/o damage or hurting others.

Please consider pedestrian use of, and/or on, the proposed roads, i.e. bikes, runners Please consider fair use by non-motorized -- an assessment of use should be all encompassing to include noise, pollution, disruption to snow and open land, interference with non-motorized, etc. Better yet, please consider limiting motorized use -- that would be a more honest request.

Proposal looks good. My main concern is opening this area to ATV & snowmachine use. I oppose any action that would include ATVs being permitted in the area.

The trail system should be re-evaluated for the Alpine area. Snowboarders & skiers don't want just long runs. We like smaller trails going between the bigger ones. Maybe you should make 3 propositions of trail systems for the public to choose from.

- Please separate the Nordic and Alpine construction. - Build the Nordic first (the Mat-Su Ski Club will groom) - If the Alpine will need to be funded with either additional taxes or housing/development, then do NOT go ahead with the Alpine.

My husband and I live at the base of Hatcher Pass where we own 5 acres and have homesteaded for over 10 years. We are avid backcountry snowboarders. We have seen the huge growth in our backyard over the last decade. What has changed most, of course, is the amount of people and vehicles. We feel a Ski Resort would do wonders to not only provide the recreation, but to manage the resources well. Even a couple chair lifts would be great. Maintaining back country areas would be ideal as well and we feel that there should be NON-motorized areas for back country skiing/snowboarding. We always enjoy climbing the mountains before it has opened to snowmachiners, because it is so quiet, serene, gasoline-smell-free, and less crowded (i.e., people, vehicles). We think there are plenty of places the snowmachiners can go without having to high mark and track/ruin a perfectly good snow pack in less than 5 minutes. They have the ability to access further into the mountains than folks like us who climb/hike for two hours for a short run. Thank You!

Which Phase: Scoping Comment

Has a tubing hill for this project been considered? I've seen them in the lower 48 and they are successful. Soldier hollow in Utah and Eagle Crest have tubing hills that are packed with families when open. It's a cheaper alternative than skiing. The tubing hill at Alyeska failed because of lousy terrain and high prices. Just a thought.

Ref the web site: CURRENT USE AND DEVELOPMENT "electric power to ski areas" There is power only to the downhill area. MANAGEMENT PLAN AND SPUD "CURRENTLY BEING DRAFTED" The draft is completed. CONSTRUCTION It only addresses the alpine area, need to address Nordic/south side development. CHAP 6 SOUTH SIDE /NORDIC DEVELOPMENT Recommend adding natural gas to "electric and telephone grids". The initial gravel road in the south side development needs to be built to "school bus standards" CHAPTER7 Power to the Nordic area needs to be included in phase 1 so that high school ski meets can be held at that location. GENERAL COMMENTS: The sequence of studies needs to be fine tuned. the archeological field work this past summer [aug.],when the vegetation was too high. they really couldn't do a good search of the proposed Nordic trails, stadium, and parking area. They didn't have the proposed road routes and said that they needed "center line staking" of the three routes. this should be done by early May so they can walk the ground before the vegetation "explodes". THE THREE ROADS The Waldo Reed road option should be reviewed quickly, then discarded. At 2.5 mil/mile the route is far longer {at least twice as long} and crosses at least 5 streams that contain salmon fry at lower elevations

(Comment received via phone) Mrs. Reed called to let us know that she lives on an original homestead off of East Edgerton Park Road (Lot A-29) and has concerns about the location of any new access to the southern portion of the Hatcher Pass Ski Area. She and her husband dedicated ROW to the MSB for access to this area: Walter Reed Road. She stated that some of the neighbors have blocked this dedicated access with rocks and are encouraging people to park on Doris Circle and trespass on her property to reach the recreation area instead of using the dedicated ROW. She stated that she has talked to the MSB and posted signs with information trying to address this – but it continues to be a problem. She is very worried that this project is going to increase the number of people trespassing on her property. Mrs. Reed does not have access to the internet and asked that all information be mailed to her for review. Her address is: 5917 East Edgerton Park Road, Palmer, 99645. (Phone: 745-3332) She is not planning on attending the public meeting.

(comment received via email) Kristina, The Hatcher Pass project has always be a passion of mine, having skied there when we had a resort at the mine in the 1960's and 70's. I like where you are heading with the project but would ask that the development remain within the confines allotted to the project. I would like to see a sledding hill with a small enclosed tram off to the side to keep the younger children safe. I will not be in attendance for the scoping that evening will be diving off the coast of Cozumel that day. I do look forward with the progress reports and am currently seeking funding to promote the bond for this project.

Bring in a new road off of the Fishhook to service the recreation area. Edgerton Parks is the only road into that residential area. The increased traffic will bring additional noise. The traffic will also spur the need for street lights in the future.

I would love to see this ski area really happen. I use the 16 mile drop off ski area now as it the only option for downhill skiing. Have been waiting a long time, so good luck.

Good afternoon, Kristi! I live off Fishhook and was going to try to attend this evening's public scoping meeting, but I'm not going to be able to make it from Anchorage in time. Would it be possible to get a summary and some of the information from the presentation emailed to me? Or will you have that online? I'm not sure what the topics of conversation will be or what is being proposed at this point, but as a resident and user of the area, I think it is crucial that trails are put in along Palmer-Fishhook. Another question I had was whether anyone is doing any detailed mapping of the park and the surrounding areas as part of the project. I had someone asking me for a detailed map the other day, and I have yet to find one, so I thought maybe you would know. Thank you for putting this together and for any information you can provide!

As a high school skier, I know additional Nordic ski trails would be greatly appreciated, especially since Valley ski teams have so little snow around town; Hatcher Pass is our main source of snow for training during the season, which is one of the longest of all high school sports. Cross country trails are also less expensive than an Alpine area, and would be done more quickly.

The Nordic Project can be easily developed with far less cost than the Alpine Area, so this part should get underway 1st. Many people who volunteer labor for parts of this project. Valley high school ski teams are currently travelling 35-60 miles per day to go to Independence Mine to practice -- and this site is closer and safer to drive to.

In favor of pursuing the Nordic trails 1st -- can double as mountain bike trails in summer.

Great ideas go for it! It will help all -- be great for the whole family -- be great for the economy too!

We are in favor of the project!

Leave it as it is!

(comment received via fax) Kristi Stuller, Could you send more information about the Hatcher Pass Recreational Area Access, Trails and Transit Facilities Project? I am in Florida. Send by mail please. Have no e-mail. What is it all about? Will it be like a park? What will it do to our taxes? I am in Snowbird Lake Estates. Please send me anything you have about it or just write it in a letter. It sounds like it is going to be pretty big. Will it be anywhere near my place in Snowbird Lakes; the transit transport system, where will it start? As you know I am on the Willow end of Hatcher Pass Rd.

Our Valley citizens need and deserve the proposed Nordic trail system. Currently Wasilla, Colony and Palmer High Schools are skiing on the same few trails due to lack of snow cover. We travel up to Independence Mine 3-4 times a week so that we can practice our sport. Without the development of these trails our kids will not have the vast opportunities to enjoy the trails (skiing, biking, running) and become active. They will be able to learn how to ski @ a young age, develop skills and continue to ski throughout their lives.

Please don't just study this to death. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough needs to complete the ski facilities this time. 48 years ago there was a tow rope in Hatcher Pass. We can send a robot to Mars, but the Borough can't put a tow rope in Hatcher Pass or even host a Nordic event. Faced with changing economic climate the Borough needs to assess what it would take to complete even a basic ski chalet w/ tow rope & Nordic trails. Once the facility is built it will grow organically. Just get started w/ even a basic t-bar & A-Frame. Please before I die of old age. It has already been studied for 20+ years.

I would like to see emphasis on maintaining the backcountry skiing experience at Hatcher Pass. We do not need another condominium-encrusted, lift-served only ski area, where traditionally skied areas will be declared off-limits because they are now a liability risk. I think it would be wise to make the construction timeline Nordic-forward, so as to be able to open the relatively more easily constructed Nordic facilities sooner and have them available. Lift served skiing does have a place at Hatcher Pass, but is not necessarily a priority. Nordic skiing facilities will have a more immediate benefit, especially to school programs, and requires less overhead and infrastructure than alpine skiing. It will be nice to see a viable alpine skiing option in the Mat-Su valley, but it is not as pressing a concern as having Nordic facilities available to Mat-Su school programs that rival the facilities available to Anchorage students. The profits associated with Nordic skiing are not as high, but the costs are not as high either. Thank you.

I am against public funds for this project. Mat-Su bonds are not selling (prison funding) and we have recently gone into debt for kgb school upgrades etc.... Add the current meltdown and recession, how can we spend so much on something to benefit so few?? If this is not a viable model for the private sector public monies should not be involved. Thank you.

(comment received via phone) Edgerton Parks Road is not that great. It would be nice to have access into Hatcher Pass off of Palmer-Fishhook and build a bridge. It would be easier upkeep.

(Comment submitted via email) Hi, I would like some more info on what will be discussed this evening at Colony Middle School.

To Whom It May Concern: On Trails and Transit Facilities Project Fact Sheet -- To leave out the access road that connects to Edgerton Parks Rd. Build road access off Hatcher Pass, Fishhook road -- build a bridge across little Su. River and it would be less traffic to everyone on Edgerton Parks Rd., because this road is not the best and it would be better for everyone to enter on a main road -- for upkeep and snow removal. Thanks.

(Submitted via phone) Mr. XXX has lived on the south side just outside the lease boundary for around 30 years. His comments are: •Hunting, hiking, skiing, etc. are compatible as they generally occur during separate seasons and that one shouldn't be favored over another. •Horse back riding has taken place in the area for over 40 years and that the trails that Ed Strabel now uses were put in by horse back riders until Mr. Strabel took them over. •Design for multiple uses including a motorized corridor (winter use only) to take folks to the eastern areas outside the lease area. •Picnic table hill has an existing sledding hill that should be utilized in the design. •☑ Restroom and warming facilities are important for the area if we really want to encourage family activities. •Need enforcement to keep snowmobilers from tearing up certain areas where other activities are occurring (such as the sledding hill). •Family supports the recreational aspects and improvements of the project. He was non-committal on the best access road other than to take off Edgerton Park Road as soon as possible to minimize traffic impacts further down the road, and to make the road as short as possible without jeopardizing the scenic qualities of the area.

I would love to see a ski area for the use of Mat-Su Borough folks that would be simple, family oriented and affordable for us. As a kid I used to go to Alyeska, but now it is so expensive I don't go even though I would like to take my family there. When they sold it to the Japanese and they upgraded it to a major resort with high speed chairs and big lodges it got too expensive for the average family. Please keep it a simple place for locals. Look at Hillberg on Elmendorf or Arctic Valley as examples. I think you might even be able to buy equipment from struggling ski areas in the lower 48.

To whom this may concern and I would not hope it will fall on deaf ears. I have lived around the foothills of Hatcher Pass for many years, it is my beautiful, naturally beautiful "backyard playground". There's something to say about natural pristine unpolluted beauty, and I worry now about what will happen to this area with this new project. Not only is its pristine beauty something to behold, but the wildlife that also abounds throughout the area. Will there still be an area here that will be open to hunting? Or is this going to come to a complete stop with the mere stroke of a pen?

I live at the head of Waldo Reed Road, and border State-Boro land. I bought this land in 1973. Over the years I built Waldo Reed Rd, to Boro specs, and then they took over maintenance.

I get my firewood on this Boro-State land. I have run my horses, 4 wheeler, 4x4 truck, snowmachine up on this land -- for almost 40 years. I am a master guide and have guided for about 40 years. I have taken clients right from my home/lodge here and hunted on this land. I want this land to remain open to hunting, horses, snowmachines. I have grandfather rights here just like the Alaska "Native". Thank you.

I have no problem with skiing going in for the young people & recreational purposes; But I do not want the rights of my hunting privileges taken away. I also enjoy occasional horseback riding in the spring & autumn months & taking my grandkids sledding down by picnic table hill with our snowmachines. (This happens only about 3 times a year & we don't have paddle tracks).

Preserve hunting rights Keep snowmachines on NORTH side of Gov't Peak -- neighborhood is very quiet now, hundreds of snowmachines on the South side would destroy the winter quiet as it is now. There's plenty of snowmachining on the NORTH SIDE -- keep it that way. Keep Edgerton Parks Road AS IS. Residents now use trails for free AND WE WANT IT TO STAY THAT WAY!

I'm all for skiing & hiking -- and horseback riding, they made the trail first. But remember, we want hunting to continue, also. Keep the window open during regular hunting season. Everyone knows ahead of time, we all enjoy Alaska together. We choose to live where we do so we can go out our back door and enjoy each season as it comes. Besides, hunting, in the long run, protects an area from encroachment of too many moose & bear making it safer for hiking. Also, there is an awesome hill for sledding, a corridor for "sensible" snowmachining is needed to get there. When you watch the neighborhood kids enjoying this you would also be as concerned as I am that a few are having their own way and not caring about those that are already using this area for recreation.

I have been back to this area many times with my Grandpa, and We would like to continue to have our hunting rights and privileges in this area. My family also enjoys sledding back on picnic table hill.

I have hunted these areas and hope you will leave it open for hunting along with your other activities. These area has been traditionally use for hunting and I hope you can see fit to let us use it and not close another area from our use.

We appreciate a project that will surely bring enjoyment to our young people, but also have some concerns that must be addressed. For many years this area has been a vital hunting area and needs to remain so. Muzzle loading and archery are not mainstream hunting techniques, eliminating many long-term hunting patrons. Nordic skiing is a very worthwhile pursuit, but this area should not be given over to one special interest group. This area must remain the multi-purpose area it has been throughout time. We look forward to more dialogue on how we can bring together people of different interest in the enjoyment of this beautiful land.

Born in Switzerland, I know the Alps very well. Alaska natural conditions correspond to the environment of the Alpine pastures. Removing the alder brush, necessary to clear the ground for skiing, will be a first step in the creation of summer pasture. Consider the possible interest for the local farmers to keep some animals on summer pasture and increase the lowland hay production. This experiment could reveal the potentially significant resource for AK agriculture and be a source of summer activity.

Dear MSB, The resources at Hatcher Pass for recreation are wonderful and I would like to see better access for the public in general. However, I feel that beyond developing infrastructure to the area such as roads, water and sewer- based on the established priorities that govern then entire borough, NO money should be used to supplement any private development of Hatcher Pass or other. Is it proper to place the property owners homes and land at risk (tax foreclosure sales) if they are not able or willing to support the development of Hatcher Pass? I think not. Development of for profit recreational sites is not a proper role of government. When the social and financial environment are ready for a private corporation to develop Hatcher Pass, they will step up to the opportunity and make the project happen without the need of tax payers "incentives" via tax payers bankrolling the project and the likelihood of successful development is greatly increased. Forcing citizens to be charitable through taxation- (redistribution of wealth)- i.e. give money to a private venture- is not a proper role of government.

The Hatcher Pass area has been a blessing to our family. Our children and we have used this area for recreational purposes as well as an occasional hunt. As our community looses more and more precious natural landscape, we treasure Hatcher Pass. No.....we are not environmentalists, we simply feel very blessed to live here in the valley with the opportunities it gives us and many others to entertain and feed our families. We feel very strong about eating meat off the land considering the way animals are fed for human consumption. We prefer healthy untainted meat for our family. A hunting place close to home that feeds may families is very valuable. Please consider these thoughts as future decisions concerning Hatcher Pass and neighboring areas are being made.

I now have almost 500 days of resort riding (and countless hiking days) all over Europe, the US, and Alaska...Hatcher Pass has been one of my favorite areas, and although the winds can seriously effect the snowpack, and the area is less than 5000 ft in vertical, I think the riding is as good as anywhere in the world. I love the area where &"Glacier Snowcat"; used to go; a phenomenal area, but it seemed to be windpacked often...I liked hiking and riding the peak immediately across the gully from the parking lot. The snow there was always incredible. I don't know exactly were the plan is to build, but I can't wait...I think this area could a better area to ride than Alyeska's north face if done right. Good Luck - I can't wait!

As the Borough is soliciting input on the proposed Hatcher Pass Recreation Area, it seems fitting to write you with my suggestion. As residents of the Lazy Mountain community, my family and I would stand to benefit greatly from such a project. First, I must say that I am favorably inclined towards the project. I believe, however, some simple considerations now could significantly boost usage of the area throughout the year, and not limit the area to wintertime-only recreation. Specifically, I note that plans are afoot to place a competition biathlon course within the area. Since a biathlon course (by definition) involves at least one, if not several shooting ranges, has the Assembly given any thought to construct at least one of those ranges in such a way that it could be used year round by shooters of all disciplines? The Assembly has been deferring action for many years on the construction of public use shooting ranges. I am sure I need not point out that Alaska had a medalist in the shooting sports at the most recent Olympic Games, and that rifle shooting is a very popular sport among our high school youth. Couple the popularity of hunting and the time-honored American pastime of informal target shooting, and such a range would enjoy year round use by a diverse cross section of our community in a safe and convenient venue. During my time in Cordova, I was pleased to take my family often to the public range out near the airport. It is a shame that the Mat-Su does not offer a similar facility, and I feel that it is time that the Assembly finally take action to provide a safe and accessible shooting area to the community as a whole. Given that much of the necessary infrastructure (roads, parking, restrooms, etc) for a proper shooting range will already be required for a biathlon course, surely the Assembly would wish to spend just a bit more to build a few more berms to permit the facility to have a true year round use that would be enjoyed by hundreds of families throughout the Valley, and not just a few elite athletes for a small fraction of the year. Such would truly be a successful and thrifty way to maximize the return on the public investment, and would offer recreational benefits to all. Furthermore, the addition of a few picnic tables and fixed grills and some open areas set apart from the shooting ranges would truly make it a superior park that even non-shooters could enjoy. Many thanks for taking the time to read this suggestion. I hope that you will pass these comments on to the Assembly as a whole for their consideration.

I support the development of Nordic ski trails in the Hatcher Pass area. When it comes to the development of a downhill ski area, I am lukewarm. A small scale operation, similar to Arctic Valley could potentially be feasible. My concerns stem from development of permanent infrastructure such as large detachable quad chairlifts. It is hard to imagine that this area could ever rival Alyeska, which receives a higher quantity of snow. The area of the proposed downhill ski area is notorious for being blasted by winds, which does not provide ideal conditions for skiing. If multiple lifts are built, they will never be removed when the ski area proves to be a financial burden to the MSB. More damaging still would be the (over) development of real estate in this area used by so many for recreation. The story of most ski areas in the USA is that to maintain any profit margin they must sell condos. A ski condo city would be a poor use of the land ecologically and aesthetically. I am not opposed to a small, community run lift access area, but am very opposed to the permanent alteration of this area by converting a mostly natural landscape to real estate. Thank you for considering my comments.

The opportunity for a world class Nordic and alpine ski area in the Hatcher Pass area has been a quest for many Alaskans over the years. Kincaid Park in Anchorage provides a successful template of what the Hatcher Pass Nordic area has the potential to become. Some key areas of concern for the Nordic area are the following:

- Access to the trailhead and main parking areas should be the most direct and with the least impact on the current residents o dwellings. Easements should be provided to anticipate future requirements. With this in mind, plan now for the extra width to allow for separated trail easement for walkers, bikers, and skiers just as we now have on the Palmer Wasilla Highway and as is planned for the new Trunk road. Recommended minimum easement of 100-150 ft.
- Easement through an established subdivision does not make sense for residents from a safety perspective. As with Kincaid park, the main road access has minimal turnouts for individual private driveways. By accessing from the west, the commute time would be an additional 10-20 minutes round trip depending on weather. Minimizing impact to current resident's privacy and minimizing noise levels should be a focus.
- In regards to the planned Nordic trail network: it is vital to insure there is a true beginner trail loop system of at least 1 mile. This will allow many newcomers to the sport to enjoy it from the beginning without being intimidated by steep hills and curves. If feasible, the trail system should be wide enough to allow traditional classic skiers as well as skate skiers the opportunity to enjoy the trail system. Beach Lake trail system is a good example to build from.
- Trails should be established and maintained at a level that provides mountain bike access as well as usable hiking and running opportunities.
- A sled hill is currently planned on the Nordic side as well. Recommend for consideration putting in a small lift – e.g., 100 - 300 yards for tubing and first time alpine skiers and snowboards. This would be much like what Elmendorf and Ft. Richardson have on their very small ski hills. This would be relatively low cost and tubing has proven to be a very fun and enjoyable outdoor activity for folks experiencing their first outdoor winter activities and requires no skills or expensive equipment. It would also allow for inexpensive day pass of \$5-\$10 for those just starting out with skiing or snowboarding. Another benefit of this is it would allow for dual use of the chalet/lodge proposed for the Nordic Facility. It would allow for better opportunities for the chalet to be successful in running a snack bar or small kitchen operation. For the Alpine area here are some comments:
- Proposed lift placement has been analyzed and looked at in detail. A consideration should be made of making a mid-mountain unload/load for the high-speed quad. This will allow for beginner skiers to get off at mid mountain and for those interested in skiing the upper mountain to board at the halfway point and stay on the upper and steeper slopes. Another advantage of this option is it allows skiers to just ski the top half of the mountain early and late in the year when adequate snow coverage is not available on the lower half. Many ski areas in the lower 48 have skiers download off the mountain via the lift system when snow is not adequate. The advantage of a high-speed quad is that it is not intimidating for skiers or walkers as the speed of the chair slows for pickup and drop-off.
- As there is a concern about revenue for the alpine lift system, options need to be addressed for year round operation. Based on this a small snack bar grill should be looked at for the top of the quad lift. This should be a small scale warming hut/café providing sandwiches, soup, and warm beverages. For summer, consideration should be made to operating lifts from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. This allows numerous summer visitors an opportunity to enjoy the expansive views and hiking for many of the older tourists that visit Alaska in the summer. A snack bar at the top allows a great place for folks to get a quick bite while enjoying the beautiful scenery. Additionally, chairs should be capable of carrying mountain bikes. A minimal impact trail from the top of the quad could meet up with Hatcher Pass Road in the vicinity of mile 16. This would allow for a scenic 6-8 mile gradual bicycle descent as many areas in the lower 48 and overseas offer.
- Paragliding opportunities should not be overlooked. A launch area from the quad could be provided at minimal cost and would offer opportunities for those wanting to learn the sport or to do tandem rides with an experienced guide.

I applaud the Borough staff and Assembly for moving forward on this type of ski resort plan for Hatcher Pass. I enthusiastically support building both the downhill and Nordic ski areas!

Please do not put a ski area in Hatcher Pass. Usually there is not enough snow and it is always wind hammered to sustain a ski area. Please do not mess with the creeks with snow making. These creeks have fish in them. Please leave Hatcher pass WILD. The proposed area is an important moose habitat. It also will exclude those people who can not afford to pay for lift tickets. It will be a money loser for the Mat- Su Borough. Please leave Hatcher Pass wild for future generations.

Projects like this enhance the community in the short and long term. They create jobs and enrich the community as well as expanding recreational and health opportunities for all members of the adjacent areas. In the dark winter months recreation and outdoor activities that are positive and active can play an integral role in the physical and mental health of our community. What if building a ski resort dropped alcoholism and domestic violence by 15% ? We have to look at this as a big picture project that may improve the well being of thousands of individuals for years to come.

We oppose any and all projects concerning Hatcher Pass, leave it as it is. Leave us our hunting areas -- we do not need more traffic. Leave the beauty of the area. There is already enough ski and machine space. Hatcher Pass Road is too narrow for heavy traffic and it can't be rebuilt; also Edgerton Parks Rd. has enough traffic, more would destroy the quietness that we have. We do not need a highway which is what would be needed to hold heavy traffic.

(comment submitted via letter) Friends of Mat-Su (FoMS) has the following comments for your consideration: - The format for asking the public to comment is confusing and cumbersome. When we asked for information from DOWL staff to comment on the EIS we were asked to provide general comments on the overall ski area project plan. However, it is unclear how these comments will be used and why the deadline of January 16, 2009 is relevant. Is this in relation to the EIS that is in the process now? If the public is to comment on the EIS and there was a scoping meeting held recently to introduce it after the work has already begun it adds to the confusion. The timeline provided does not delineate how the public comments will impact future decisions. It would be easier for the public to have a single document to sift through rather than a web page with many links and lots of documents. It would also be helpful to have access to any public comments received by DOWL during this process. - FoMS suggests that prior to spending any more money on consulting, environmental studies, and construction of roads and facilities, the MSB should invest in conducting a thorough poll in order to determine if the Alpine and Nordic projects are feasible. This information will also reveal whether one project is more feasible than the other. This is important because the project documents cite several financial challenges that ski areas face. For example, in discussion about lift tickets, it is suggested that offering discounted tickets to attract more skiers will be important because there is a DECREASING SKIER USE TREND. Therefore, it is prudent to have data to support the economic viability of an Alpine Ski Area in today's shaky economy. Moreover, the available documents fail to demonstrate that there is any significant funding available for this project; only that funding will be dealt with at a later date. - It also seems important to have the Hatcher Pass Special Use District completed and approved before any work should begin. The SPUD is the community's tool for creating a well planned area that residents and recreational users can enjoy. It would be unfair to ignore this process. Nordic Ski Area - FoMS feels strongly that the Nordic ski area project on the south side should receive equal if not more emphasis than the Alpine project. The federal road funding for the EIS and road construction is dedicated to that project. The Nordic facility will provide 150 operating days in winter, as well as provide recreational activities through the rest of the year, whereas the Alpine facility will only have 95 to 105 operating days. The Nordic area is a less complicated and less costly endeavor that will benefit a large and diverse user base on a year round basis. The Nordic area will be useful for summer recreation serving the interests of hikers, bikers, runners, equestrians, and the like. Currently, there are three local high schools with Nordic ski teams (there are no local high school alpine teams). These teams have limited training and racing options in the borough and often travel to Chugiak for practice. Therefore the South Side trails can be used by high school Nordic ski teams and cross country running teams. Therefore, we suggest focusing on environmental studies and beginning the process of developing trails on the South Side. We also suggest that the project include lights for at least 10K of trails during Phase 1. Furthermore, this area should not be evaluated for residential development. This area should be a dedicated park to benefit all users, including Anchorage skiers who would likely make the trip when the snow has not arrived in Anchorage yet. Alpine Ski Area - FoMS does not recommend implementing lighting in Phase 1 or snow making for the Alpine project on the North Side. Purchasing and operating snow making equipment is expensive and requires large volumes of water and uses large amounts of energy. It would be prudent to wait and see how successful the area is before assuming that enough skiers will visit the area to make this investment worthwhile. A simple rope tow designed to accommodate skiers and snow boarders seems more than adequate to access the Phase I terrain. This will be the least expensive and safest method for moving people up the small hill. Also, Lift #2 is described as taking 14.7 minutes to transport skiers! This is too long a ride for the terrain offered to skiers. FoMS is concerned that the terrain is too moderate to attract enough skiers to be viable, even with the added lift proposed for Phase II. Furthermore, high winds regularly blow in this area and low, flat winter light often occurs making downhill skiing challenging in this location. The mid-mountain chalet seems like an unnecessary feature, considering that it is located in the shade for much of the year. A very simple warming hut will suffice. According to one document alpine users consume 10 gallons of water a day, but this amount can be reduced to 8 gallons per day through water conservation strategies. FoMS suggests that these strategies be employed for this project as well as other water and energy saving technology in this climate of dwindling energy supplies. The key driving factor to use when determining how this project should proceed is the environmental analysis; in other words, if studies indicate that the Little Su is too sensitive to handle the kind of proposed development the borough should have no hesitation in scaling back development or abandoning it all together. Nonetheless, the base area road and parking lot should use pervious paving surfaces to minimize runoff to the Little Su and should focus on respecting and utilizing the site's natural attributes. - FoMS suggests that the borough retain full ownership of the facility and be the sole operators if this project is pursued. The facility should be a borough owned and operated asset that is managed like the other parks in our borough. This would be the most efficient use of resources and ensure equity among employees and benefit the community as a whole. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the EIS and Hatcher Pass Ski Area Project.

(comment submitted via letter) Dear Ron Swanson, I am concerned about the progression of the plan to create a Nordic skiing area in Hatcher Pass and what appears to be movement neglecting other outdoor enthusiasts such as hunters, trappers and snowmachiners. Since I was an infant my parents owned 360 acres directly south of the proposed Nordic ski area so growing up in this area I have hunted for many years, harvesting numerous moose with my father and later, my father in law. I have also trapped there and caught my first red fox and coyote in the plan area. This is something that is a necessity and a pleasure for me, my wife and my four children to participate in year round. My family and I love to hike and recreate in many other ways as well but we primarily use the trails up in the Pass like mint glacier, archangel and the independence mine areas. In my opinion there are many other options for the borough to be looking at improving such as crevasse moraine, the aforementioned areas up in the Pass, around the high schools like Colony, and the ever increasing trail use area on Sun Valley road off of Palmer Fishhook. To develop the area for Nordic skiing with the building of a chalet, parking lot and other facilities would "ruin" the area's natural and traditional appeal. There are many users of this area who have used the traditional and grandfathered trails to enjoy this hillside, so however the plan continues it needs to incorporate the rights and respect of specifically, hunters and trappers. Securing these rights and having this understanding will hopefully defuse any unnecessary misunderstandings between all area users. I also don't feel that the economics will add up for this to be a successful venture. Traditionally, this area has been used primarily by local individuals for whom access is quick and convenient however, for many other users this area is anything but convenient and quite a bit out of the way. There appears to be a big push for this project by Mr. Ed Strabel and that concerns me as well since if the project does go through he potentially stands to be rewarded by increased visibility and use of his bed & breakfast establishment, this appears to be a conflict of interest. I know that Mr. Strabel has done much of his own developing of the area with seeding and widening traditional and grandfathered trail systems. I have spoken with his neighbors and am convinced that his attachment to the trail project is unhealthy for many who would like to use it, if it is not used as he intends. In conclusion, I believe that the Borough should focus its efforts on improving already used and established hiking and skiing trails that are located in the Hatcher Pass area and around the valley. If the project does push through there must be an acceptance and rights given to users who don't just ski and hike but also hunt and trap this area, finally I want to continue to use this area with my wife and children and protect it so that someday they and their children can enjoy the same lifestyle I have enjoyed. Thank you for your attention to my comments.

(comment submitted via letter) I am writing to express my opinion specifically about the southern Nordic recreation area. I was born and raised in the Wasilla area and continue to live on property that was purchased in the 1950s by my grandparents, Robert and Gertrude Clarke. This property is at mile 5 on Wasilla Fishhook Rd and I currently own 30 acres at that location. I have recreated extensively in the Hatcher Pass area and particularly on the Edgerton Parks in the exact area that the Nordic area is proposed. This recreation has included hiking, moose and bear hunting, berry picking, photography, sledding, atv and snowmachine riding and more. I have truthfully actively utilized this area for at least 30 years and was taken as a child into these woods by my father David ZumBrunnen and close friend Al Plisousky who lives at the base of Government peak. This area is special to me and a place that I want to express my interest over. Please understand that I am not against development. I am a business owner in the valley and rely on development for success, yet at the same time there are some things that should be left alone for our children to be able to enjoy. I have multiple concerns about the need and purpose of this project. I do not understand how it will actually provide financially for the MSB. There are multiple other areas for Nordic skiing, hiking and mountain biking, such as the current Hatcher Pass area up to the Crevasse Moraine ski area, Colony schools trails and multiple other sites that are utilized but do not seem to be even near a capacity that requires another extensive development. This new development will require staffing and extensive maintenance which will cost money and as a taxpayer of the MSB and State of Alaska I am not in support of it from a financial aspect. I also do not believe that it would be utilized to the extent that the MSB believes. Mountain Streams B&B already has a fairly significant trail system in place on this mountain which is used, but of all the times, in both winter and summer, that I have been up there I have only seen a handful of people utilizing this area. The Strables are very well connected in this Nordic group and yet there still seems to not be heavy use. I also have personally done research and was not aware of the area being non-motorized until last year and was assured by the MSB and State Parks Headquarters that there were not special permits available or issued at the time, yet Mr. Strable has been allowed to knowingly utilize his machines to put in this trail system and maintain it, but I am still not technically allowed to access the an area that I have utilized historically far longer than he. I feel that the current plan for development has been relatively quiet and should be more publicized for comment. I also feel that with the downturn in the economy this may not be the best time for pushing such a large development with the expenses that it will entail. This area has been looked at for years to be developed by many private organizations and even they seem to think that it will not sustain, so why are we going to invest taxpayer money into a potential money pit for a limited exclusive use group? This area is already allowing people to utilize it for Nordic functions through the B&B and also allowing those of use who utilize it for other resources, such as wildlife and subsistence lifestyle purposes, to have a place close that is accessible. I have great concerns about the ability for the abundant wildlife in the area to sustain with a large development in the area that will force them to push out. This is also very sad to me that there will be one less place for me to be able to take my nephews or children to go for an evening hunt, berry picking, bear viewing or whatever. If this area is developed with a more extensive trail system and a greater number of people, then, whether it is illegal or not, it will not be a safe or fun area to recreate for any of us who have used it for decades for a lot more purposes than skiing and hiking. If this area is to remain non-motorized then give us a way to access the area across Government Creek legally so we have a hope of continuing to live and recreate in this area that is very dear to a lot more of us than you may think. Overall, I have great concern about the impact on the local area for the residents of Edgerton Parks Rd. who have partly moved there to get away from the crowds and to be able to recreate in an area like this that will be potentially taken away from them. Is it right for us who have been using this area to be told that we may only use it if we have skis on or are riding a mountain bike? Why are we putting in chalets and ski lifts in the only beautiful and easily accessible area in the valley for mountain sports that, again, only serve a small, exclusive use group? Why are we investing MSB, state and federal taxpayer dollars on a questionable return on investment? There are multiple other sites for Nordic activities in the valley already and I propose that we develop them more if we need to, but please do not develop the southern Nordic development area.

Build Something to Ski On. I have been a winter recreation enthusiast at Hatcher Pass for over 30 years. I enjoy all types of skiing at Hatcher Pass. In the past I have been a supporter of development of an Alpine ski area. What I have learned over the past 25 years is that a downhill area is capital intensive, financing is difficult to obtain and the economics are not very favorable for a ski area to break even. Incremental improvements that the public can utilize now make the most sense. Start with the developing the Nordic trails. Construct a short access road to a trailhead and begin building intermediate level cross country trails. The public wins, they get a return on investment. If the limited available funding is spread out over the Nordic and the Alpine projects, the past will be repeated, studies will gather dust on a shelf and not enough funding will be available to complete something to ski on. The borough and federal funds obtained for this project were initially designated for the Nordic trails. In addition some of the federal funding was reappropriated from other transportation projects. The intent of the funding is for transportation and the Nordic trails meet the intent of the funding. First built the Nordic area with the funds in hand, obtain some success and then we can build on the success with other improvements. This project desperately needs success – the Nordic trails can provide that now.

I feel this land is public land to be used for multiple use as all motorize, hunting, skiing, horse riding, berry picking, etc.

As a local business, due to the knowledge of the public as I understand, they live here for the hunting, fishing and snowboarding and that`s why they purchased their property here. This is a beautiful area to be shared by all, not one specific group. I myself ride and hunt with my children in this area and value this right of opportunity.

I am writing to express my concern about the Hatcher Pass project. As a climber and backcountry skier I visit Hatcher Pass many times throughout the year and I do not support development plans for this area. My reasons for not supporting this project are two fold: 1. Hatcher is a beautiful area and I have spent many days exploring all the valleys, peaks and ridges. A ski area in the middle of one the best back country ski runs of the area would essentially mean yet another wild area lost. 2. I am not a Mat-Su property owner -- but I see no way that the Mat Su can raise enough money for this project -- which inevitably means the money must come from either state or federal sources. Regardless of projected growth in the valley, this is not a sustainable project and the only way it will remain open in the future is through public subsidies. We are at an economic time in our history -- we cannot dump money into projects that are not feasible or sustainable. This is a project that will unnecessarily tax our dwindling state coffers. In short - I do not support this project because it would destroy a beautiful area of Alaska and unnecessarily burden our state with another poor investment.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE HATCHER PASS MANAGEMENT PLAN AND SPUD/POLICIES AND STANDARDS To Whom It May Concern: I wish to address three areas of the HPMP and SPUD that the Mat-Su Borough Assembly should address when taking up this matter. One is residential development, another is hunting, and the last is motorized use. Residential Development: I understand that many alpine ski developments are paired with residential developments, as that is often the element making these projects economically viable. Current residents in the proposed development area have justifiable concerns, primarily regarding the effect such development will have on water quality. I believe that these concerns are best addressed through the environmental assessment that is to be performed in the area. This assessment will determine the viability, size, and number of residential units sustainable in the area. The prudent course of action would be to follow these recommendations in adopting residential development guidelines for the area. I support a residential development plan in the SPUD that follows the recommendations of the EA. Hunting: Hunting within the designated ski areas has long been a traditional use in the area, mostly by local residents. I see no conflict with development plans and hunting in most of the area designated for skiing. Most hunting is completed before the snow falls and thus would not compete with skiing. Obviously, residential and other developed areas would have to be off limits. Mountain biking, hiking, and horseback riding would, in my opinion, not be incompatible with allowing hunters access to the area. Those biking, hiking, or horseback riding are accustomed to dealing with hunters on trails in August and September throughout Alaska. Motorized Use: If the boroughs intent is to develop alpine and Nordic skiing in the Government Peak subunit of the Hatcher Pass Special Use District, then motorized use must be restricted to commercial and emergency access with no corridor for snowmachines through the area. There are several areas I wish to address on this subject. A) Traditional Use of the Area Has Had Only Limited Motorized Use I have skied in the Southside and Westside subunits for over 24 years. I can testify to the fact that this area has had very limited snowmachine use until recently. Topography in the area prohibited east/west travel as deep ravines blocked access. I began skiing in the area in 1983 and never saw snowmachine tracks except for a few runs that went a short way up towards the base of the mountain and back down. With the advent of long-track, high horsepower machines the ability to traverse the deep ravines became possible. I remember the day a few years ago when I first saw a track running west across the slopes. Snowmachine use has gradually increased since then to where machines are in the area every weekend of the season. The vast system of snowmachine tracks through the area now makes most of it un-skiable. B) Corridors Through the Area Are Unenforceable Suggested corridors through the Southside and/or Westside subunits are unacceptable. The suggested plan for such corridors requires the borough to enforce the use of the corridors. This is impossible without daily on-site enforcement. The area is open and above tree line. Machines allowed into the area will travel where they please, as they do now. This year there were 2 km of groomed Nordic ski trails in the 11,000 acres of the SPUD. Snowmachines illegally using this non-motorized area regularly found this small groomed trail while traversing all over the area and drove their machines on the trail much to the consternation of Mr. Strabel, who worked very hard to maintain the trail, and to those of us attempting to ski on the trail. My wife took a very bad fall last winter when she hit a snowmachine mogul made in the middle of the ski trail. C) Snowmachine and Skiing Uses Are Incompatible I have nothing against snowmachining. However, there is no ski development anywhere that allows recreational snowmachining. Snowmachines are considered a hazard to skiers because of the risk of collisions and the damage that the machines do to groomed slopes and trails. Are there snowmachines in Kincaid Park; Alyeska; Vail, Colorado? If the borough wants a ski area, there can be no recreational snowmachining. I predict that if corridors are established through the area that the assembly will be revisiting this issue once development begins and the problem becomes acute. D) Snowmachines Have Other Use Areas Within Hatcher Pass Currently, there are two areas designated non-motorized in the entire Hatcher Pass Management Plan, Independence Mine and the Government Peak subunit. Why do snowmachines need to gain access to the skiing areas when they have thousands of acres designated for their use? E) Snowmachine Access to Other Areas and Trails Can Be Provided Without a Corridor Through the Ski Area Those asking for corridors through the Southside and/or Westside areas cite the concern for access to trails west and north of the area. The access north of the area from the Southside and Westside subunits is marginal at best, often dangerous because of avalanche conditions, and only usable by expert riders with high-powered machines. Access to trails west of the area is needed. This access would connect trails to the east, Moose Meadows, Wishbone Hill, Sutton, Chickaloon, to the vast trail systems to the west, including Big Lake and beyond. The best access is along Edgerton-Parks Road, not through the ski area. See solution below. Putting the access through the ski area makes no sense when a better alternative is available. F) Residential Developers Do Not Want Snowmachine Corridors Homeowners have battled snowmachine corridors through and around their property everywhere in Alaska through the use of fences, gates, berms, and dangerous wires and ropes. The problem underscores the unenforceability of corridors as machines leave established trails and drive through private property. Noise and vandalism are constant problems associated with the issue of private residences and snowmachine use. No residential developer would want a snowmachine corridor running through the property. Proposed Solution for Motorized Use: Snowmachine users cite the need for access to other trails as the rationale for a motorized corridor through the Southside and Westside subunits (see E above). This need can easily be accommodated by establishing a motorized corridor along the Edgerton-Parks road/utility easement. Access to the north through the Westside subunit is not needed; it is rarely used, nor is it wise for the borough to establish this dangerous route as a borough trail. I suggest adding a parking lot at the west end of Edgerton-Parks Road for motorized users wanting to travel west of the area. It is my understanding that the plan currently calls for access at the end of Waldo Reed Road. I do not believe this access point is far enough from Nordic ski trails to avoid problems with snowmachines encroaching on ski areas. In fact, some current ski trails run right along the corridor north of Waldo Reed Road. As stated above, these incompatible uses must be separated by more than a corridor to avoid problems. Studying the topography of the area it becomes evident that a snowmachine access point connecting to western trails must be west of the Government Creek drainage to avoid conflict with skiers.

As a resident of the Mat-Su Borough for over 30 years living on Wasilla Fishhook Road it disturbs me to see a proposal to limit the activity over the entire Hatcher Pass area. The proposal to allow only ski, bike and hike access on all of Hatcher Pass limits use of the area to a small population of the valley's residents. There are numerous residents, myself included who have enjoyed responsible use of Hatcher Pass not only for recreation but for subsistence through fishing and hunting to support our family. I absolutely disagree with taking away the access for all residents to enjoy and use the Hatcher Pass area from all residents.

My husband and I raised all of our children in our home here on Wasilla-Fishhook Road. Over the years Hatcher Pass has served us as a vast recreational area for all types of out door activities including fishing, hiking, snow machining, picnics and hunting to support our family. To hear that a proposal would take away a number of these opportunities is worrisome to me. That our family, and a large number of other valley residents might be restricted from the ability to not only enjoy Hatcher pass responsibly in all ways, but to feed our family is not okay. I absolutely do not want to see this change take place.

I am in full support of responsible development of our land use. As we look at this opportunity I would ask that we continue to provide areas in place currently for hunting use. I have hunted this area from the age of 15 and now as a father of a son, I would like to some day share this hunting area with him. Thank you for your consideration and best of luck as you responsibly field the many views you are sure to receive through this project.

My comment is regarding the Hatcher Pass South Side Rec Area and Trail System. My parents were amongst the original homesteaders along E. Edgerton Park Road in the early 1960's. I have personal recollections of the area going back nearly 45 years. I remember my father helping to build the old bridge across the little Su and the muddy track that was the original road. I generally support the development of the south side of Government Mountain. I have two concerns however under the general topic of EXCLUSIVE use the area. First there should be some provisions made for motorized vehicles in the area. A trail system should be included to provide access away from the Nordic ski areas for snow machines in the winter and 4wheelers in the summer to travel to land west of the South Side Rec Area. The reality is that snow machine enthusiasts have been using the area for years and I suspect they will for years to come with permission or not. So why don't we respect the traditional uses of the area and manage the snow machines in a way that will allow for the enjoyment of ALL Alaskans. Secondly though I imagine this topic is well beyond the scope of your project but again in line with the issues of Non-Exclusive use in the area, and respecting and preserving traditional uses of the area. As long as it is possible hunting should also be allowed in the area. I appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Don't turn this area into an `exclusive use` area, benefiting only select groups. I've lived on or near Government Peak almost exclusively since 1966. I harvested my first moose and bear here. I've hunted, trapped, snowshoed, skied, snowmachined and sledged here for nearly all my life. An area for parking is a fine idea, as it would allow others to enjoy this area as have I. Another consideration... every south flowing stream, two feet or larger, holds spawning silver salmon in the fall. (It never ceases to amaze me.) I would hate to see the Little Su salmon runs negatively impacted.

I support developing the Nordic trail system in the Southside area ASAP. This part of the borough's Hatcher Pass recreational plan for the can be implemented as soon as the access road into the area is completed. As I understand it, there is Federal money earmarked for road construction so let's get it built. The competitive trails are already laid out so useable trails can quickly be brushed out and used by x-c skiers.

I'm pro hunting, fishing, four wheeling, and snowboarding and I don't want this to change for any reason!

Having been raised in the valley, and living at the base of Hatcher Pass, I whole heartedly disagree with any change that would limit all access to Hatcher Pass. While I understand that development is sometimes necessary, as well as the need to protect our resources, to set aside such a vast and amazing area to a limited number of users is wrong. I've hiked, fished, snow machined, and much more all over Hatcher Pass for more than 30 years. This area should never be closed off to responsible use by all residents in all ways. It also disturbs me that this change would affect both fishing and hunting in area's of Hatcher Pass. My family has subsisted from hunting for over 50 years. With more and more restrictions on hunting, this would be one more way of making the provision of fish and game harder to access. This affects a great number of Alaskans and especially valley residents who have depended on all our resources to support families as well as recreate in Alaska. Do not make this change.

Which Phase: Scoping Comment - From Fishhook Community Council

(Comment received from Fishhook Community Council Meeting, Jan 15, 09.)Are you collecting data from Fish & Game?

(Comment received at Fishhook Community Council Meeting, Jan 15, 09.)Is the Northern Alpine Area where the locals go to snowboard now (mile 16)?

(Comment received at Fishhook Community Council Meeting, Jan 15, 09.)The recommendation was to delay the decision about a Special Land Use District (SPUD) until after completion of the EIS. Will the Borough take comments between the completion of the EIS and the adoption of a SPUD?

(Comment received from Fishhook Community Council Meeting, Jan 15, 09.)The bubble you show goes into private property – why is this?

(Comment received at Fishhook Community Council Meeting, Jan 15, 09.)Will the areas be limited to non-mechanized uses?

Which Phase: Scoping Comment - Submitted at RPAMB Meeting

(comment taken at RPAMB and Parks & Rec mtg on 1/14/09 by Ron Swanson) There was a comment during the meeting that dealt with the location of the transit facility on the south side. The person commenting thought the facility should be located more on the southern end of the access road (whichever route is selected) along with a parking lot. He felt that if folks had to drive all the way to the Nordic center it would defeat the purpose of providing public transportation to the Alpine area and for local residents as a “park and ride” lot.
