



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

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PRESS RELEASE

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Access & transit to ski areas, subject of meeting

MAT-SU—Roads, trail access, and transit facilities will be the focus of a meeting next Wednesday, May 27, on the Hatcher Pass Ski areas.

“Build it now,” was among comments made by the public at the first public meeting in December. Most in the room expressed general support for the ski project. Skiers and snowboarders and more have long enjoyed the winter slopes at Hatcher Pass. The ski project would add infrastructure and access.

The Wednesday meeting won't talk trails and lifts but instead how best to get there and offload and return safely.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough received some \$5.6 million in federal funding from the Federal Transit Administration to carry out an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process and construct the access roads and transit facilities. The EIS is now under way for the access project. Field work began last summer and more will continue this summer. The EIS will cover impacts related to transit improvements such as access roads, parking areas, transit facilities and trail connections. A draft EIS is expected to go before the public sometime in the summer 2010 or the fall of 2010. DOWL HKM is helping the Borough write the EIS.

The ski facilities are planned to open in 2012.

Among the subjects to be discussed:

- Road alternatives that will lead to the southern side of Government Peak for accessing the Nordic Ski area.
- A less steep road proposed to the northern side of Government Peak for accessing the Alpine ski area.

- Parking areas for buses and vehicles
- Transit facilities, the location and size

Hatcher Pass, part of the Talkeetna Mountains and foothills, is 55 miles north of Anchorage. Some field work began last summer on the 11,000 acres that make up the area being studied. The Borough owns 3,000 acres and has management authority on the remaining land. The work includes: wetland delineations, vegetation mapping, habitat mapping, fish and aquatic surveys, an eagle nest survey, and a cultural resources survey. Some field work reports are already posted on the web site www.hatcherpass.com. A scoping summary is there also as well as 87 public comments.

The Borough is researching ways to fund the regional ski area, which for phase 1 would cost about \$19 million. The Hatcher Pass Ski areas include both Alpine and Nordic. The main features proposed in Phase 1 of the project include two chair lifts, a day lodge with snow sports school, rental equipment, night-lighting, and snowmaking on the northern Alpine side.

On the southern Nordic side: 10 kilometers of competition trails, 10 kilometers of recreational trails, restroom and warming area, road access and parking.

The meeting will take place at Colony Middle School at 9250 Colony Schools Drive from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Presentations will be made at 6:00 and 7:00 pm.

The web site www.hatcherpass.com is a place to comment and learn more. The site also can be found under projects on the Borough web site www.matsugov.us. The project team seeks your comments on the proposed alignment of roads, on social and environmental resources, and remarks on the parking and transit facilities.

For more information call Dowl HKM at 746-7600, or Brad Sworts, Mat-Su Transportation Division Manager at 746-7430 or Mat-Su Public Affairs Director Patty Sullivan 355-0103 or psullivan@matsugov.us