

HANDOUTS



Safety Starts at Our Core

Comprehensive Safety Action Plan



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The MSB Safety Action Plan is **now** available for **PUBLIC REVIEW**



Go to the project website to review and submit a comment!
ss4a.matsugov.us

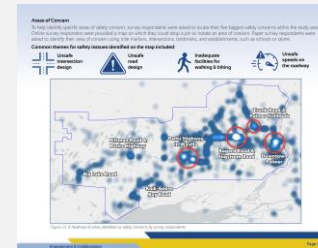
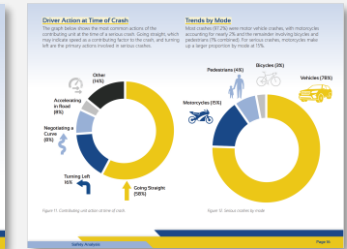
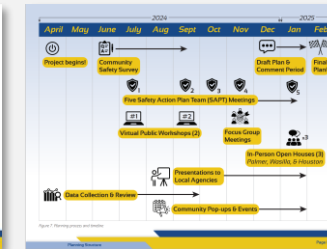


What's included in the plan?



Plan Chapters

1. Leadership Commitment & Goal Setting
2. Planning Structure
3. Safety Analysis (Existing Conditions/Peer Review)
4. Engagement & Collaboration
5. Equity Considerations
6. Policy & Process Changes
7. Strategy & Process for Project Selection
8. Progress & Transparency



Performance Measures and Targets

Performance Measure	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Traffic Fatalities	10	8	6	5
Number of Traffic Injuries	120	110	90	80
Number of Traffic Property Damage Incidents	250	230	210	200
Number of Traffic Crashes	380	360	340	330

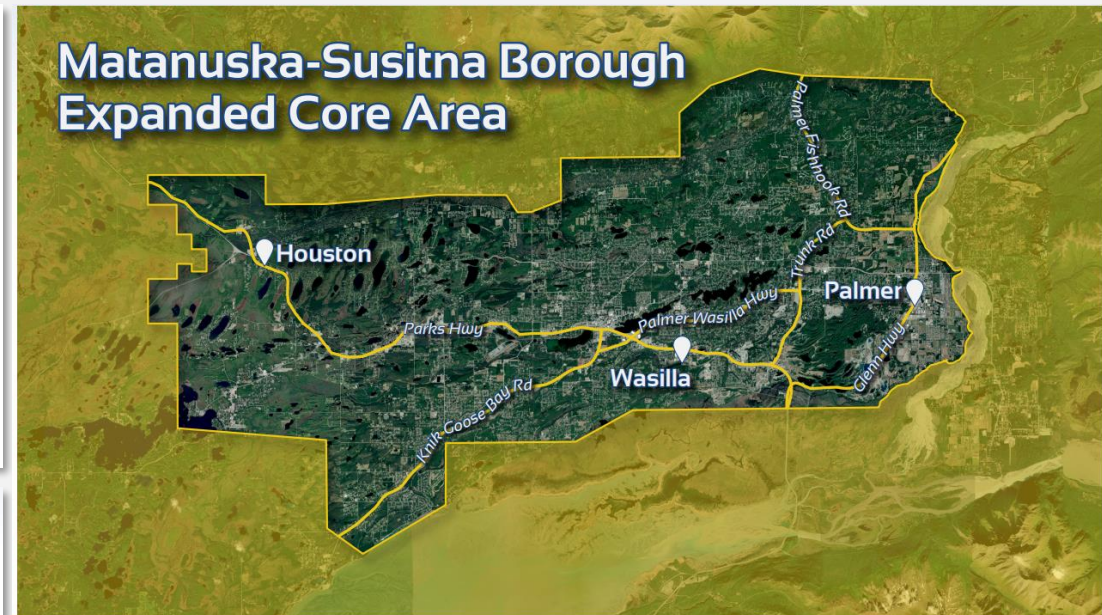
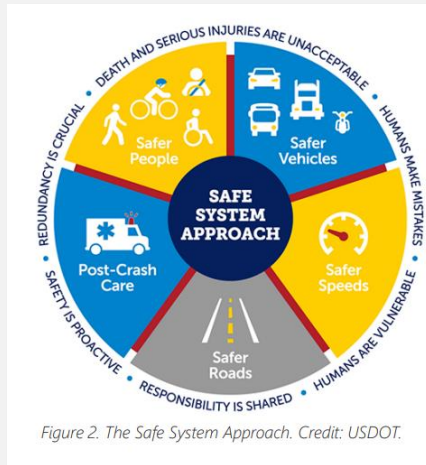


Chapter 1: Leadership Commitment & Goal Setting



Overview

- Project study area
- Safe Systems Approach
- 3.5% Annual Reduction Goal



Chapter 2: Planning Structure



Overview

- **Safety Action Plan Team**
 - Representation
 - Meeting Schedule
- **Plan Process**
 - Outreach
 - Schedule
 - Meetings
 - Plan Adoption

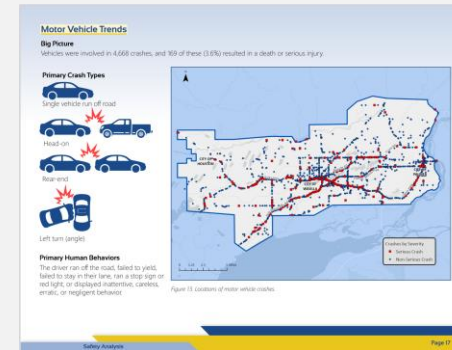
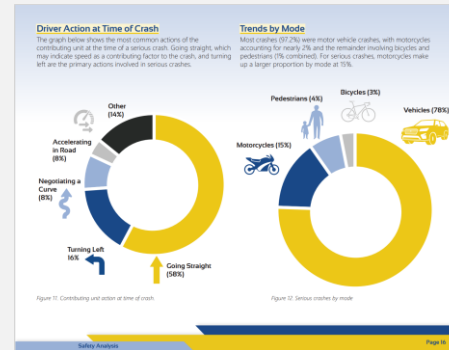


Chapter 3: Safety Analysis (Existing Conditions & Peer Review)



Overview

- Existing Conditions Analysis
 - MSB Crash Trends by Mode
 - Crash Types
 - Crash Circumstances
- Peer Review (11 cities)
 - Education, Enforcement, Infrastructure, Policies, 5-year crash averages



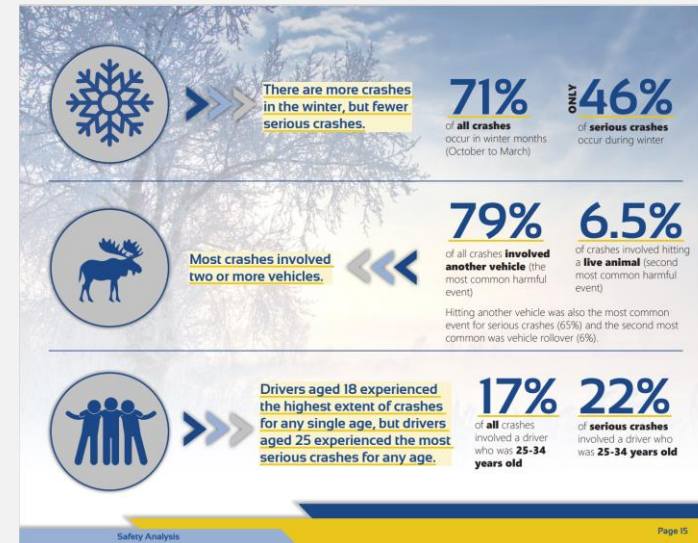
National Best Practices and Peer Review

As part of the MSB CSAE project team performed a peer review analysis to assess safety strategies that have proven to be successful in other communities around the United States. Eleven communities were selected, most of which have similar climates to the MSB. They included:

- Ada County, Idaho
- Anchorage, Alaska
- Austin, Texas
- Boulder, Colorado
- Denver Metro Council of Governments
- Canyon County, Idaho
- Fairbanks, Alaska
- Minneapolis, Minnesota
- State of Missouri
- State of Utah
- Walla Walla, Washington

SSA is an emerging concept for the nation and for communities, and many are embracing the Vision Zero goal through public commitments and the SSA program. The table below includes safety strategies being planned or used in other communities, and some that are already being implemented in Alaska.

Peer Community Strategy	Benefits	Communities Using It Successfully
Implement Vision Zero campaigns and maintain a regional Vision Zero webpage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes a culture of traffic safety • Provides resources, support, and shared responsibility for safety 	Boulder, Denver, and Ada County
Combine countermeasure deployment with promotional activities (press releases, promotional signage, media interviews)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides educational opportunities for safety treatments 	Boulder

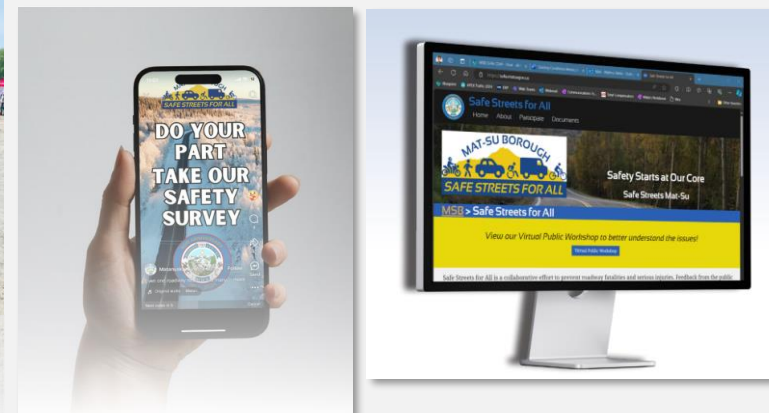
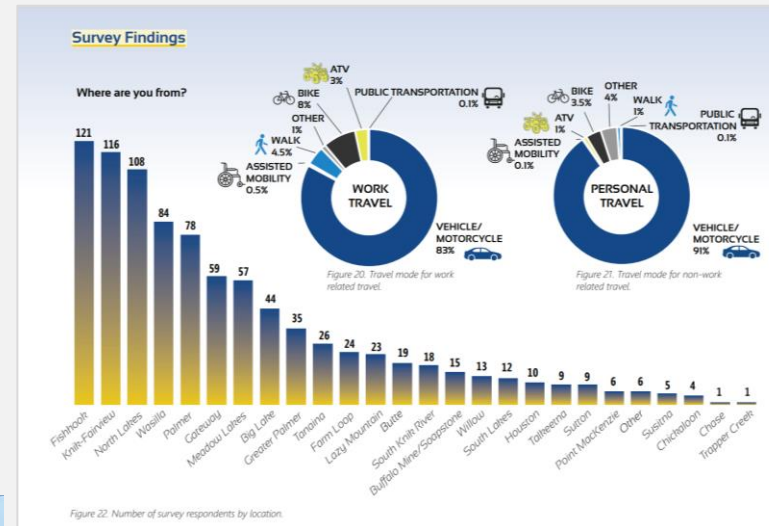


Chapter 4: Engagement & Collaboration



Overview

- Project Website
- Stakeholder Outreach
- Safety Survey Results
- **912 Responders**
- 5 SAPT Meetings
- 3 In-person Open Houses
- 3 Focus Group Meetings
- 2 Virtual Public Workshops
- 6 Pop-up Events
- 15 MSB Agency Presentations
- Online Interactive Crash Data Dashboard
- Social Media, News Publications, Email Notifications

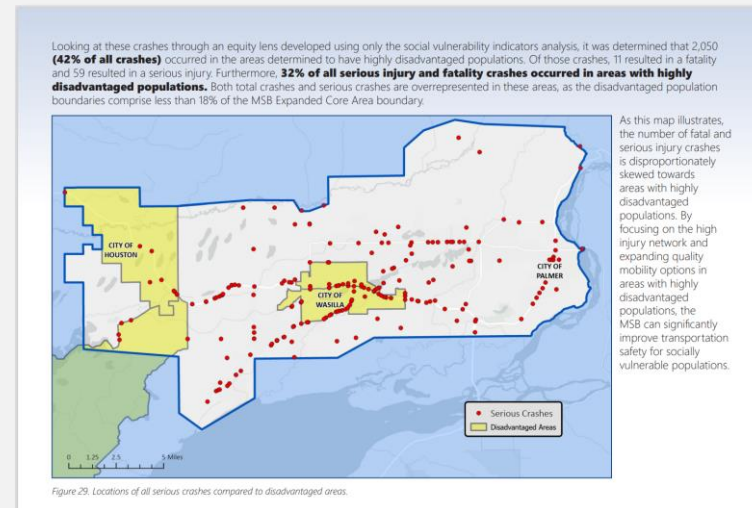
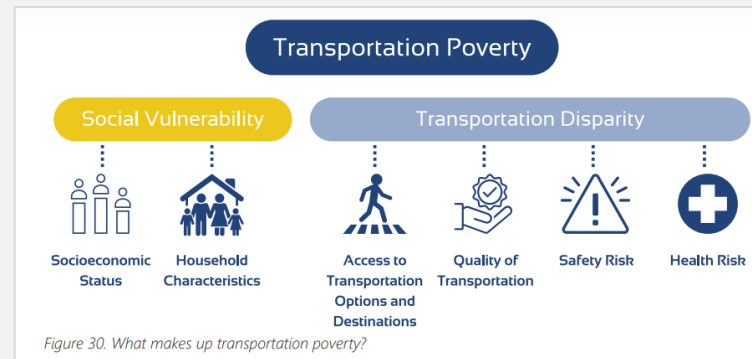


Chapter 5: Equity Considerations



Overview

- Equity Analysis
 - Vulnerable Populations within MSB Expanded Core Area
 - Transportation Insecurity
 - Social Vulnerability
 - Health Vulnerability
 - High Injury Equity Analysis
 - Transportation Barriers
 - Recommendations to Improve Equity
 - Equity Impact Analysis



Social Vulnerability Indicators Within the MSB Expanded Core Area
 Finally, a third equity analysis of the MSB Expanded Core Area focused on the social vulnerability category of the ETC Explorer to assess the most highly disadvantaged areas. For the third equity analysis, the project team used socioeconomic status and household characteristics to assess social vulnerability.

- Indicators for socioeconomic status include**
- Percent of population with income below 2x the poverty level
 - Percent of people age 25+ with less than a high school diploma
 - Percent of people age 16+ who are unemployed
 - Percent of total housing units that are renter-occupied
 - Percent of houses that spend 30% or more of their income on housing with less than \$75K income
 - Percent of population uninsured
 - Percent of households with no internet subscription
 - Gini index (degree of inequality in the distribution of income/wealth)
- Indicators for household characteristics include**
- Percent of population 65 years or older
 - Percent of population 17 years or younger
 - Percent of population with a disability
 - Percent of population (age 5+) with limited English proficiency
 - Percent of total housing units that are mobile homes





Chapter 6: Policy & Process Changes

Overview

- Existing Plans Review
 - Key Findings
 - Project Recommendations
- Policy/Program Review
 - What is Already Working
- Recommendations for New Policies and Practices
- Safety Toolkit

Table 6: Safe Vehicles - SSA Recommended Policies and Practices for MSB Expanded Core Area

ID	Equity Impact	Policy/Practice
SV1	High	Evaluate the MSB's vehicle fleet, and when replacement vehicles are due, give consideration for the smallest vehicle size suitable for the task.
SV2	Moderate	Child car seat education and workshops
SV3	Moderate	Adult car fitting education and workshops (e.g., proper mirror adjustment, ergonomics, and other safe practices in vehicles)
SV4	High	Income-based programs and potential incentives for vehicle owners that address vehicle maintenance issues such as operable headlights and blinkers, brakes and brake lights, and tires with proper all-season tread
SV5	High	When purchasing replacement vehicles for MSB vehicle fleet, consider vehicles with more safety features and automations such as lane assist, backup cameras, and other hazard warnings.

Table 7: Safe Speeds - SSA Recommended Policies and Practices for MSB Expanded Core Area

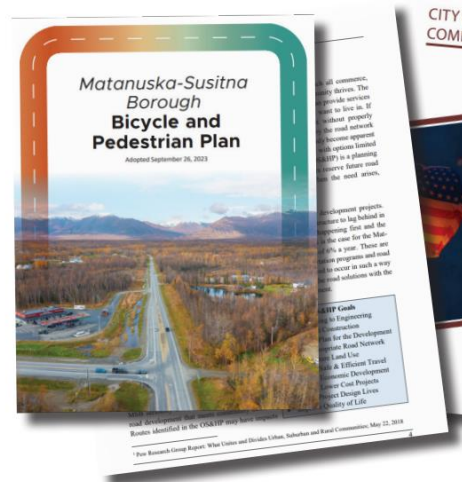
ID	Equity Impact	Policy/Practice
SS1	Moderate	Initiate policy development for active monitoring for speed enforcement.
SS2	Moderate	Review/implement speed management policies for setting speed limits.
SS3	High	Assess the appropriateness of speed and functionality of local and state roads in the MSB through the development of an MSB Complete Streets Plan and future MSB transportation plan updates.
SS4	Moderate	Develop a consistent speed zone policy for schools within the MSB Expanded Core Area.
SS5	Moderate	Work with local enforcement agencies to advocate for increased funding, staffing, and equipment to strengthen policing capabilities throughout the MSB.
SS6	Moderate	Work with local enforcement agencies to educate policy makers and advocate for stronger laws and stricter fines and penalties to improve accountability for speeding and traffic violations.

Table 8: Safe Roads - SSA Recommended Policies and Practices for MSB Expanded Core Area

ID	Equity Impact	Policy/Practice
SR1	High	Develop an MSB Complete Streets Plan.
SR2	High	Update street design guidelines, standards, and borough code to support Complete Streets policies and Safe System principles.
SR3	Moderate	Prioritize and pursue implementation funding for the projects recommended in the MSB CSAP. Refresh the safety priority analysis at least every three years to ensure continued relevancy.
SR4	Moderate	Systematically install low-cost safety countermeasures at priority locations identified in the MSB CSAP and throughout the region.

Policy & Process Changes

Page 63



Appropriate Speed Limits & Speed Feedback Signs



Speed Safety Cameras



Bicycle Lanes



Crosswalk Visibility Enhancements



Chapter 7: Strategy & Process for Project Selection

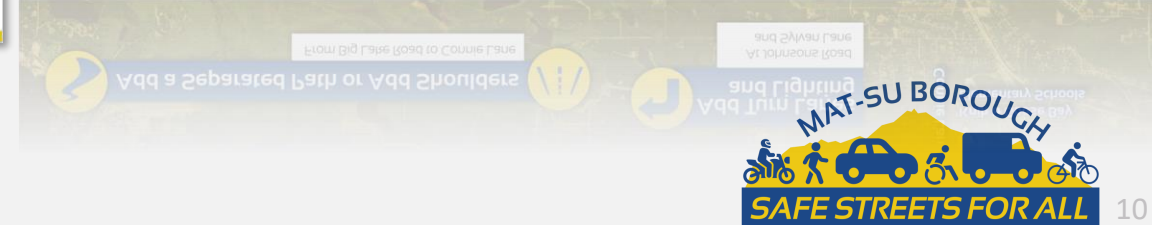
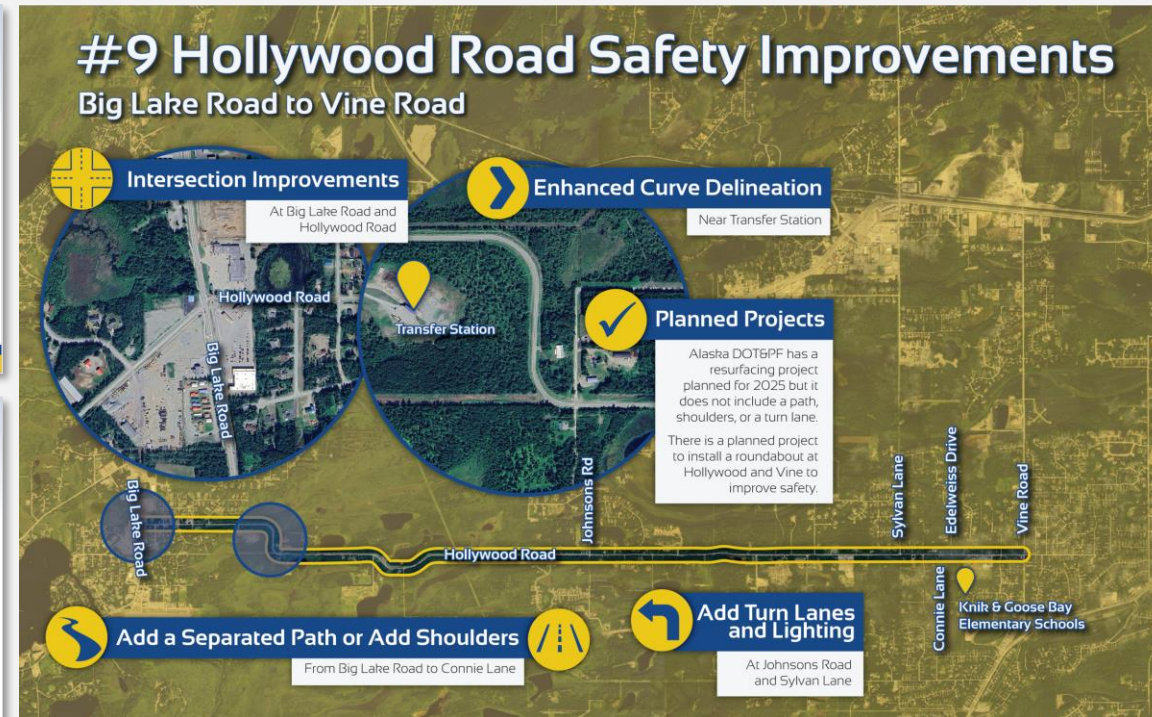
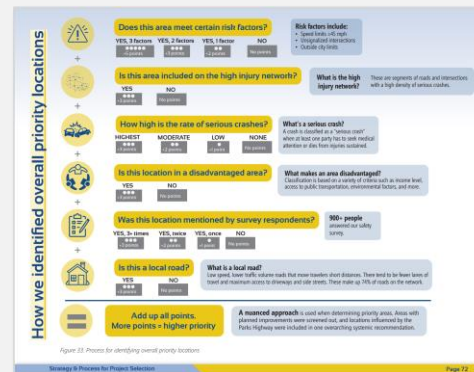
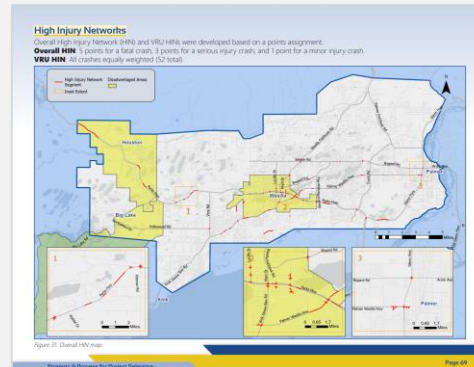


Overview

- High Injury Networks
- Risk Profiles
- Project Prioritization

Criteria

- Priority Projects



Chapter 8: Progress & Transparency



Overview

- Implementation Matrix
- Tracking Progress
 - Data Dashboard
 - Performance Measures & Targets
 - Updating the MSB CSAP

Implementation Matrix

Table 10: Implementation Matrix - Immediate (0-2 years)

Implementation Action	Related Policy/ Practice	Implementation Partners
Apply for federal grant funding, such as the Safe Streets for All program, to implement recommended <u>near-term</u> projects outlined in Chapter 7. Strategy and Project Selections of the MSB CSAP.	SR3, SR4, SR5	MSB, City of Houston, City of Palmer, City of Wasilla, MVP
Apply for federal grant funding, such as the Safe Streets for All program, to implement <u>near-term</u> demonstration projects or supplemental planning projects that align with the MSB CSAP.	SR3, SR4, SR5, SR6	MSB, City of Houston, City of Palmer, City of Wasilla, MVP
Begin systematically installing low-cost safety countermeasures at locations identified for improvement in Chapter 7. Strategy and Project Selections, and throughout the region.	SR4, SR5, SP5	MSB, City of Houston, City of Palmer, City of Wasilla, MVP, DOT&PF
Share the MSB CSAP and Safety Countermeasures Toolkit with partner transportation agencies such as MVP and DOT&PF in support of implementation projects.	SP3, SR5	MSB
Establish a Safe Streets MSB Working Group to guide development of a Safe Streets MSB or Vision Zero campaign and website, including seasonal safety messaging, safety in school zones (developing consistent speed zone policy, signs and markings, and maintenance procedures for schools), and encouraging compassion and community responsibility in young drivers through campaign partnerships with health and human service organizations, parent groups, and schools.	SP1, SP2, SP4, SS4, SP9, SP10, SP11, SR11	MSB, City of Houston, City of Palmer, City of Wasilla, MVP, DOT&PF, Alaska State Troopers, MSB School District, Mat-Su Health Foundation
Implement a Winter Dashboard for MSB to show the public the status of open requests, in progress, and snow removal on routes for borough-maintained routes.	SR12, SR13, SR14	MSB
Establish a Maintenance Working Group to address key challenges and roadblocks associated with all-season maintenance of streets, sidewalks, multi-use pathways, bike lanes, bus stops, and school zones. Devise a resource such as a checklist or infographic to illustrate the hierarchy of information, roles, and responsibilities for adhering to maintenance goals. Explore potential efficiencies in RSA consolidation.	SR12, SR16, SR14	MSB, City of Houston, City of Palmer, City of Wasilla, MVP, DOT&PF
Organize and facilitate an annual safety walking tour for elected officials and the public to demonstrate safety needs and navigating locations where improvements are planned or have recently been implemented.	SP8	MSB, City of Houston, City of Palmer, City of Wasilla, MVP, DOT&PF



Attend the online virtual workshop

ss4a.matsugov.us



Explore crash & safety data on Mat-Su Borough's urban roads

This virtual workshop is part of the development of the Mat-Su Borough Comprehensive Safety Action Plan

- Explore the data
- Safe Streets for All
- Crash Locations
- Travel Modes
- Causes
- Solutions



What's next and ways to participate

- View the Plan [ONLINE](#) and submit comments

Public Review Closes on January 19

- View the Virtual Public Workshop
- View the Data Dashboard
- Come to an in-person Open House

Wednesday, January 15

- Houston City Hall (4:00pm – 6:00pm)

Thursday, January 16

- Wasilla Museum & Visitor's Center (4:00pm-6:00pm)
- Palmer Pioneer Peak Elementary School Library (4:00pm-6:00PM)



Thank you!

Joni Wilm

Email address:

joni.wilm@mbakerintl.com

Website:

ss4a.matsugov.us



*Smith Road, Palmer Ak
Photo credit: Joni Wilm*

Matanuska-Susitna Borough Comprehensive Safety Action Plan

Executive Summary



Safety in transportation is an essential component of a healthy community. A safe transportation environment is one where people can meet their daily needs, using a mode of travel that is the easiest, most convenient, and affordable for them and their families. Recognizing this, the U.S. Department of Transportation created the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program to provide funding for plans and projects that help prevent deaths and serious injuries on roadways across the country. The Comprehensive Safety Action Plan for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) is a strategic component of the SS4A program. Once developed, the plan can be used to successfully apply for SS4A-related grants to fund implementation projects, supplemental planning activities, and demonstration projects.

To ensure the MSB can use this plan to successfully apply for future SS4A grant funding, this plan is organized to clearly align with the SS4A eligibility requirements for Safety Action Plans.



Chapter 1: Leadership Commitment & Goal Setting:

Reduce fatal and serious injury crashes by 3.5% per year.



Chapter 2: Planning Structure:

The Safety Action Plan Team and their involvement in shaping the plan.



Chapter 3: Safety Analysis (Existing Conditions):

Crash data and trends in the MSB's Expanded Core Area boundary from 2018-2022 and peer city comparison.



Chapter 4: Engagement & Collaboration:

Gather information from a multi-disciplinary group of stakeholders, transportation agency professionals, and the public.



Chapter 5: Equity Considerations:

An equity analysis identifying disadvantaged populations and showing the correlation between demographics and safety risk.



Chapter 6: Policy & Process Changes:

Identifies opportunities for improving planning and funding processes to help create a safe transportation network.



Chapter 7: Strategy & Process for Project Selection:

Explore the methodology used to determine priority locations and recommended projects.



Chapter 8: Progress & Transparency:

A clear implementation strategy, actionable steps, performance measures and targets, and a process for updating the plan.



Pictured: Members of the Safety Action Plan Team help guide plan development.

To learn more about the planning process and to read the plan, visit our website

ss4a.matsugov.us



All Potential Priority Location Projects



The process for determining priority locations followed these steps:

1. Identify high injury segments and intersections based on crash data
2. Identify risk profiles for serious crashes based on crash history and other contextual information
3. Establish priority locations on the network
4. Using countermeasures and strategies identified in the plan, develop scopes for recommended infrastructure projects or supplemental plan recommendations to improve road safety

Priority locations (in order):

1. Parks Highway Corridor (Church Road to Seward Meridian Parkway)
2. Safe, Equitable Walking Routes to School (Area Wide)
3. Separated Pathway Regulatory Signs (Area Wide)
4. Westpoint Drive & Crusey Street Pedestrian Improvements
5. Bogard Road Intersection Improvements & Separated Path (Seldon to Peck or Seldon to Wasilla-Fishhook)
6. Vine Road Separated Path
7. Seldon Road and Church Road Intersection Improvements
8. Arctic Avenue Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements (Glenn Highway to Palmer Airport Road)
9. Hollywood Road Safety Improvements (Big Lake Road to Vine Road)
10. Clapp Street Safety Improvements (Curtis Menard Sports Center to Laurie Avenue)
11. E. Seldon Road Safety Improvements (Windy Bottom Road to Lucille Street & Wasilla-Fishhook to Bogard)
12. Swanson Avenue Complete Street (Parks Highway to Crusey Street)
13. Green Forest Drive Improvements
14. 49th State Street Separated Path
15. Big Lake Road Intersection Improvements
16. Local Road Speed Management Plan (Area Wide)



PC Reso 24-33 Comments

HANDOUT



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Natural Resources

DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION
MAT-SU / COPPER BASIN AREA OFFICE

7278 E. Bogard Rd.
Wasilla, AK 99654
Main: 907.745.3975
Fax: 907.745.0938

Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly
Planning Commission
350 E Dehlia Ave.
Palmer, AK 99645

January 3, 2025

Dear Mat Su Borough Assembly | Planning Commission

On behalf of the Division of Natural Resources, Department of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR, Alaska State Parks) we are submitting these comments in reference to Matanuska – Susitna Borough Planning Commission Resolution NO. 24-33, for the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) within the Denali State Park Special Land Use Planning District.

Alaska State Parks would like to submit these written comments for the record as you consider the CUP for Ark@Denali. Firstly, DPOR would like to make clear that Alaska State Parks does not typically comment on the private development on private lands in or adjacent to our state lands.

With that said, DPOR would like to clarify a few points that were made in a letter dated Dec 19, 2024, from the Boutet Company and the draft resolution that is before you for consideration on January 6th, 2024.

DPOR appreciates the efforts that the planners of this development have made to date regarding potential impacts to the adjacent K'esugi Ken Campground and the surrounding environments of the park. It should be noted however that staff are concerned with a few elements that have been presented to the Assembly that will affect our park and park users.

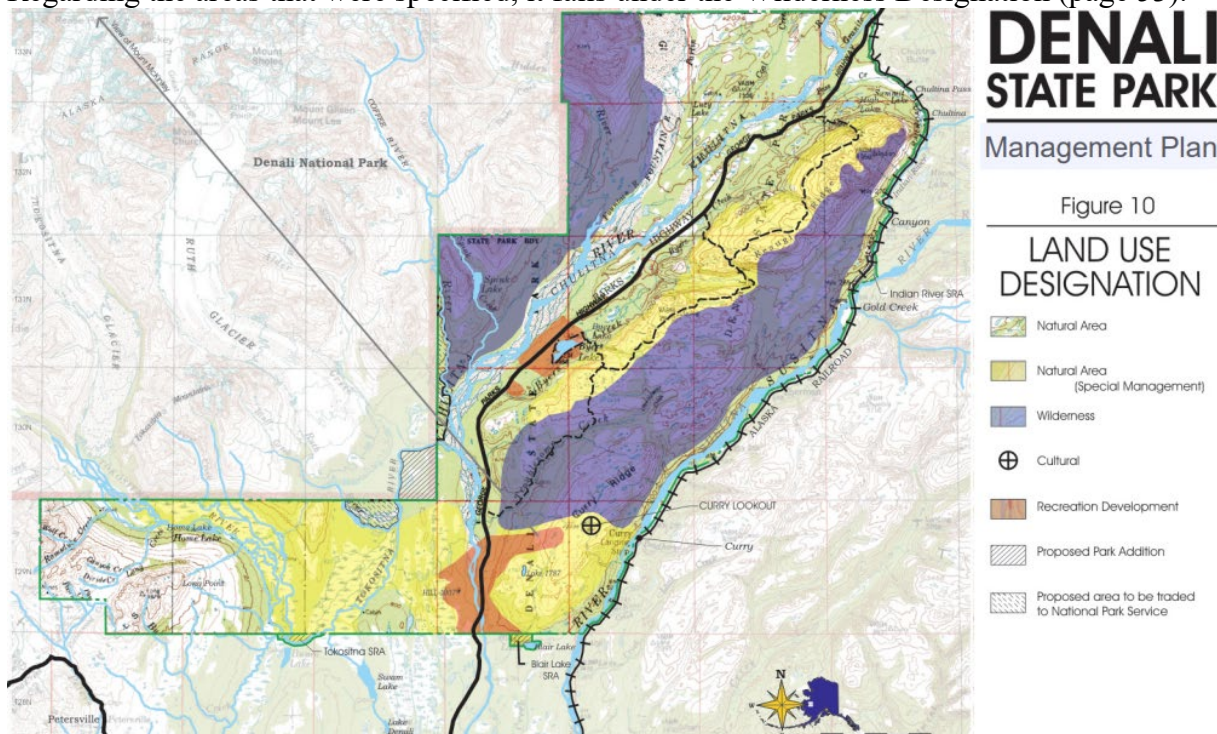
Helicopter Operations ~ Currently there are no FAA flight restrictions within Denali State Park. Should flight seeing operations become successful at Ark@Denali, staff may need to monitor the impacts on the K'esugi Ken Campground and reserve the right to request that FAA restrictions be put in place. Furthermore, it should be noted that the FAA does have flight restrictions over Denali National Park and Preserve which request a minimum altitude of 2,000' above the surface of lands and waters. The boundary of Denali National Park and Preserve is relatively close to the Denali State Park boundary and the effects noted in FAA Advisory Circular (AC 91-36C) may apply to Denali State Park in the future.

Another element in the applicants' documents note that helicopters would not land East of the Parks Highway. DPOR wishes to reference our regulations that prohibit any helicopter landings within Denali State Park without a Commercial Use Permit.

The Management Plan for Denali State Park (DSP) and applicable regulations prohibit the use of helicopters within DSP for commercial purposes.

For your reference, the Management Plan can be accessed here: [Denali State Park Management Plan](#).

Regarding the areas that were specified, it falls under the Wilderness Designation (page 53).



Within this designation, helicopter operations are deemed incompatible except for park management, research, and emergency purposes (page 63).

Activity/Facility	Natural	Wilderness	Cultural	Recreation Development
Helicopter Operations. Landing and take-off of rotary-blade aircraft to provide access to the park if authorized by the Director. ²¹ Practice landings prohibited by park regulation.	Conditionally compatible. Except for park management, research, and emergency purposes, landings limited to gravel bars or beaches on the Tokositna, Chulitna, and Susitna rivers if authorized by the Director. Under Alternative B, one helicopter landing zone may be designated in conjunction with the Tokositna backcountry lodge.	Not compatible , except for park management, research, and emergency purposes.	Not compatible, except for park management, research, and emergency purposes.	Same as Natural

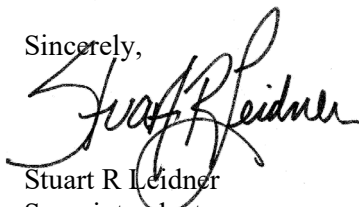
Furthermore, regulation 11 AAC 20.410(c) states: “A person may land a helicopter in Denali State Park if authorized by the director under 11 AAC 18.010.” Regulation 11 AAC 18.010 pertains to Special Use Permits (non-commercial) and is limited to park management, research, and emergency purposes.

Gravel Access Ramp ~ In the letter from The Boutet Company, it states on the third page that they would develop a gravel access ramp. DPOR would request that the company provides verification of their boundaries. Staff's review of the boundaries as they currently appear, a gravel access ramp may encroach on state lands. It is difficult to ascertain from imagery, and DPOR assumes that the area has been completely surveyed and would like to verify that their proposed access is in fact completely on private land. The concern is that their boundary may not extend to a point where their guests can hand launch a raft or other means of floating the Chulitna that it would require requesting a Special Use Permit for access across state lands. Currently, under state law DPOR would not be allowed to provide a private easement across state lands for that purpose. Any such access must be available to all public to access regardless of whether they are staying at the campground. The applicants would be required to submit a Special Use Permit application that would be adjudicated under our current laws and authority.

Bears ~ On page 4 of the same letter, DPOR wishes to clear up any confusion of the roll of our state park law enforcement. Bear dens and monitoring of said sites is the responsibility of Alaska Department of Fish and Game. State Park Law Enforcement rangers do not have authority, nor have staff historically monitored bear dens. DPOR confers with Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Alaska Wildlife Troopers as needed to address problem bears. Nor does DPOR have Park Rangers who are assigned to monitor in-holding properties and as such, staff will not be monitoring bear activity within this commercial development.

Furthermore, included in the Matanuska – Susitna Borough Planning Commission Resolution NO. 24-33 on page 13 0 19 (beginning on 221 of 236) stating that the park will implement a bear safety plan. DPOR asks that this be clarified to state that the applicant or private operators are responsible for said plan so as not to be confused with Alaska State Parks.

Sincerely,



Stuart R. Leidner
Superintendent
Mat Su | Copper River Basin Region

Cc: Ricky Gease
Matt Wedeking
Wendy Sailors

From: [Peggy Horton](#)
To: [9-AAL-FAASI \(FAA\)](#)
Cc: [9-AWA-NoiseOmbudsman \(FAA\)](#)
Subject: RE: Question on helicopter noise
Date: Friday, January 3, 2025 10:36:00 AM
Attachments: [DNR Comments 10-28-24.pdf](#)
[image001.png](#)

Hello Mr. Pennie,

Thank you for responding to my email. I have attached the correspondence I received from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding their comments on the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application for the campground facility. Nikki Potter represents DNR. They did not specifically address the addition of the helipad or helicopter tours within the state park. The applicant for this CUP has also been in contact with DNR and has learned that there are certain permits the campground will need to obtain from them to operate fully.

I understand that DNL stands for Day-Night Average Sound Level, which is a metric used to measure cumulative noise exposure over a 24-hour period. It represents the average noise level on a typical day of the year based on annual aircraft operations.

My previous email aimed to provide information to help the Planning Commission understand the likely noise levels at the proposed helipad, which is located 300 feet from the Parks Highway. The public hearing for this matter is scheduled for Monday, January 6, 2025, at 6 p.m. Alaska Standard Time. I believe you have provided sufficient information in your email below, especially considering that the cutoff for any new submissions is noon today. I truly appreciate the research you've conducted and thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Peggy Horton
Current Planner
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
350 E. Dahlia Avenue
Palmer AK 99645
907-861-7862

From: 9-AAL-FAASI (FAA) <9-AAL-FAASI@faa.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 3, 2025 9:49 AM

To: Peggy Horton <Peggy.Horton@matsugov.us>
Cc: 9-AWA-NoiseOmbudsman (FAA) <9-AWA-NoiseOmbudsman@faa.gov>
Subject: FW: Question on helicopter noise

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Greetings Ms. Horton,

My name is Ryan Pennie, I am the local FAA Alaskan Regional Community Outreach representative. Your inquiry was forwarded to my office for assistance.

A couple aspects determine the best way forward. To ensure we get the right answer and process through the correct authorities.

The unknown type of helicopter will be a factor in the time the process could take.

Three aspects of your query may determine what that process is.

1. "I am processing a permit for the construction and operation of an RV "campground with related amenities within Denali State Park."
2. "The property is owned privately. It is an in-holding within the State Park."
3. "Department of Natural Resources."

Can you please keep me informed of what the DNR has informed you of, and who you are corresponding with there?

FAA guidance for helicopter noise that I am aware of follows:

"For helicopters, the FAA has noise standards for a Stage 3 helicopter that became effective on May 5, 2014. These more stringent standards apply to new type helicopters and are consistent with ICAO Annex 16, Volume 1 Chapter 8 and Chapter 11." That is the last update I currently have.

- **DNL 65 dBA and below:** The FAA considers this level to be compatible with residential land uses.
- **DNL 65–75 dBA:** The FAA considers this level to be "normally unacceptable" and requires special review and abatement measures.
- **DNL 75 dBA and above:** The FAA considers this level to be "unacceptable" except in very limited circumstances.

I am researching whether there is anything more recent to supersede this. Please use the email address 9-AAL-FAASI@FAA.gov for future correspondence.

I look forward to assisting you in the matter.

Kindly,

J. “Ryan” Pennie
FAA Alaskan Region
Community Engagement Specialist
222 West 7th Ave, Box 14
Anchorage, AK 99513
Main: 907 271-5645



From: 9-AWA-NoiseOmbudsman (FAA) <9-AWA-NoiseOmbudsman@faa.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, December 24, 2024 4:10 AM
To: Pennie, Jared R (FAA)
Subject: Fw: Question on helicopter noise

Hey Ryan—

Can you please forward this to the right people in your office?

Happy holidays!

From: Peggy Horton <Peggy.Horton@matsugov.us>
Sent: Monday, December 23, 2024 8:12 PM
To: 9-AWA-NoiseOmbudsman (FAA) <9-AWA-NoiseOmbudsman@faa.gov>
Subject: Question on helicopter noise

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good Morning,

I work for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the local government planning organization in southcentral Alaska. I am processing a permit for the construction and operation of an RV campground with related amenities within Denali State Park. Here's a link to the application material for the permit. [Ark @ Denali RV Campground Resort CUP](#) The campground is proposing a helipad for helicopter tours. They do not currently have a third-party helicopter service, so they don't know the exact type of helicopter to be used for the tours. The property is owned privately. It is an in-holding within the State Park. I'm in contact with the Department of Natural Resources for information on what is and isn't allowed within the State Park.

We have received some public concerns about expected noise from the helicopters reaching the highway that runs alongside the proposed campground and the state hiking trail system nearby. The helipad is located about 300 feet from the local highway, an interstate. A 50-foot-

wide vegetated buffer will provide visual screening from the public highway.

I've already looked at Chris Corbisier's Living with Noise article on the FWHA website. I understand the noise coming from the highway. Would you be able to give me a dB range we should expect from the helipad when the helicopter is on the helipad? If you can calculate the helicopter dB range expected at the highway 300 to 400 feet from the helipad, that would be helpful also. These are tour helicopters, not ones carrying cargo.

My understanding is that our office can only regulate noise when the helicopter is on the ground because the FAA regulates noise in the air. Could you confirm that assumption and provide any information concerning noise from tour helicopters?

Respectfully,
Peggy Horton
Current Planner
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
350 E. Dahlia Avenue
Palmer AK 99645
907-861-7862



Talkeetna Community Council, Inc.

A non-profit, community service organization

January 2nd, 2025

Re: Resolution 24-33 A Conditional Use Permit In Accordance With MSB 17.17 – Denali State Park Special Land Use District For The Construction And Operation Of An RV Campground Resort Within The Park's Boundaries. The Site Is Located At Milepost 135.7, 4852 North Parks Highway, Tax ID #U04998000L02-4 (Staff: Peggy Horton, Current Planner)

Submitted via email to: Lacie Olivieri, msb.planning.commission@matsugov.us, peggy.Horton@matsugov.us

To Planning Commission Members Glenn, Allen, Koan, Shane, McCabe, Fernandez, and Scoggin:

This letter is a follow-up letter to the one we submitted on Dec. 5th, 2024 in which we requested that the Planning Commission extend the public comment period for Resolution 24-33 regarding the Conditional Use Permit for the Construction and Operation of an RV Campground Resort Within Denali State Park's Boundaries. We are making that same request again today.

Although the planning commission did technically extend the deadline by pushing it back to Jan. 6th, it did not do so in any meaningful way to allow for input by community councils and area businesses that would be affected by this CUP. To our knowledge, no community councils have met or (will have met) between the date that the notice was sent out (December 19th) and the date of the next meeting (Jan. 6th, with comments due by Jan. 2). To date, we haven't even seen that the nearest impacted neighbor, Denali State Park, has been able to weigh in with comments or concerns.

The Talkeetna Community Council requests that the Planning Commission extend the deadline for public comment on Resolution 24-33 and delay a vote until the next Planning Commission meeting in February (at an absolute minimum) Our Council (as well as other Northern Valley Community Councils) deserves to have the opportunity to listen to the issues and concerns of our community members and businesses that would be impacted by this proposed new development.. This development has the potential to significantly impact our community and business members, as well as a vast number of visitors who use and do business in or near Denali State Park.

Talkeetna Community Council, Inc.
P.O. Box 608, Talkeetna AK 99676

Although we have not been able to publicly discuss this issue at a community council meeting, that doesn't mean we haven't been hearing about it from our local community members. There have been a number of concerns raised about the development, but a particular concern that has been brought up by many individuals is that the introduction of a helicopter tour operation at that location is incompatible with the values, purposes and uses of Denali State Park. Many folks have expressed concern that the helicopter tour operation would diminish the quality of the user experience within the park, as well as be disruptive to wildlife. The application refers only to a "third party operator" - who is the third party operator, and what kind of safety and track record do they have doing business in Alaska? These are just some of the questions being raised, undoubtedly there are many more.

This process has seemingly been rushed from the start, at least in terms of public involvement. We're not suggesting to stop development, but we do encourage responsible development. A project of this magnitude, in this magnificent but fragile location, deserves to have a fair and honest attempt to engage the public so that it can be developed in the best way possible. We respectfully request that you delay any further decisions on this project until affected community councils and other stakeholders can hold meaningful discussions about the potential impacts.

Thank you for hearing our concerns and thank you for your service,



Jonathan Korta
Chair, Talkeetna Community Council
jon@talkeetnacouncil.org
(907) 203-2532



Denali Citizens Council

www.denalicitizens.org * mail@denalicitizens.org * P.O. Box 78, Denali Park, AK 99755 * (907) 244-2510

January 3, 2025

RE: Conditional Use Permit in Denali State Park, milepost 135.7, 4852 North Parks Highway

To the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission:

The Denali Citizens Council Board of Directors opposes the granting of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) that would allow construction of a helipad and associated helicopter usage as part of the development proposed by the Boutet Company.

As you know – and have recognized in code by creating the Denali State Park Special Land Use District – the state park is incredibly important for outdoor recreation, particularly for Alaskans and residents of local communities who value the chance to camp, hike, fish, paddle, and float in a natural setting. Ease of access by road, incredible scenery, chances to explore a variety of terrain by foot, both flatwater and swift water boating opportunities, wonderful places to camp – these are all features that help make Denali State Park uniquely beloved.

It is unfortunate that the development proposal includes provision for a helicopter landing pad with multiple flights per day. There are few more disruptive activities for non-motorized recreational users than helicopter flights. Particularly in such close proximity to K'esugi Ken Campground, Troublesome Creek, and associated trails, the flights represent a noisy disturbance that benefits only a few people at the expense of the many. Impacts are likely to reach beyond the immediate area to include people camping and paddling at Byers Lake, hiking Kesugi Ridge, and certainly floating on the Chulitna River. It would be worth the Commission's time to understand better how extensive an area may be impacted by the noise from a single helicopter. We suggest that you contact National Park Service soundscape monitoring staff at Denali National Park where they have conducted extensive and authoritative research on this topic.

Helicopter use seems to fall through a gap in the Borough code for the Denali State Park Special Land Use District. While the proposed RV park is clearly identified under permitted conditional uses in the code at 17.17.060, helicopter use or aircraft facilities are unmentioned. We would argue that the level of noise created by helicopters fits best under the "prohibited uses" described in 17.17.070, as it is closer to an industrial use in terms of its impact than any of the conditionally permitted recreational uses. At the very least, the helipad and associated helicopter activity do not meet the general standard articulated in 17.17.180 for conditional use permits, that "(1) the conditional use will not detract from the value, character or integrity of Denali State Park." This use definitely will detract from the value, character AND integrity of the park.

Meanwhile, there is no shortage of opportunities for flightseeing experiences in the area that don't affect the State Park, with flights originating in Talkeetna, Healy, and outside the Denali National



Park entrance. No one who wants such an experience – and can afford it – is likely to be displaced by disallowing helicopter flights from this location.

Please support the many over the few. We hope that you will deny the portion of the CUP application for helipads and helicopter flights.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

DCC Board of Directors

Scott Richardson

Steve Carwile

Nancy Bale

Nancy Russell

Charlie Loeb

December 31, 2024

PO Box 766
Talkeetna, AK 99676

TO: MSB Planning Commission
FROM: John Strassenburgh

RE: ARK Conditional Use Permit on an inholding within Denali State Park (DSP) located at MP 135.7 of the Parks Highway, directly across from K'esugi Ken, PC Resolution 24-33.

I am addressing the revised Staff Report dated December 26, 2024 and PC Resolution 24-33 and an update of the application materials dated December 19, 2024, all of which are contained in the PC packet for its January 6, 2025 meeting. None of these revised materials were made available to the public until the afternoon of December 27, 2024.

There have been some constructive revisions to the ARK Plan Letter¹ and Borough Staff Report/Res 24-33. These changes came about as a direct result of public comments submitted to Planning in the week preceding the PC's December 16, 2024 meeting, postponed to January 6, 2025. These comments were submitted barely in time for the December 16th meeting because of inadequate public notice back in October. The noticing problem and need for postponement was partially explained by Staff at the at the December 16th meeting. But it is important to also note that the notice was also improper because staff originally did not follow precedent to notice the Northern Susitna Valley Community Councils² even though the authority to do so is provided in Code.

This cascading noticing deficiency leaves the public perpetually behind the curve, only being allowed to comment after the Staff Report/Res 24-33 had been written when it is virtually a done deal. Public comment is supposed to help inform the Staff Report/Res 24-33, not react to it. As a result of the improper notice last October and the disjointed way Staff and PC has tried to rectify the problem, the public's right to participate fully in the process has been greatly diminished.

For example, of the 7 community councils noticed as a result of the postponement of the public hearing, NONE of the councils were scheduled for a meeting between their notice date of December 19th and the Hearing date of January 6th, and therefore none of these community councils are able to comment.

¹ See December 19, 2024 letter from the Boutet Company and signed by Tim Alley on behalf of the owner of the subject property.

² See Dale Van Doren file number CUP2007-0029, which was a CUP application to build a tourism hotel on a parcel that adjoins the Subject Parcel (i.e., ARK) on its south.

I attended the December 16th PC meeting and it was evident that the public hearing was postponed in order to withstand possible appeal, rather than because the PC wanted to hear the perspectives of the general public, notably from those who use the Park and are knowledgeable about the Park. I think it is important not to lose sight of benefits of public input. Decisions are better and more broadly serve the public interest when the public is meaningfully engaged in the process.

Of note, in spite of lack of public notice and due to a KTNA news report, twenty members of the public submitted comment for the December 16th PC meeting. But the comments were classified as “Handouts”, which means they were not in time to be meaningfully considered at the meeting. Due to postponement, staff and the applicant had time to read the comments and make a number of changes in both the ARK Plan Letter and the Staff Report/Res 24-33 to reflect at least some of this new information.

Helicopter Tours

With respect to the ARK’s helicopter tours, the revisions cleaned up the language to clarify that the 8 tours per day at intervals of about one hour between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm was a maximum limit and to require certain flight limitations. But that doesn’t alter the fact that helicopter’s are very intrusive to both the eye and the ear, and are incompatible with the value, character, and integrity of Denali State Park.

Unfortunately, neither the ARK Plan nor the Staff Report embraced the public’s wish to eliminate entirely or even reduce the frequency of helicopter tours to and from the subject property.

I appreciate that ARK states that its (third party) helicopters will be permitted to land and take off only from the west and that its helicopters will not be allowed to fly over K’esugi Ken campground or over adjacent inholdings.

However, the language of both the ARK Plan and the Staff Report/Res 24-33 is not clear as to whether ARK will permit its (third party) helicopters to fly over Curry Ridge and K’esugi Ridge. The Staff Report itself at page 19 of the packet (page 10 of the Staff Report) acknowledges the adverse effect of helicopters on both Park visitors and wildlife, as follows:

Helicopters can be noisy, and flying over sensitive areas like the nearby trails and campgrounds could negatively impact the experience of those using those facilities. Additionally, the noise could disturb both wildlife and visitors enjoying the natural sights and surroundings. Staff recommends a condition of approval that aligns with the applicant’s statement regarding the flight paths and frequency of operations for the proposed helicopter tours. This would not limit the flight path of helicopters during emergencies.

I **request** that the standard of approval that allows helicopter tours be removed from the ARK Plan and the Staff Report/Res 24-33, and replaced with a standard of approval that prohibits helicopters except in an emergency.

Failing that, I **request** that the frequency of helicopter tours be reduced to one every two hours rather than one every hour.

Regardless of frequency, if helicopter tours are allowed at all, I **request** that the ARK Plan and the Staff Report (or final Decision Document that comes out of the PC for this CUP) and Res 24-33 be written to make it clear (as it does with K'esugi Ken Campground and adjacent inholdings) that ARK not permit its (third party) helicopters to fly over Denali State Park, particularly over the trails and campgrounds.³

A helicopter operation on the subject property would be in full view and earshot of the most used parts of Denali State Park; the power up noise of takeoff and the constant whump whump whump of a helicopter would be heard for miles. In general, people living in the Northern Sunitna Valley are accustomed to the noise of passing aircraft, but such noise is sporadic, infrequent, and at muted by distance and relatively high altitude. The proposed ARK helicopter operation would be "in your face" almost continually on a daily basis between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, which coincides with the time frame that most people use Denali State Park.

Bear Awareness Protocols

Although the "Bear Awareness" protocols in the revised ARK Plan letter and the Staff Report/Res 24-33 are a significant improvement The current Staff Report, as does the ARK Plan establishes basic common sense "bear aware" protocols. These protocols are designed to protect public safety within and beyond the subject property. And not only humans... the bears are better protected as well, from becoming food-conditioned and inevitably getting into trouble and shot.

However, the ARK bear aware proposal is problematic because it shifts much of its responsibility for implementing and the ongoing monitoring of the program to the Denali State Park rangers at K'esugi Ken. There is no indication that Denali State Park management has been contacted and agrees to provide staffing for this purpose, even if ARK agrees to reimburse the Park.

Proper Bear protocols is a very important public and bear-safety necessity, and, accordingly I request that the viability of ARK's plan be verified prior to consideration by the PC of this CUP.

³ It is very important to protect the major trails and facilities from noise and viewshed impairment, including but not limited to: Little Coal Creek Trail, Ermine Trail, Cascade Trail, Byers Lake Loop Trail, Troublesome Creek Trail, Curry Ridge Trails originating at K'esugi Ken, the high country trails that go between Little Coal Creek and K'esugi Ken, Rocky Knob, Lake 1787, Byers Lake Campground and Public Use Cabins, and Byers Lake. These trails and facilities are all on top of or on the west side of the ridges. In addition, helicopters should be kept away from Denali Viewpoint South off the Parks Highway.

Draft Res 24-33 at p. 13 states that the park will implement the program:

WHEREAS, according to the application material, the park will implement a bear awareness program that includes informational pamphlets and briefings at the check-in station for all visitors, detailing requirements for food and garbage storage to minimize attraction to bears;

State Parks is short staffed and underfunded. The above WHEREAS is unrealistic. The basis for this WHEREAS is probably the statements at page 4 of the ARK Plan letter: “The staff will communicate with the Rangers on K’esugi ken Campground which is watching for bear dens” and “a Park Ranger is assigned to monitor in-holding properties throughout the park and will monitor activities as needed.”

I suggest that Staff take a harder look at this, and contact the Mat Su State Parks Superintendent, to ensure that responsibility for the Bear Awareness program is clearly defined.

Additional comments on Draft Res 24-33

Page 14

WHEREAS, Denali State Park is carefully managed by state agencies. The state’s oversight reduces the risk of non-compliance and ensures all necessary permits are thoroughly reviewed and obtained prior to use;

I don’t know where this statement came from and I don’t see how this WHEREAS is relevant to this ARK development.

Page 16, number 6 under THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

The proposed commercial use does not detract from the value, character, or integrity of Denali State Park (MSB 17.17.180(A)(1)).

I disagree. Without question, helicopter tours are incompatible with Denali State Park and would detract from its value, character, or integrity of Denali State Park.

Page 18, number 6 under BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

6. Helicopter tours, regardless of the originating point, are limited to one per hour and no more than eight per day. Tour helicopters are not permitted to fly into or out of the subject parcel from the east, over K’esugi Ken Campground, or adjacent private lands. This condition is not meant to limit the flight path of helicopters during emergencies.

I **request** that the PC **amend** this BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED statement to specifically state that ARK will not permit its (third party) helicopters to fly over the ridgetops or over the western slopes of Denali State Park. That’s where the visitors are and where the trails and facilities are,

and that is where most folks will be adversely affected by helicopter noise and viewshed impairment.

Page 19, number 7 under BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

7. The operation shall comply with the maximum permissible sound level limits per MSB 8.52—Noise, Amplified Sound, and Vibration.

The Borough Code refers to a Sound-Amplifying Device when it stipulates decibel limits. It is doubtful, especially considering the examples of “sound-amplifying device” provided in Borough code, that a helicopter would be considered a sound-amplifying device, so it is doubtful that Code would apply in this case. So this standard of approval would be of no value in protecting against helicopter noise.

Conclusion

ARK derives considerable benefit from the public by virtue of its location within Denali State Park. With benefit, comes responsibility to the Park: To be a good neighbor; not detract from the value and wilderness character of this beautiful park, not diminish quality of the park visitor experience. I ask that ARK not bring helicopters to Denali State Park.

Sincerely,

//s//

John Strassenburgh

From: [cici.schoenberger](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); [MSB Planning Commission](#)
Subject: CUP for the proposed RV Park near Denali State Park
Date: Thursday, January 2, 2025 4:44:20 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To the Planning Commission:

I am writing to express my opposition to potential approval of a CUP for the operation of Helicopter Tours and construction of a helipad. I am a person who uses both K'esugi Ken and Byers State Parks and their hiking trails on a regular basis. While some efforts to mitigate the impact of the noise of the helicopters appear to have been made, it does not seem to me that helicopter tours are compatible with the enjoyment that I, and so many others, get from hiking the trails in the relative peace of the area. I understand that there are many ways to enjoy the wilderness, but this seems to be an unnecessary addition to a well-used area that is so accessible in other ways. I am asking that permission to operate the Helicopter Tours not be granted.

I also must express my dismay over the lack of consideration for the time frame of this hearing. It seems that the community has been given very little opportunity to hear the pros and cons of this proposal since the meeting was scheduled before any of the most impacted communities in the Northern portion of the Borough has had an opportunity to meet. Our communities deserve more consideration and respect from the Borough. This is not the first time this has happened and it must stop. Community members need to have information to properly decide and then to express an opinion so that the various Board entities can understand the feelings of those directly impacted by their decisions.

Thank you for your consideration,

Cici (Lucille) Schoenberger
Talkeetna

From: [Trisha](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: MSB 17.17 -- Denali State Park Special Land Use District
Date: Friday, January 3, 2025 10:23:45 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Hello,

My comments in regard to the CUP request within the Denali State Park Special Land Use District:

The establishment of a helipad and subsequent helicopter tour activity does not seem consistent with desired use and overall experience outlined in the Denali State Park Management plan. I agree with the sentiment already expressed: keep the helicopters at the airports.

The public comment period and process for this issue fell short. Outside of this particular CUP request I would ask the Borough to review its public comment/review process and make changes to allow adequate notice, specifically when the issue concerns lands that are of broad interest to larger populations. Like a state park. Many community councils and committees meet monthly - and are made up of volunteers - making it difficult to encourage comment or provide information in a timely manner. Many of us no longer have access to print newspapers - like the Frontiersman - as we continue to navigate the changing ways we get information. I would also recommend submitting comment opportunities and deadlines to KTNA, the Upper Susitna Valley's only public radio station. They offer an Announcement page just for such items of community interest. These are read over the air three times a day during the week. There is currently no upper valley newspaper.

There were so many well thought out and well written comments in the previous round of public input that I feel my other opinions have been stated, and I continue to support those letters. My two main points above I wanted to be sure I expressed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Trisha Costello
Talkeetna

Comment on proposed ARK development in Denali State Park, PC Res. No. 24-33

From Bill Sherwonit <akgriz@hotmail.com>

Date Mon 12/30/2024 7:57 PM

To Peggy Horton <peggy.horton@matsugov.us>; MSB Planning Commission <msb.planning.commission@matsugov.us>

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Members of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission,

I'm writing in response to a proposed commercial-use "RV Campground Resort" on an inholding within Denali State Park at mile 135.7 of the Parks Highway. I came late to this particular issue and only because a friend who lives in the area notified me, so I may not have all the terminology and details, but my understanding is that an entity named ARK or ARKDenali is seeking a conditional use permit for this development, which I believe is given as PC Res. No. 24-33.

I have several concerns, including what I (and many other Alaskans who value Denali State Park) consider an insufficient notice and comment period. From what I've been able to learn, the borough sent out an initial notice on Oct. 25, 2024, but that notice was somehow sent to only a few recipients and no copies of the notice were received by residents of the northern Susitna Valley, nor by community councils in that area, nor by those who recreate in Denali State Park and are advocates for that parkland.

By the time information about the proposed development was more widely circulated, it was already December; but enough people commented on the original CUP with their concerns that it was revised. And on Dec. 27, a packet with the revised staff report and other information was posted on the planning commission's website. That leaves the public only seven days—seven!—to digest the newly revised information and prepare comments before the Jan. 3 deadline. Making things worse is that this time frame occurs during the holiday season.

At the same time, it appears that the state agency that manages Denali State Park, the DNR's Division of Parks, has not yet submitted comments and it's uncertain, as I write this, whether the park's superintendent, other staff, or Division of Parks administrators (including Director of State Parks Ricky Gease) will have the opportunity to comment by that deadline. It seems the borough's planning commission would want input from the primary land manager of the area surrounding this proposed development.

Given all that, I urge the Planning Commission to postpone any decisions on the proposed development until the public and the state agency that manages Denali State Park are given sufficient time to comment and/or testify in person. The way this process has taken place is unacceptable to me and, I would suggest, to many others who care deeply about Denali State Park and the recreational opportunities it provides and wildlands that it protects.

All that said, I will comment on one aspect of the proposed development that is deeply concerning to me and, I would argue, is an inappropriate activity throughout much of Denali State Park, which is widely considered one of the gems in the Alaska State Parks system. That is, the proposed helicopter tours.

Helicopter tours would conflict greatly with many of the most popular summer activities in Denali State Park, namely hiking, backpacking, boating, and camping and would intrude upon and deeply compromise the park's wilderness character in its more remote areas, for instance Kesugi and Curry Ridges and the Peters Hills in the park's western reaches. I would argue that helicopter tours within the park should be disallowed. But if permitted along the park's highway corridor, it must be made clear that they stay a considerable distance from the Kesugi-Curry Ridges area, Byers Lake, and the Peters Hills. Popular trails that connect with the Kesugi-Curry Ridges complex must also be off-limits to helicopter traffic, from the Little Coal Creek Trail in the north to the Cascade Trail, Troublesome Creek Trail and Curry Ridge Trail.

I also have concerns about bear-safety and proper food-storage at the development, to minimize bear-human conflicts and harm to either people or bears. But for now I will emphasize my opposition to the helicopter tours, particularly in Denali State Park's wilder areas. And again I ask the borough Planning Committee to enact a more realistic public-comment period and postpone any decisions on the proposed development.

In ending I'll note that my relationship with Denali State Park goes back to the late 1980s and that I've spent many days within the park, been an advocate for its wild values, and written about the park in a wide range of publications, from newspapers to magazines and books. Thanks for considering my comments and perspectives,

Bill Sherwonit

Anchorage, Alaska

akgriz@hotmail.com

comments Res 24-33

From Kathleen Fleming <redstar62n@gmail.com>

Date Tue 12/31/2024 10:58 AM

To Peggy Horton <peggy.horton@matsugov.us>; MSB Planning Commission
<msb.planning.commission@matsugov.us>

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To: Planning Commission

Re: PC Res #24-33

I love Denali State Park. The easy access hikes, the views, the blueberries, the wildlife, the peace and quiet.

There may be a need for additional camping and RV sites in the region, since the existing park drive-in campsites are so popular. A focus on low impact on wildlife is important, and I appreciate efforts to avoid bear encounters.

The impact of any helicopter operations that close to/within the park cannot be mitigated. It should not be allowed.

We have some real jewels in the Borough. They are precious largely because of their natural ambiance. We should not elevate commercialization to the point of tarnishing these gems, like Denali State Park.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Kathleen Fleming

40 year resident of the upper Su Valley

Email your comments to both peggy.horton@matsugov.us and to msb.planning.commission@matsugov.us. Comments are due by **noon** on Friday, January 3rd. Your comment should be addressed to the Planning Commission and include PC Res. No. 24-33 in the subject line. You only need to make 2 or 3 points.

From: [Caitlin Elison](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: MSB 17.17 Denali State Park Special Land Use District
Date: Thursday, January 2, 2025 8:24:00 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Good evening,

I'd like to comment on MSB 17.17.

I own land west of the parks highway at MP 124 and spend a significant amount of my weekends out there. Currently the air traffic is very high. On a daily summer average I see a minimum of 10 Turban Otters flying over head on their way to and from Denali on any given day. This doesn't include any private aircraft that also frequent the area.

The air traffic is already very high and if helicopter tours are added they will severely impact the area with an already over crowded airspace.

At what point do we say enough is enough? Where is the line in the sand?

The place the "Ark" doesn't add value to our parks. We already have places to camp in the area. And there are already permitted tour companies operating in the area.

I urge the assembly to not approve this special land use permit.

Thank you,

Caitlin Elison
907-350-1569

From: [Doug Moore](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Public comment for CUP for the Boutet Company Denali Park SPUD
Date: Thursday, January 2, 2025 9:11:46 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

I am writing to encourage the Planning Commission to grant the Conditional Use Permit for The Boutet Company Inc, for Yoland D'Oyen, application for an RV park at Milepost 135.7, 4852 North Parks Highway.

The permit application spells out exactly what we need in the northern Susitna Valley. We need more opportunities for tourist of all types to be able to enjoy the splendor that Alaska offers. This development will provide employment opportunities for locals, add to the bed and property tax. In addition the development will provide much needed additional camping spaces and much needed cabins for use in the very underdeveloped Denali State Park.

It is a perfect place for this type of development. It is near the highway and on private property. It does not detract from the State Park in any way. If completed as planned it will clean up one of the few eyesores within the Parks Highway corridor running through Denali National Park.

I know there is concern about helicopter use in the area, but the application causes zero concern for me. The only use of the State Park in the summer west of the highway is rafting on the Chulitna River. Overflights at cruising speed will cause a few minutes of noise pollution that rafters may encounter if they are in the right place at the right time. The east side of the highway, which the application says they will remain out of, is where all the trails and activities are. Honestly, that helicopter noise is going to be minimal compared to all the truck traffic ascending and descending the many hills in this area. It's a highway corridor, not an irreplaceable wilderness area.

I highly encourage the Planning Commission to approve this application,

Sincerely,
Doug Moore
HC 89 Box 8574
Talkeetna AK 99676
cell 907-841-3200

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This email has been checked for viruses by AVG antivirus software.
www.avg.com

From: [Brian Okonek](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); [MSB Planning Commission](#)
Subject: ARK Conditional Use Permit application in Denali State Park
Date: Friday, January 3, 2025 10:11:18 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Dear MSB Planning Commission,

Thank you for considering a few of the recommendations that you received concerning ARK@Denali's proposal for development on private property within Denali State Park.

The process for the public to weigh in on the ARK proposal and the MSB staff report in a meaningful manner has been poorly executed. It was nice that the comment period was extended and that upper valley community councils were notified, but because this period fell within the Christmas and New Year's holiday and before any community council meetings took place it did not allow the public to participate fully. Denali State Park is cherished by many residents of the borough, the State and visitors from far away. There should have been a much more robust public process. It would be best to delay any decision on the ARK@Denali CUP for another month so that more of the public can comment. Denali State Park deserves to be protected from development that will degrade the "character and integrity" of the park and quality of experience for park users.

The bear/human conflict issue is really quite easy to mitigate. Educate the public about bear aware practices, require and ensure that all garbage and food is stored in bear resistant containers, keep development away from salmon streams and monitor all the above. This should be the responsibility of ARK@Denali and the MSB. State Parks monitors state land within the park and CUP holders and the MSB should monitor private lands within the park.

Helicopter landings and take offs at the proposed heliport and overflights of Denali State Park will negatively impact other user groups in the park. It is virtually impossible to regulate overflights. There are "best practices" for height of flights above the ground to mitigate disturbance to wildlife, but no one monitors or regulates it. The natural soundscape is diminishing around the world and is being overrun by mechanical noise. A helipad with eight authorized helicopter operations per day is too much. The helicopters will be heard far from the private helipad. Noise will not stop at the border of the private property.

Sincerely,

Brian Okonek

From: [NICK Power](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Denali Conditional use Permit MP 135
Date: Thursday, January 2, 2025 11:23:04 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Hello,

My family and I own property within the trapper creek glen HOA which is just South of the East West Express trail and on the west side of the Parks.

I am a long standing taxed citizen of this quaint piece of property. Over the years the noise pollution from aviation has gotten very distracting and disturbing. The helicopter operations will only make the noise pollution worse.

I've had property here for 20 years and just now caught wind of them mentioning an opportunity to comment on this. It's likely I've missed many more concerns for the area that are not seemingly properly publicized.

I spend a lot of time in this vicinity and have seen the animals reactions out of pure terror being bombed by existing aviation companies. This used to be such a beautiful area but, now it only seemingly caters to ultra rich folks whom are just coming for a quick flight through. They are blinded to the fact the noise pollution they are off putting to local wildlife and the other multitude of user's within the vicinity.

K2 aviation with their big, loud white and red airplanes are constantly polluting the air with noise.

Thanks for the opportunity to share my little ground level, tax paying experience. Please do not allow this.

Thank you,
Nick Power
907-748-4144

The Boutet Company, Inc., for Yolanda D'Oyen, submitted an application for a Conditional Use Permit under MSB 17.17—Denali State Park Special Land Use District to construct and operate an RV campground resort within the park's boundaries. The site is located at Milepost 135.7, 4852 North Parks Highway, Tax ID #U04998000L02-4.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Shoo Salasky](#)
To: [MSB Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: PC Res. No. 24-33: Comments
Date: Thursday, January 2, 2025 11:50:54 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To the Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission,

As a 46 year resident of the Upper Susitna Valley, I find it unconscionable that the Borough is even considering this permit application to operate helicopter tours within Denali State Park. A commercial operation such as this is in direct opposition to the Mission Statement of Alaska State Parks —

Mission Statement

"The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation provides outdoor recreation opportunities and conserves and interprets natural, cultural, and historic resources for the use, enjoyment, and welfare of the people."

The noise generated by multiple rotor-wing take-offs & landings daily, will only detract from the “conservation and interpretation of natural, cultural and historic resources for the use, enjoyment and welfare of the people” who come to Kesugi K’en to hike, camp, bird, photograph, rest, relax and commune with nature in one of Alaska’s premier parks.

To allow commercial helicopter tours to operate at the entrance to Kesugi K’en State Park is in direct conflict with the already existing uses for which the Park was established.

I urge you to deny this absurd permit request.

Thank you,
Sheryl Salasky
PO Box 196
Talkeetna, Alaska

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Willi Prittie](#)
To: [MSB Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: PC Res. No. 24-33: Comments
Date: Thursday, January 2, 2025 9:21:14 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To Matanusca-Susitna Borough Planning Commission

Regarding the planned RV park development just off the Parks Highway in Denali State Park near Kesugi Ken campground: I have the below comments.

Thanks to the Borough for efforts to make conditions of the Conditional Use Permit for this operation enforceable, and also to permit applicant for clarifications of their intentions. Bear awareness, bear-proof trash protocols, and water quality are important considerations for such a development.

However, I feel very strongly that the helipad and helicopter tours **SHOULD NOT** be approved! This activity within Denali State Park and so close to Kesugi Ken campground and many hiking trails in the park is completely inappropriate! According to MSB Code: 17.17.180 (A) (1) says, “(A) A conditional use may be approved only if it meets the requirements of this section in addition to any other standards required by this chapter. (1) the conditional use will not detract from the value, character or integrity of Denali State Park;” Helicopter flight noise and take offs and landings **WILL HAVE** serious negative impact on “value, character, or integrity of Denali State Park”! This is beyond question. I would remind the Borough that the Denali State Park Management Plan includes this text, “Noise from fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters travels long distances, disturbing ground-based recreationists seeking quiet and solitude.” I refer you also to MSB 17.17.180 GENERAL STANDARDS.

I am a long time Alaskan resident, and I frequently hike, backpack, and ski in the state park. I do so to enjoy quiet and the great views while I get good, healthy exercise. Noise from a helicopter operation disturbing hikers and backpackers on park trails which pretty much all face to the west where the helicopters will be flying (to say nothing of boaters on Byers Lake) is exactly the type of development use that much language in code and management plans seeks to avoid!

There is also lacking an important condition: Anyone hiking on any trail in Denali State Park needs to be protected by helicopter generate noise by a tour operator or route. I do not believe that MSB 8.52 is adequate to do so.

Thank you for your work on this, and for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Willi Prittie
Sunshine, Alaska

From: [Schiroadams](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: The Boutet Company MSB 17.17 Permit Application Comment
Date: Thursday, January 2, 2025 9:15:22 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Peggy,

If the permit for this development is issued please stipulate that public river access (put-in and take out) is required.

While this proposed development will degrade the characteristics of Alaska that visitors and locals cherish (helicopters tour noise) other aspects are reasonable. The Chulitna River access is a great idea if public access is stipulated. A Chulitna River public access is currently lacking for this section of the river and is sorely needed.

Thanks for your consideration,

Dave Schirokauer
POB 256
Healy AK 99743

907-612-0272

From: [corinne](#)
To: [MSB Planning Commission](#)
Cc: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Comment on MSB 17.17 -- Denali State Park Special Land Use District
Date: Friday, January 3, 2025 10:00:12 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To the Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission:

I am writing regarding a Conditional Use Permit for an RV Resort/Cabins/Campground/Helicopter Tour in Denali State Park (MSB 17.17 -- Denali State Park Special Land Use District).

First, I want to say that I am disappointed that the public notice on this CUP was so poorly executed. For an inholding in an outstanding state park, the impacts of a development like the one proposed affects many more people than those who own property immediately adjacent to the development. This area of Denali State Park is the most readily accessible to half the population of Alaska and to many visitors to south-central. A development here has potential to affect the experience of everyone who comes to the scenic overlooks, campgrounds, cabins, hotels, and trails in this area. I do hope that borough staff will review their procedures for noticing the public about any development with the Denali State Park Special Land Use District and think more broadly about who is affected by such proposals.

Second, I have not had time to review the entire packet so I can only comment on the proposal to have a helicopter tour operating from this site. The terrain along this portion of the Parks Highway makes that idea especially negative for other users to the area. In general, the land slopes down to the west of the highway, and up on the east side. The noise from a helicopter operating from near the highway will reverberate loudly off that upslope, which is also where most of the trails, current campgrounds, and other overnight accommodations are located, and echo over the proposed development, existing residences and accommodations, and scenic overlooks on the west side of the highway. I would imagine that anyone staying at the proposed development would prefer to drive to the sightseeing air businesses in Talkeetna, less than an hour away, versus hearing helicopters coming and going outside their campsite or cabin all day long. Everyone else staying or recreating nearby would prefer that, too.

Permitting a helicopter tour operation from this site is short-sighted and will negatively impact the many users of Denali State Park. **I urge the Planning Commission to send the proposal back to the developer with a firm note that a helicopter tour operation is incompatible with the uses and values of the Denali State Park Special Land Use District.**

Sincerely,
Corinne Smith
PO Box 991
Talkeetna, Alaska 99676

From: [Michele Stevens](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); [MSB Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Conditional Use Permit for an RV Resort/Cabins/Campground/Helicopter Tour in Denali State Park
Date: Thursday, January 2, 2025 9:17:59 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Dear Borough Planning Commission

The Petersville Community would be greatly affected by the helicopter tours with this project. We property owners and residents of the Petersville area like our remote living and the quiet it comes with. We understand the decibels of sound created by the helicopters are no more than a highway noise, however we choose to be off grid just to get away from that noise. We have a community of 380 property owners some of which is next to the Park boundaries and We oppose the Helicopter portion of this project. We have no quarrel with the RV park and other items proposed. We would like to continue with our peace and quiet in our area. This letter would have been more in depth if it had been better advertised and was given more time to address this issue. Thank you for your time

Michele Stevens

President

Petersville Community Non-Profit Corp.

DBA

Petersville Community Council

To: Mat-Su Planning Commission
Date: December 10, 2024
VIA Email To: peggy.horton@matsugov.us and msb.planning.commission@matsugov.us.

Re: Comments MSB Planning Commission Resolution No. 24-33
Resolution of MSB Planning Commission Approving a Condition Use Permit for a commercial use (Recreational Vehicle (RV) Campground Resort) within the Denali State Par Special Use District

Dear Mat-Su Borough Planning Commissioners:

I am writing again to ask that the proposed conditions for approval be amended to disallow the proposed Helipad and Helicopter Tours. I appreciate that both the Applicant and the Borough have dealt with some of the concerns raised in my previous letter and in other peoples' letters. The major concern about the development, i.e., Helipad and Helicopter Tours, however, has not been adequately addressed.

Findings of Fact pulled from the Staff Report:

According to the application material, the proposed helipad is situated approximately 13 feet below highway elevation and about 320 feet west of it. A 50-foot-wide vegetative buffer will visually screen the helipad from the Parks Highway. - [The issue is not visual screening from the Parks Highway, but audio screening from K'esugi and Curry Ridges and trails.](#)

According to the application material, the helipad will operate from May 15 to September 15, with hours from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. - [9 a.m. to 5 p.m. is prime hiking time, and the hours that see the greatest use of Denali State Park by visitors.](#)

According to the application material, the site will limit proposed helicopter tours to one per hour and no more than eight per day. - [How long will the noise from the approach to landing to taking-off be audible from the campground, the hiking trails, and the ridges? Staff report does not address the amount of time that each tour will create objectionable noise.](#)

According to the application material, helicopter flights will utilize the airspace generally above the Chulitna River for flights into and out of the Park. - [Is the reference to the State Park or the National Park or both? The K'esugi Ridge and the State Park trails traverse 37 miles from Little Coal Creek Trailhead to the Upper Troublesome Creek Trailhead. The trails to access the ridge are on the west side of the ridge, i.e., east of the Parks Highway. Helicopters don't fly high; they make a lot of noise; they don't fly fast; and, the noise lingers. Take-offs, landings, and flights into the State Park will be disruptive to anyone hiking the K'esugi Ridge Trail System.](#)

According to the application material, helicopters will not fly into or out of the subject property from the east, over adjacent inholdings, or the K'esugi Ken Campground. - [As above, this fact omits consideration of the impacts to anyone hiking the K'esugi Ridge and the new Curry Connector Trail \(17 miles.\)](#)

The discussion on page 10 of the Staff Report says, "Helicopters can be noisy, and flying over sensitive areas like the nearby trails and campgrounds could negatively impact the experience of those using those facilities. Additionally, the noise could disturb both wildlife and visitors enjoying the natural sights and surroundings. Staff recommends a condition of approval that aligns with the applicant's statement regarding the flight paths and frequency of operations for the proposed helicopter tours. This would not limit the flight path of helicopters during emergencies." - [Unfortunately the applicant's statement regarding the flight paths does not address the K'esugi Ridge or Curry Connector Trail. Thus, the helicopter tours would be free to fly over the entire ridge system just by flying into the State Park north or south of the K'esugi Ken campground.](#)

The Staff Report states: The proposed use meets all standards of MSB 17.17. - [I disagree because:](#)

MSB Code 17.17.140 says, "... The conditional use permit procedure is intended to allow planning commission consideration of the impact of the proposed conditional use on surrounding property and the application of controls and safeguards **to assure that the conditional use will be compatible with the surrounding area and in keeping with the character and integrity of the Denali State Park.**"

MSB Code 17.17.180 (A) (1) says, "(A) **A conditional use may be approved only if it meets the requirements of this section in addition to any other standards required by this chapter. (1) the conditional use will not detract from the value, character or integrity of Denali State Park;**"

[Until the conditions of approval are revised to disallow the Helicopter Pad and Helicopter Tours the standards of neither MSB 17.17.140 nor of MSB 17.17.180 have been met, and the CUP should not be approved. Helicopter Tours are not compatible with the surrounding area nor are they in keeping with the character and integrity of the Denali State Park. Helicopter tours will definitely detract from the value, character and integrity of Denali State Park.](#)

Staff Recommendation # 6 states: "Helicopter tours, regardless of the originating point, are limited to one per hour and no more than eight per day. Tour helicopters are not permitted to fly into or out of the subject parcel from the east, over K'esugi Ken Campground, or adjacent private lands. This condition is not meant to limit the flight path of helicopters during emergencies." - [Staff Recommendation #6 is not sufficient to meet the requirements of MSB 17.17.140 and MSB 17.17.180.](#)

Notice Problems

In my prior comments, I was one of the people who requested the public hearing be kept open until the Planning Commission's February 3rd meeting. Instead, staff recommended that the public hearing not be opened but postponed to the Planning Commission's January 6th meeting. The Planning Commission so acted. Unfortunately, that did not solve the problem. The new notice was posted, notices were mailed out to the State and to property owners on December 17th. Notices were then emailed with a link to the application material, and a request for comments to community councils from Big Lake, Meadow Lakes, Willow, Talkeetna, Susitna, Trapper Creek, and Chase on December 19, 2024. Then, on Friday December 27th in the afternoon the MatSu Borough revised staff report and the Applicant's December 19th letter with clarifying information were posted. **The general public, thus, had 3 1/2 business days or 6 1/2 calendar days to review the new materials and comment. But, not one of the community councils noticed had a meeting between December 19th and January 6th, so they could not comment.**

I do not know why the original public notice was so slim. Community Council meeting dates are published on the borough calendar well in advance. Why didn't the planning department consider that the community councils would not meet prior to January 6th and recommend postponing until January 20th or February 3rd? I can only hazard a guess that it might be because the department is understaffed. As we approach the next budget cycle, I hope the commissioners will advocate for adequate funding for the planning staff. In a growing borough it's critical.

As always, I appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,
Ruth D. Wood
Talkeetna, Alaska

Jan 3, 2025

To the Mat-Su Planning Commission:

Please consider my comments regarding Planning Commission Resolution 24-33

What I love about living in Alaska is slowly eroding due to industrial tourism. I live in Talkeetna, and in the summer it is almost impossible to go downtown because of the 18 tour buses a day that infiltrate a town of 1,000. Car and bus traffic is almost constant on the Talkeetna Spur Road. Downtown is saturated with tourists disgorged from the constant bus traffic. When will it be enough and when will the quality of life for those of us who live here be taken into account?

Two years ago, I went to my favorite lake to paddleboard with friends, only to find a commercial rental company had set up shop. Talkeetna Community Council was never notified. We were never given a chance to comment. It's the drip, drip, drip of tourism invading quiet community spaces. It's frustrating and detrimental to why we live in a wilderness space.

Now comes this proposed major development inside Denali State Park. According to MSB 17.17, the land in Denali State Park is zoned for recreational uses, not commercial. Please consider carefully before issuing a CUP for the entire proposed development. It's huge and it will alter the wilderness aspect of the State Park. According to the Planning Commission Staff Report: "Based on the above findings, the proposed commercial use does not detract from the value, character, or integrity of Denali State Park." I beg to differ. Of course a development of this magnitude will alter the character of the State Park and impact the quiet nature of camping, hiking, and backpacking there.

The most egregious aspect of the proposed development is the idea of guided helicopter tours—8 tours per day, one per hour. Helicopters are noisy and invasive. I am saddened to read the Planning Commission staff recommends allowing the use of helicopters. Last fall, I was riding my bike on the road at Denali National Park, and the noise from small airplanes was noticeable and distracting. Because of the Pretty Rocks slide at Polychrome Pass, buses can no longer get to the backcountry lodges. Instead, small airplanes ferry passengers to and from the lodges in the backcountry. The increase in noise was definitely noticeable. To think the drone from helicopters won't affect the experience of every other user of the State Park is ridiculous.

Please deny the entire CUP for this massive project. If you cannot square going that far, at least do not permit helicopter tours. Please consider the needs of the people who live close to the State Park and are regular users or of the many independent travelers who relish the wilderness experience of hiking in the State Park. Also remember, people come to Alaska for the wilderness experience. A development of this scope detracts from the intimacy of the natural world they wish to experience.

Sincerely,

Kathy Trump

P.O. Box 470
Talkeetna, Alaska 99676
907-315-8775
kathy.trump@yahoo.com

From: [Karako Walker](#)
To: [MSB Planning Commission](#); [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Resolution 24-33, Opposition to Proposed CUP for Helicopter Tours & Development in Denali State Park
Date: Friday, January 3, 2025 10:59:11 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Hello,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed CUP for helicopter tours and development in Denali State Park. As an avid visitor, I have come to deeply appreciate the unparalleled serenity and natural beauty of this remarkable landscape. The tranquility of the park is not only a source of personal joy but is integral to the wellbeing of its wildlife and ecosystems.

Helicopter tours would introduce a disruptive and intrusive noise pollution that would shatter the quietude of this pristine environment. The constant hum of helicopters would diminish the park's natural ambiance, disturbing visitors and wildlife alike. Such disturbances could significantly alter animal behaviors, including displacement, which could ultimately have detrimental effects on local populations and biodiversity.

The very essence of Denali lies in its ability to offer a refuge from the clamor of modern life. By allowing helicopter tours and unrestricted development, we risk undermining the core values that make this park a treasured haven for both humans and wildlife. I urge you to consider the long-term consequences of this decision and deny the CUP to protect the park's natural integrity for generations to come.

Respectfully,
Kara Walker

--
Kara Walker
walker.km@gmail.com
425-442-8048

From: [Sean McPhilamy](#)
To: [MSB Planning Commission](#); [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Conditional Use Permit for Helicopter Tour in Denali State Park
Date: Friday, January 3, 2025 11:33:13 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Good day,

I am writing in concern of the draft Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the Ark@Denali proposal, specifically regarding the helicopter tour operation.

I am concerned at the proposed noise level helicopter operations disrupting both humans and wildlife in the area.

I am concerned at the proposed location (320 feet west of the highway, which will cause surprise/response from drivers on the highway.

I am concerned at the term “tour”, as other similar operations offer helicopter tours at planned times for cruise ship visitors, when in fact there are multiple helicopters operating simultaneously for a named “tour”.

If adopted, there should be in-place noise level monitoring, along with a correction to spell out that each tour has a maximum of one helicopter in operation (per tour). Finally, the natural vegetation “left in place” should be better defined as to density and height above ground.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sean

~

Sean McPhilamy

PO Box 966
Talkeetna, AK 99676-0966

(907) 947-4310
seanmcphilamy@mac.com

From: [Kim Bailey](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us; ricky.gease@alaska.gov
Subject: Helicopter Tours in Denali SP
Date: Monday, January 13, 2025 10:24:41 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To whom it may concern,

In regards to allowing helicopter tours in Denali State Park, I am firmly against it. Hearing helicopters buzzing around while trying to enjoy the solitude of the outdoors or enjoying the sounds of birds singing is a very negative experience. Tourists come from all over the world to get away from such noise pollution. Alaska is one of the few places they can go where they can have a true wilderness experience, away from the noise of mankind. Subjecting the majority of people who have come to enjoy Denali State Park to this noise pollution for the sake of a small minority of people who are willing to pay an exorbitant amount of money to be helicoptered around is unfair.

Allowing helicopters into a park such as Denali State Park also degrades the very wildness of the park for which it was set aside. It disturbs the wildlife, disrupts flight patterns of birds, and may cause animals to avoid places they have always gone to feed or den. Hence, having helicopters flying in the park is selfish behavior on the part of humans.

I have spent many weeks over the years on the different islands of Hawaii, which have multitudes of helicopter tours. There is nowhere you can escape the constant sound of whirring blades. I love Hawaii, but their noise pollution is one of the most offensive aspects of visiting their state. I hope Alaska never falls victim to these helicopter tours (which cater mostly to the wealthy) to the detriment of everyone else who is trying to enjoy the peace of the outdoors.

Please do not allow helicopter tours to infringe on the peace and quiet of Denali State Park.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Kim Bailey
Anchorage

From: [l baker](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us
Subject: No helicopters in Denali Park
Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025 7:56:36 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To whom it may concern:

I have visited Denali Park at least once annually since the 1980s. During that time I have revelled in the beauty and serenity of Alaska's jewel of a park. The views and hiking opportunities are many and such a solace from the hustle and bustle of my daily life.

The thought of introducing frequent helicopter noise into that serene experience is awful. How could anyone imagine allowing such a corruption?! People come from all over the world to spend time in those peaceful surroundings and helicopters do NOT belong there. At all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Linda Baker
Fairbanks, AK

From: [Mark](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Denali State Park "RV Campground Resort"
Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025 11:17:17 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Ms. Horton,

I'm writing you today to submit public comments about the proposed "RV Campground Resort" to be built in Denali State Park and that I understand will be considered at the Planning Commission's meeting on January 20.

I do not have any comments concerning the rv/campground, however I strongly oppose any kind of helicopter tours within any part of Denali State Park. I own property just off the Alaska Railroad, .5 miles north of the Railroad's southernmost of four bridges over the Indian River and immediately east of the Park. My property is 300+ vertical feet above the river & railroad and has a sweeping view of the Park from the northern most part of Kesugi Ridge south for many miles. So you can imagine I am a very interested party.

The application says the landing site is primarily intended for safety purposes. This seems at best disingenuous as it then goes on to say that they would like to have 8 tours a day, one every hour. It doesn't say exactly where they want to go, how high above ground level they will fly or how long they might want to hover or circle over something of interest. Exactly what are the FAA and Alaska State Park requirements? Exactly how are they going to mitigate off site impacts? Many people say that the stretch of the Alaska Railroad through the Indian River canyon is the most scenic part of the entire Alaska Railroad. So am I now to enjoy a helicopter full of tourists flying past my place, at or below my eye level, 8 times a day? This after they carefully access the resort from over the Chulitna river and avoid the Kesugi Ken campground?

Denali State Park seems to have an increasing amount of use every year. I know there is in my neighborhood. Like me, people come to get away and enjoy the natural beauty. Helicopter activity and noise diminishes the experience for everyone not in the helicopter. That is to say I believe this use **will** materially detract from the value, character and integrity of the surrounding area. Therefore I urge you to disallow this activity.

Mark Bielke
ASLS 91-206
3341 W. 84th Ave.
Anchorage, AK 99502
907-248-2430

From: [cary birdsall](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: CUP Ark@Denali RV Resort Campground
Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025 3:50:20 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Hello.

I have a residence in Talkeetna and spend considerable time in and near Denali State Park. I am quite unhappy at the prospect of helicopter tours being conducted from within the park. Inholders in public parks, preserves, and similar, have social and legal responsibilities to users of said areas. I believe the development of inholdings should be regulated with an eye toward compatibility with existing usage as well as existing statutes and law. I believe landowners should have the freedom to use their land as they wish, but when their plans impact others, careful consideration must be made. Helicopter tours should already be illegal, but apparently they aren't. This would be a high level nuisance for park users, most of whom come to the area for unmotorized recreation and quiet enjoyment. Quiet. We come here for quiet.

I urge the Planning and Land Use Department to deny at least this part of the proposal.

Thank You,

Cary Birdsall

From: [Michelle Bittner](#)
To: msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us; [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Opposal to Allowing Commercial Helicopter Operations in Denali State Park and Surrounding Wilderness Areas
Date: Monday, January 13, 2025 10:04:11 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Dear Planning Commission,

I have been an Alaska resident for over 45 years and I am opposed to any proposals to allow commercial helicopter operations in and around Denali State Park. Helicopters are noisy and intrusive and would disturb wildlife within and around Denali State Park and people who are visiting Denali State Park and surrounding areas for the purposes of experiencing Alaska's vast wild areas. I have visited numerous wild areas which allow helicopter tours on the outskirts of the parks. Haleakala National Park is one example of a National Park where I hike very regularly. Helicopters are not allowed to hover over the park land but they are allowed to hover over the borders of Haleakala National Park. The noise from these helicopters completely disrupts the solemn and peaceful experience of being in and hiking across the crater. Likewise, Na Pali State Park does not allow helicopters to fly over the Park but does allow helicopters to fly along the coast over the water. Similarly, this noise from the helicopters disrupts the experience of being surrounded by nature.

Helicopter tours in and around Denali State Park would be incompatible with the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation which is to provide outdoor recreation opportunities and conserve and interpret natural, cultural, and historic resources for their use, enjoyment, and welfare of the people. Allowing commercial helicopter operations in and around Denali State Park would disrupt the experiences of the people who recreate in the park and want to experience the area in its natural state.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Bittner
Anchorage, Alaska

From: davebraunak@gmail.com
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Helicopters over Kesugi Ridge
Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025 7:10:48 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

My family has enjoyed Denali State Park and hiking Kesugi ridge trails. Please keep helicopter tours out of there.
Thank you
Dave Braun
davebraunak@gmail.com
Text 4805197794
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Dirk & Margaret](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Helicopter Tours in Denali
Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025 10:32:22 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Dear Ms. Horton,

I have conducted and published research on disturbance of helicopter flights to wildlife and I am a frequent visitor to Denali State Park. I oppose granting a use permit for helicopter tours within the park because of the potential disturbance such flights will have on wildlife and on the thousands of visitors that visit the park each year.

Sincerely,

Dirk V. Derksen

From: [Fr. Marc Dunaway](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: No to Helicopters in Denali Park
Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025 1:59:05 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

This would be an intrusion into the natural beauty of the park. Unthinkable. Maybe in the future a twice a twice a week dirigible? Maybe.

Marc Dunaway
Eagle River, Alaska

From: [Nina Faust](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us
Cc: ricky.gease@alaska.gov
Subject: Helicopters in Denali State Park
Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025 3:47:39 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

P.O. Box 2994
Homer, AK 99603

January 12, 2025

Peggy Horton and the Mat-Su Planning Commission
peggy.horton@matsugov.us and msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us

Dear Planning Commission Members and Ms. Horton:

As an Alaskan who has visited a wide variety of State Parks around Alaska, I see Denali State Park as one of the State's crown jewels. Helicopter flights into this magnificent park is incompatible with other uses. Hiking into the high ridges for the view of Denali, experiencing the quiet of those high places where sheep and bears roam, is simply breathtaking.

The quiet soundscape of a park like this is such an under rated natural resource. People go to parks to experience quiet, which is impossible with constant pervasive and intrusive helicopter noise. This noise also has impacts on wildlife.

There are other areas not in the park that perhaps would be an alternate destination, but it is important to protect this park for its inherent natural values like quiet. Please keep helicopters out of Denali State Park.

Respectfully,

Nina Faust

Cc: Alaska State Parks, Ricky Gease (ricky.gease@alaska.gov),

From: [Anne Coray](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us; ricky.gease@alaska.gov
Subject: Helicopter Tourism in Denali State Park
Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025 2:14:56 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To All Involved,

Although I don't necessarily object to the development of an RV Campground Resort on a private inholding within Denali State Park, I am concerned about the proposal to allow helicopter tours as part of a visitor activity from there. Helicopters are extremely disruptive to users of the park, other inholders, and also to wildlife. To say that helicopters are loud is an understatement. Allowing them to be employed (up to eight flights per day!) for flightseeing is beyond belief. An operation like this would completely change the character of the Park. Most people visit national and state parks for a reprieve from the daily assault on our senses from television, computers, and traffic. Please do not grant permission for this kind of noise pollution in such a peaceful and bucolic setting.

Yours,

Anne Kahn



Virus-free www.avast.com

From: [Richard Kenshalo](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Denali State Park helicopter tours
Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025 5:54:26 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Hi,

Please consider banning helicopter tours in Denali State Park. Alaska has a unique ability to preserve quiet areas that can be enjoyed by all users. And wildlife experiences aren't enhanced by helicopter tours, only for the wealthy that can afford them.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Richard Kenshalo
Palmer Alaska

From: [Michael Kreger](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: no helicopter tours in Denali state park
Date: Monday, January 13, 2025 4:27:50 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To the Matanuska-Susitna planning commission:
We oppose helicopter tours in Denali state park.
Thank you
Michael and Darcy Kreger
5363 Sillary Circle
Anchorage, AK 99508

From: [Mark Luttrell](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: No helicopter intrusion in Denali State Park
Date: Monday, January 13, 2025 12:28:42 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Ms Horton:

I do not support the Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission issuing a conditional use permit for helicopter touring in Denali State Park. I'm concerned about the noise impact and intrusion on those who climb the muddy trails to Kesugi Ridge to be rewarded with a spectacular view of Denali and the Alaska Range. Kesugi Ridge retains its wild character and is utterly unique to Alaska. Where else is there a relatively flat, elevated, dry alpine trail very easily accessed by four trailheads along the Parks Highway?

Quiet, contemplative, physically demanding recreation is by far the preferred use. Helicopters would disrupt and intrude and cheapen this experience.

Mark Luttrell
Seward

From: [Dave Mesiar](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Helicopter tour flights Denali State Park
Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025 12:28:09 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Please deny applications for permits to operate helicopter tour overflights and landings within Denali State Park. The noise generated is totally incompatible with other silent forms of recreation and enjoyment available to users there.

From: [Diane Sallee](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us
Cc: ricky.gease@alaska.gov; stuart.leidner@alaska.gov
Subject: Oppose RV Campground Resort in private inholding in Denali State Park
Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025 9:32:52 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To Peggy Horton and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission:

I am writing to oppose approval of the proposed RV Campground Resort on the private inholding in Denali State Park. I camp in Denali State Park every year and hike the Curry and Kesugi Ridge Trails. Commercial helicopter operations from the private inholding would have a negative impact on recreational users and wildlife in Denali State Park and are not compatible with the wilderness character of these lands.

Thank you for protecting this popular park.

From: [Julie Schmidt](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Denali Park Helicopter Tours
Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025 8:01:32 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Denali Park is one of the most quiet and accessible parks in Alaska. Please, preserve the solitude of its environment by denying helicopter tour access to the park and its immediate surrounding areas. Those seeking a helicopter experience can use the services of existing operators outside of the park. These operators are located a short distance away from the park entrance and have access to beautiful areas away from the park itself. I know because I took one such tour in recent years. Preserve the peacefulness of Denali National Park by denying the request to operate helicopter tours in the park.

Gayle Schuh
Eagle River, AK

Sent from my iPad

Dear Peggy Horton,

I am writing to express my opposition regarding Public Notice MSB 17.17 – Denali State Park Special Land Use - and also to urge the borough to prohibit the use of helicopters in the park.

Denali State Park is a sanctuary of natural beauty and tranquility, offering visitors a unique opportunity to connect with the wilderness in its purest form. Allowing an RV park to operate and grow, as well as allowing helicopters to fly in this area disrupts this serenity and undermines the very purpose of the park.

One of the most significant impacts of helicopter activity is the noise pollution it generates. The sound of helicopter engines reverberating through the park's vast landscapes shatters the peaceful environment that many hikers, campers, and outdoor enthusiasts seek when visiting. This noise intrusion diminishes the experience for those who come to the park to find solace and escape from the clamor of daily life.

Additionally, helicopter flights pose a serious threat to the park's wildlife. The loud and persistent noise can disturb animal behavior, disrupt nesting and feeding patterns, and drive wildlife away from their natural habitats. Furthermore, the presence of helicopters detracts from the park's mission to provide a natural and undisturbed environment. The visual and auditory intrusion of these aircraft diminishes the sense of remoteness and wildness that makes Denali State Park so special.

I also strongly oppose Public Notice MSB 17.17, which would permit the development of an RV park near Denali National Park. Such a project risks transforming the area into another "Glitter Gulch"—a chaotic and unsightly cluster of commercial development that undermines the park's pristine beauty and dignified character. Allowing this kind of development would irreparably harm the natural landscape and detract from the unique experience that visitors seek when coming to Denali State Park.

I urge the borough to take decisive action to protect the park's integrity by implementing a ban on helicopter flights within its boundaries and to deny the 17.17 special land use. These steps would demonstrate a commitment to preserving the park's natural beauty, safeguarding its wildlife, and ensuring that visitors can continue to enjoy the peace and serenity that make Denali State Park a cherished destination.

Thank you for considering this important issue. I appreciate your dedication to preserving the unique character of Denali State Park and ensuring that it remains a haven for both people and wildlife.

Sincerely,

Aubrey Smith Talkeetna, AK 435-231-2247

From: [Kim Strong](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Denali state park
Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025 6:46:21 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

As a yearround resident of indian river subdivision on the northern border of denali state park, i would like to see the matsu planning commision maintain the current managment plan - remain as a designated wilderness area , espially keseugi ridge. No on commercial flights.

Sincerly, kim strong

From: [Don Voigt](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Denali Park -Keep it Wild
Date: Monday, January 13, 2025 11:01:02 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Good Morning,

As a 50 plus year resident of Alaska, I oppose commercial helicopter flights within the Denali State Park. Keep Denali Park free of helicopter noise so we can enjoy nature.

Thank you,

Don Voigt
PO Box 1470 Palmer, AK

From: [Katherine West](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Denali National Park
Date: Sunday, January 12, 2025 9:55:50 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

NO! to any type of helicopter flight seeing around Denali. One of the last great wilderness areas on earth and you want to commercialize it? Most people want to rest assured in their hearts that there is a natural wilderness left, with hopes to visit it. Why take a chance of upsetting the wildlife, creating more litter, making more noise and intruding into those visitors who want a quiet natural experience and beauty, with another money-making scheme. Do not help turn America the great into America for profit.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [Michael Holzmueller](#)
To: msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us; [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Commercial RV Campground Resort proposal within Denali State Park and proposed helicopter tour operation within surrounding park.
Date: Monday, January 13, 2025 3:01:47 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Dear Sirs & Madam's,

Having been an Alaska resident for 44 years and owner of a cabin within the Indian Creek Subdivision located beside Denali State Park, I protest against the development of said "RV Campground Resort" in Denali State Park as well as a helicopter operation flying tourists around the Kesugi Ridge area, multiple times a day.

I acquired my parcel & cabin with the whole purpose of being distanced from the activities of the general public. Although there are multiple cabins within the Indian River Subdivision, there is respect to privacy, a respect to minimize damage to a fragile landscape and clearly an appreciated absence of noise pollution. Helicopters buzzing continuously throughout the Denali Park area would liken it to a big city hospital with medivac flights dropping off patients multiple times a day. I've been around that and it sucks!

There are plenty of campgrounds along the Parks Hwy by Denali Park that I have seen that are rarely used. I see no need to impact the area any further.

Your respect for my concern and objection is greatly appreciated.

Michael Holzmueller
murrypeak@gmail.com

From: [Frank Baker](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); ricky.gease@alaska.gov
Cc: msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us
Subject: Helicopter tours Denali State Park
Date: Tuesday, January 14, 2025 10:01:39 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

This brief message is to state my objection to a proposal allowing helicopter tour flights into Denali State Park (DSP). If you've ever travelled to Kauai, or other Hawaiian islands, you have witnessed the impacts of helicopter traffic over what were once quiet, serene landscapes. I support economic development in Alaska, but areas such as DSP should be protected, not only from an ecological standpoint, but also from noise pollution.

Thanks for your attention to this matter,

Frank E. Baker
79-year Alaska resident

10405 Stewart Dr.
Eagle River, Ak 99577
(907) 694-4388

From: [shannon.cartwright](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: No to Helicopter Flights
Date: Tuesday, January 14, 2025 11:05:18 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

I have been a year round resident of the eastern boundary of the Denali State Park for 48 years....the last 25 years.. on the northern end of the park. For all these years I and my neighbors have respected and followed the rules of the state park so we and many other Alaska residents and non residents have been able to enjoy skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, summer and winter camping, berry picking and of course enjoying the majestic views of Denali in an undisturbed wilderness area. We have always depended on the state of Alaska to rm safeguard our gem of mountainous land for our wilderness adventures. I have spent 35 years traveling all summer through the Talkeetna Mountains and Alaska Range and have seen first hand how air traffic affects the wild residents where they so often move on to quieter areas ...for good! I hope that the Mat-Su planning commission maintains the current management plan and keeps the Denali State Park as a designated wilderness area.. especially Curry and Kesugi Ridge.

No to all commercial and helicopter flights!

Sincerely
Shannon Cartwright

From: [Jack DiMarchi](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: public comment on Denali State Park RV Campground Resort
Date: Monday, January 13, 2025 9:06:30 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Ms. Horton,

I am submitting these comments in response to a request for a special use permit for "RV Campground Resort" to be built in an inholding to Denali State Park and that I understand will be considered at the Planning Commission's meeting on January 20.

I have owned property very close to Denali State Park since 1981. I am strongly opposed to their proposed plans to offer helicopter tours in Denali State Park! Such a loud and disruptive presence would conflict with the park's pristine character, disrupt the experiences of people on the ground and, possibly most importantly, impact wildlife movements within the park including grizzly bears. It is well established that the noise from helicopters is disruptive to wildlife, even at considerable distance.

Further, it is my understanding that commercial helicopter operations are fundamentally incompatible with the park's designated wilderness status which includes much of the area on the east side of the Park in the Indian River and Susitna River watersheds. Hopefully, State Parks will make a concerted formal effort to argue against allowing the proposed commercial helicopter operations as well.

Every other user of the park is drawn to it because of its wild character, including the wildlife and peace and quiet. Allowing commercial helicopter tours will degrade that experience for every one of these users.

The proponents seem to recognize that the flights would be an intrusion to the campers at Kesugi Ken campground - well they will be an intrusion to everyone else in and around the Park - it's just a bad idea!!!

Jack DiMarchi
Coregeoscience@gmail.com

From: [Frank Baker](#)
To: ricky.gease@alaska.gov; [Peggy Horton](#)
Cc: [MSB Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Helicopter tours Denali State Park
Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 10:52:47 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

I join many other Alaskans in voicing my opposition to allowing helicopter tours within Denali State Park (DSP), which has become a hiking haven for Alaskans and visitors from across the world, and contains abundant wildlife within a natural ecosystem.

The best example of how esthetically damaging helicopters are to wilderness areas is on the 12-mile Na Pali coast on the Hawaiian island of Kauai. The traffic is incessant, noisy, and completely destroys what would otherwise be a serene and beautiful hike through a breathtakingly beautiful area, all the way to the Kalalau Beach.

I'm a 79-year Alaska resident and not adverse to economic development. But there are some lines that we should not cross. The tradeoffs are too great. Please act to preserve the natural and wild aspects of DSP. The Curry Ridge - Kesgui Ridge trail system constitutes a world-class hiking/camping/photography destination that should remain intact.

I'd like to take this opportunity to also mention helicopter traffic in the Knik Glacier area. Before it gets out of hand, those tours should also be more stringently regulated, and limited.

Sincerely,

Frank E. Baker
10405 Stewart Drive
Eagle River, AK 99577
(907) 242-7346

From: [Terry Cummings](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Regarding: Helicopter Sight-seeing proposal in Denali State Park
Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 12:26:35 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

I am adamantly against allowing helicopter sight-seeing in Denali State Park. People go to Denali for the wildlife, to hike, and for the wild character of the park and helicopters would disrupt these activities; not to mention the disruption to the animals in the park. It would degrade the wild character of the park that citizens and visitors go to the park for.

The availability for public comment on this issue was also woefully inadequate.

Thank you,
Ms. Terry Cummings
6740 East 10th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99504
63 year Alaskan resident and park visitor
numerous times.

From: brian.gehring
To: msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us; [Peggy Horton](mailto:Peggy.Horton); ricky.gease@alaska.gov
Subject: Alaska State Parks - Thank You and Helicopter Tour Comment
Date: Tuesday, January 14, 2025 5:27:59 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Good Day,

While I am happy that Denali State Park is getting more popular as a destination for Alaskans and visitors, I wanted to implore the commission to maintain the wilderness character of the park as development continues. Permitting increased aviation activity would detract from user experience and is against Alaska State Park's Mission Statement.

I worked as a hiking guide in Denali State Park for several years, and I have recreated in the area for many years. People love the wild experience the park provides and almost all guests have commented about how much more 'natural' their experience in the state park is compared to the national park. The lack of aviation traffic in the state park compared to the national park is a huge factor in adding to the wilderness character. I cannot recall ever being disturbed or even hearing planes flying nearby when guiding clients in the state park, but I have almost always heard planes when doing trips in the national park, even when hiking miles away from the park road.

Finally I want to thank everyone working to make Denali State Park an economically accessible park for "the people". Last winter I brought ~20 students to the park for a winter "backcountry" trip and they were truly enjoyed the natural character of the park. Several of the students had never camped and were using loaner gear, yet they had a world class experience. This trip and others like it are possible thanks to responsible developments like Kesugi Ken and work on trails, viewpoints, and trailhead areas. I really hope development continues to focus on "the people" and not on cost-prohibitive resorts and permitting expensive and destructive activities like helicopter tours.

Sincerely,
Brian Gehring
Educator

"The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation provides outdoor recreation opportunities and conserves and interprets natural, cultural, and historic resources for the use, enjoyment, and welfare of the people."

From: [Angie Hamill](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us
Subject: Helicopter tour activity in Denali State Park
Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 12:35:17 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Hello, I am writing today in **opposition of any helicopter tour activity within Denali State Park**. The quiet and natural environment of the state park is one reason the park was established for the enjoyment of residents and guests of Alaska. Helicopter tour activity would highly degrade the experience of those spending time in and around Denali State park. One hiking and sitting atop Kesugi Ridge does not want the peace and beauty interrupted by the sound and vision of tour helicopters. Just the thought of the invasion of the peace enjoyed in nature is enough to make me feel nauseous.

I know that there are some developers who want to build a commercial RV Park on a private inholding within Denali State Park and that they want to be able to offer helicopter tours. I beg you to **deny the conditional use permit for this helicopter tour activity**. It is incompatible with the experience intended for the enjoyment of Denali State Park.

Thank you,
Angie Hamill
Chugiak, AK

From: [M Miner](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Proposed helicopter tours
Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 2:47:50 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Hello Peggy,

Im writing to share my concerns about the potential for helicopter tours to start in Denali State Park. I use the park annually for hiking, sightseeing and wildlife viewing and know that all of these activities will be adversely impacted by the use of low flying helicopters. I vehemently oppose helicopter landings anywhere near or on the Kesugi/Curry ridge "corridor". I was incredibly impressed by the new Curry ridge connector trail and sent compliments to the Mat-Su division of state parks

for their support of this incredible trail that links up with Kesugi Ridge. I can not think of a more impactful intrusion, well maybe ATVs would be worse, than to have helicopters landing and taking off along this wide expansive ridge.

Thank you for listening to my concerns and it's my hope that the MatSu Borough protects this truly world class trail system from helicopter landings.

Thank you,
Mark and Mary Miner

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Bill Sherwonit](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); [MSB Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Additional comment on proposed ARK development in Denali State Park, PC Res. No. 24-33
Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 12:38:23 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To the Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission.

Below is a commentary I've written about this issue, published in the Anchorage Daily News on January 11 (online) and 12 (in the newspaper). I wish to enter it into the record in addition to my earlier written comments. Once again, thanks for considering my perspectives,

Bill Sherwonit, Anchorage, Alaska

Helicopter tours don't belong in Denali State Park, by Bill Sherwonit

Though it has so far received little attention, a troubling new commercial activity is being proposed within one of the gems of our Alaska State Parks system. Developers want to build a commercial "RV Campground Resort" on a private inholding within Denali State Park and, with little public notice, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's Planning Commission will soon decide whether to approve a conditional use permit for this facility.

My problem is not so much with the "resort" itself, but one of its proposed visitor activities: helicopter tours within the surrounding park, with as many as eight flights per day from spring through fall.

Like many other Alaskans who've built a long and deep relationship with Denali State Park, I oppose commercial helicopter flights within the park's boundaries, because such a loud and disruptive presence would conflict with the park's wild values and character, while also inevitably creating conflicts with the visitors who recreate in DSP in numerous less-intrusive ways, most notably camping, hiking, backpacking, and boating. There is also reasonable concern over the impacts of helicopter flights on the park's wildlife.

In his written comments to the Planning Commission, park superintendent Stuart Leidner has noted that, based on Denali State Park's management plan and regulations, commercial helicopter operations "are deemed incompatible" with the park's designated wilderness. I would add that some "special management" natural areas outside the wilderness zone—for instance much of the Kesugi-Curry Ridges complex and the highly popular Kesugi Ridge Trail, along with trails that connect to those ridges—need similar protections. And I would ask Alaska State Park officials to defend the park's wild spaces from such unprecedented motorized intrusion.

I also ask Alaskans who support our unmatched state park system to speak up in defense of Denali State Park's wild character, its wild values.

Although the Mat-Su Borough gave unacceptably poor public notice, weather events have pushed the planning commission's meeting from January 6 to January 20. So there is still time to comment (with the deadline for written comments at noon on Friday

January 17). You can email your comments to Peggy Horton (peggy.horton@matsugov.us) or the Planning Commission (msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us). Or contact the Mat-Su Borough and request information on this proposed development and how to make your voice heard.

You might also contact the director of Alaska State Parks, Ricky Gease (ricky.gease@alaska.gov), and tell him to protect our parks from activities that by their nature would degrade both the wild character of our parks and the experiences of most park visitors.

Anchorage nature writer and wildlife/wildlands advocate Bill Sherwonit is a widely published essayist and the author of more than a dozen books, including "Animal Stories: Encounters with Alaska's Wildlife" and "Alaska's Accessible Wilderness: A Traveler's Guide to Alaska's State Parks."

From: [Kathryn Davis](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: MSB 17.17 Denali State Park Special Land Use
Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 8:57:12 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Dear Matsu-Susitna Planning Commission,

It has come to my attention that an application has been filed by Yolanda D'Oyen and The Boutlet Company as Arc@Denali RV Resort Campground for a conditional use permit to construct an RV Park.

Within this proposal they have asked for permission to fly helicopter tours from this Trapper Creek Alaska location North to the Denali State Park zone while intending to fly above the Chulitna River. There is not enough detail provided within the application to better understand the final destination or flight pattern.

As a long standing Alaskan resident of 35 years, business owner by way of CanoeAlaska, and resident landowner of the Matsu-Susitna region, ANY added air traffic as noise pollution will certainly detract from not only wilderness trips on the Chulitna or into Denali State or National Park boundaries but will be yet another disturbance to the wildlife. Hunters alike should recognize that added helicopter activity is a nuisance to migration, breeding and refugia (places where wildlife finds rest from human activity)

This is an unacceptable request and requires more attention before decisions are made. Keep our wild places as wild as we can so that the million plus visitors to Denali each year get what they come for.

Sincerely,
KK Davis

kk@canoealaska.com
907-978-1912

From: [Kathryn Davis](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Re: Correction: RV Park 17.17 application Trapper Creek
Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 9:50:40 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Oh my goodness!!

kk@canoealaska.com

apologies!

KK Davis

On Wed, Jan 15, 2025 at 8:58 PM Kathryn Davis <akkathryn@gmail.com> wrote:
| KK Davis email address correction.

| kk@canoealska.com

From: [Lia Amundsen](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); msg.planningcommission@matsugov.us; ricky.gease@alaska.gov
Subject: Keeping our wild places wild
Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 9:45:59 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Dear Matsu-Susitna Planning Commission,

It has come to my attention that an application has been filed by Yolanda D'Oyen and The Boutlet Company as Arc@Denali RV Resort Campground for a conditional use permit to construct an RV Park.

Within this proposal they have asked for permission to fly helicopter tours from this Trapper Creek Alaska location North to the Denali State Park zone while intending to fly above the Chulitna River. There is not enough detail provided within the application to better understand the final destination or flight pattern.

As a lifelong Alaskan resident, I do not support any added air traffic as noise pollution will certainly detract from not only wilderness trips on the Chulitna or into Denali State or National Park boundaries but will be yet another disturbance to the protected wildlife. Hunters alike should recognize that added helicopter activity is a nuisance to migration, breeding and refugia (places where wildlife finds rest from human activity)

Allowing helicopter tours in areas that have already seen a surge in air traffic and noise pollution is unacceptable and requires more attention before decisions are made. Keep our wild places as wild.

Sincerely,
Lia Amundsen
Two Rivers, Alaska

From: [Judy Caminer](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Conditional Use Permit under MSB 17.17
Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 9:03:36 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Dear Ms. Horton, I oppose permitting this development and most specifically the use of helicopters in Denali State Park.

They are in opposition to the reason people go to the area, for quiet, most especially in wilderness areas.

Kesugi Ken is a fabulous area and generators are not allowed there to preserve the quiet. Many people use the ridge for recreation and would object to helicopter travel affecting their views and sense of natural quiet.

Thanks for your consideration,
Judy C. Caminer
12550 Toilsome Hill Dr.
Anchorage, AK
99516

From: [Josh Davis](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: MSB 17.17 Denali State Park Special Land Use Application
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025 12:38:14 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Dear Matsu-Susitna Planning Commission,

It has come to my attention that an application has been filed by Yolanda D'Oyen and The Boutlet Company as Arc@Denali RV Resort Campground for a conditional use permit to construct an RV Park.

Within this proposal they have asked for permission to fly helicopter tours from this Trapper Creek Alaska location North to the Denali State Park zone while intending to fly above the Chulitna River. There is not enough detail provided within the application to better understand the final destination or flight pattern.

As a lifelong Alaskan resident, business owner by way of CanoeAlaska, and resident landowner of the Matsu-Susitna region, ANY added air traffic as noise pollution will certainly detract from not only wilderness trips on the Chulitna or into Denali State or National Park boundaries but will be yet another disturbance to the wildlife. Hunters alike should recognize that added helicopter activity is a nuisance to migration, breeding and refugia (places where wildlife finds rest from human activity)

This is an unacceptable request and requires more attention before decisions are made. Keep our wild places as wild as we can so that the million plus visitors to Denali each year get what they come for and.

Sincerely,

Josh Davis
Owner
CanoeAlaska LLC.

(907) 347-3602 canoealaska.com 1101 Peger Rd.



From: [Cliff Eames](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Cc: ricky.gease@alaska.gov
Subject: NO helicopters in Denali State Park
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025 11:38:15 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Dear Ms. Horton,

I was dismayed to learn that helicopter flightseeing is being proposed for Denali State Park (DSP). The Park is indisputably one of the special treasures in the Alaska State Park System--wild lands with rich populations of wildlife that are nevertheless quite easily accessible, at minimal expense, to the residents of Anchorage and the Mat-Su (as well as others). I strongly urge the Planning Commission to deny the request for a conditional use permit.

Before moving to the Copper Basin I spent many, many memorable days in Denali State Park, including the Kesugi Ridge area. I can't think of anything that would be more certain to ruin my experience than helicopters, the noise of which is especially obtrusive and can be heard from a great distance away. People don't go to DSP to hear motor vehicle noise. They go, among many reasons, to escape the noise and busyness of their daily lives; to recreate and experience peace and quiet in a natural setting; and to hear natural sounds and experience natural quiet, both of which are harder and harder to find in reasonably accessible areas. There is NO place for helicopters in Denali State Park.

Sincerely,

Cliff Eames
Kenny Lake, AK

From: [Megan Edge](#)
To: msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us; [Peggy Horton](#); ricky.gease@alaska.gov
Subject: Denali State Park in RV Campground Resort Opposition
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025 8:57:51 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Hello,

I am writing today to express my deep opposition to a recent proposal for an RV Campground Resort in Denali State Park. I am a lifelong Alaska who has had the privilege of recreating in the area for the last 32 years. I have been taught by the family and communities that raised me to enjoy the gifts this land has to offer in the most respectful way to the land, the animals and the people who occupy that space. An RV Campground Resort, with obnoxious helicopter tours, disregards everything growing up in Alaska taught me.

Please protect our parks.

Kind Regards,

Megan Edge

Anchorage Resident

From: [Dee Frankfourth](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Denali State Park helicopter access via inholding
Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 6:50:23 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Dear Ms Horton,

I urge denial of the permit being sought to allow helicopter tours from a future RV resort development in Denali State Park at Kesugi Ridge.

As a third generation Alaskan who has spent many weeks in both Denali national park and the state park over the past five decades, I realize the irreparable harm to wildlife that could be caused by this single action.

Visitors travel from around the world to visit Alaska for the possible opportunity to witness wildlife sightings...true wildlife sightings in the wild...that could be compromised by this activity.

Please. Don't kill the goose that laid the golden egg.

Sincerely, Dee Frankfourth

From: [John &/or Gretchen](#)
To: msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us; [Peggy Horton](#)
Cc: ricky.gease@alaska.gov
Subject: Helicopters at Denali State Park Special Land Use Area
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025 12:04:21 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Planning Commissioners:

I am highly concerned about the noise of takeoff and landing of helicopters from within the boundaries of Denali State Park, specifically from an area that recreators at Kesugi Ken Campground overlook. This is a comment on the proposal to create an RV Campground Resort and tourist area on private land within Denali State Park off the North Parks Highway.

First, I appreciate that the MSB has designated a Denali State Park Special Land Use Area. It reflects that the borough values the park as a South-Denali gem.

My family owns three properties in the MSB, including a remote recreational cabin not far from the southern border of Denali State Park. It is a wonderful, beautiful area. It is plagued somewhat already by overflights from Talkeetna to Denali, which are noisy and detract from the experience on the ground, even though these aircraft typically fly high. I am, with other family members, author of the guidebook Alaska Adventure 55 Ways (known in previous editions since 1972 as 55 Ways to the Wilderness in Southcentral Alaska). I was thrilled to be able to get the new Curry Ridge Trail into the latest edition of the book. That trail runs from the Kesugi Ken Campground at the southern end of the ridge over the length of Curry Ridge and ties into the long-standing Kesugi Ridge Trail. Taken together, there is a 48 mile point to point hike possible there, with fine variety and lots of open high country with the ability to see Denali and the Alaska Range. It is the longest dedicated hiking trail in the state, and arguably the most scenic. And it is yours—it is part of the MatSu Borough. I would point out that the Planning Commission packet does not show the new Curry Ridge Trail, and it should. This trail is rightfully popular; it is one of the very best multi-day backpacking trips, and its multiple trailheads allow for many different day hikes and trail runs by a variety of people and different abilities. Proposals for the Alaska Long Trail seek to tie into this premier trail and extend it north and south to create the new longest dedicated hiking trail in Alaska, and most of it would be in the borough. It would be outstanding if the borough had the foresight to protect and not whittle away at the experience to be had in the park.

The proposed RV Campground complex seems, like most such developments, to want to cram too much into too small a space, to the detriment of the camping experience, but that aside it appears to be reasonably well thought out. The problem with it is the helipad and proposed helicopter flights in and out across and around the state park. This site is located more or less “across the street” from the driveway to Kesugi Ken Campground and the southern terminus of the Curry-Kesugi Ridge Trail. The campground and trail are within the 1-mile bubble from the proposed commercial use. I can tell you from living for years 1 mile from Merrill Field in Anchorage that one can easily hear (from inside the house) airplanes go to full throttle for takeoff and helicopters spool up, warm up, and then whop-whop into the air. The application materials before you suggest helicopters will come and go about once per hour during standard daytime business hours May 15-Sept 30. While I applaud the developers for limiting the flights to those hours, I also note that this probably means 18 landings and 18 takeoffs per day for 4.5 months during the prime recreation and visitor season. All of the many hundreds of other people who are not taking (and probably cannot afford) helicopter flights would have to

listen to this noise, more than 2000 aircraft operations per season.

Furthermore, it appears that you, the Planning Commission, may be the only real check on helicopter activity. From the information in your Planning Commission packet, it appears that the state park itself would not have any permitting authority unless the operator sought a permit to land within the park on state land; overflights could happen without permits. If flights were once in a while and at high elevation, such as the aircraft that follow the highway corridor between Cook Inlet and Fairbanks, it would be relatively low impact, but hourly flights at low elevation during the best daytime hours of the best season for outdoor camping and hiking (and viewing of the Alaska Range) in this spectacular state park is not in the borough's best interest. I believe it was a multi-agency effort to put the Kesugi Ken Campground in, and it took years. It has been popular from the day it opened. I urge you to do everything within the borough's power to keep it the best possible experience.

I see that the borough has a noise code that applies principally to amplified sound from speakers. It suggests that noise should not exceed 70 decibels during the day. It appears from online references that helicopters can easily be at 100 decibels at takeoff and landing. While it would not be that loud at the campground or South Denali Viewpoint, it would be a continual noise source that would be audible over a wide area—and that is just based on takeoffs and landings, without regard for where the helicopter tour actually would go.

Your staff clearly has worked diligently to make sure that the proposal meets the various specific requirements of the MSB Code for a special commercial use permit, and I applaud the developer for checking the boxes. However, I would encourage you to look at the bigger picture:

- The land is zoned for recreational use. Even if commercial helicopter flights were considered a recreational use, they clearly are not the primary use envisioned in the Code, because they require a Conditional Use Permit. Trails and public campgrounds are specifically noted as "permitted principal uses" within the Denali SP Special Land Use District. The special land use district code encourages you to protect those principal uses.
- "The conditional use permit procedure is intended to allow planning commission consideration of the impact of the proposed conditional use on surrounding property...to assure that the conditional use will be compatible with the surrounding area and in keeping with the character and integrity of Denali State Park." (17.17.140).
- 17.17.180(A)(1) states the first requirement for approving a conditional use permit is not the details of setbacks, sign size, etc but is that the proposal "will not detract from the value, character, and integrity of Denali State Park." I suggest that helicopter takeoff and landings and frequent overflights of the park without controls WILL detract from the value, character, and integrity of the park, and by extension of the borough.
- Although the draft resolution you are considering suggests that the proposal will "not be harmful to the public health, safety, convenience, and welfare," I would suggest that the noise of up to 2000 helicopter operations WOULD be harmful to public health, convenience, and welfare at established park facilities and on general park and private land, including where people may boat on the river or hike off trail.

There may be a temptation to kick the can down the road by thinking the helicopter operator itself may need to get a special commercial use permit (this is not clear from the packet) or thinking flights are some other agency's issue. But this is the proposal that includes a helipad, a large fuel tank to support helicopter flights, and the operation of helicopters as part of its permit. I suggest you severely restrict commercial takeoffs and landings from this site or

require that the helipad and all helicopter operations be removed from the plan--for the value, character, and integrity of the park, and ultimately for the good of the borough.

Thank you for your service to the borough and for tackling these complicated questions of public policy.

John Wolfe Jr.

co-author, [Alaska Adventure 55 Ways](#) (released 2022)

www.55waysalaska.com | IG [@55ways.alaska](#)

907.301.9607

johngretchenak@gmail.com

From: [Janet Hall](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Helicopters in Denali National Park
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025 10:21:20 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To Whom it May Concern,

Please do not allow helicopters tours to start up in Denali National Park. This is the crown jewel of Alaska and the country. Helicopters serve a purpose in search and rescue efforts on the mountain but helicopter touring does not.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Janet Hall

Sent from my iPad

From: [Elizabeth Hatton](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Helicopters in Denali State Park
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025 9:59:34 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Dear Ms Horton,

Please accept this email as a public comment on the proposed use of helicopters in Denali State Park.

I am a long time Alaskan who has enjoyed multiple backpacking and day hikes as well as winter ski trips in Denali State Park. I have had the pleasure of 30 years of cabin visits on the edge of Denali State Park. It is a unique place in which to enjoy wilderness beauty, wildlife, and natural quiet. Helicopter noise destroys all that.

Please do not allow helicopters in Denali State Park.

Elizabeth Hatton
907 331 8754
aklhatton@gmail.com

From: [Melanie Heacox](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us; ricky.gease@alaska.gov
Subject: Helicopter tours in Denali State Park
Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 6:57:43 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Helicopters should not be allowed in the skies over Denali State Park. I request that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission say "no" to this commercial activity proposed for the new RV Campground Resort.

The commercial operator suggests up to eight flights per day from spring to fall. Because I live in SE Alaska I'm all too aware of the endless noise of helicopters above Juneau Alaska on any given summer day. A recent visitor suggested it sounded to him like a Viet Nam war zone. Locals can hardly wait for the end of summer, for quiet to return.

Helicopters are loud and disruptive and they will degrade the park's wild values, and diminish the experience of hikers and backpackers who travel there for quiet and solitude. Research indicated that helicopter noise damages human health and learning ability. Helicopters keep the view to themselves and share the noise with the rest with everybody below. They are a particular and acute form of noise pollution.

Park Superintendent Stuart Leidner has noted that, based on Denali State Park's management plan and regulations, commercial helicopter operations "are deemed incompatible" with the park's designated wilderness.

There are no shortage of helicopter operations in the skies of Alaska. Please leave Denali State Park as a place to recreate without the incessant buzzing of rotors.

Thank you.

Melanie Heacox
P.O. Box 359
Gustavus, AK 99826

From: [Jan Myers](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Helicopter
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025 8:46:11 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Sent from my iPhone

I recently read Bill Sherwonit's commentary on helicopter rides in or close to Denali State Park. This park is enjoyed by many for its peaceful and scenic beauty. Helicopter rides simply do not belong in such a place and would be disruptive to both park users and wildlife. Please consider either not permitting them or restricting their use to limited areas.

Thank you
Jan Myers

From: [Susan Orlansky](#)
To: msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us; [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: public comment -- helicopter tours
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025 8:25:24 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

I understand the Borough is considering an application to approve helicopter tours over Denali State Park. I urge the Borough to reject the application. I own a cabin just south of the Park and I am a regular non-motorized user of the Park. I – and many others – appreciate the quiet of wild lands. Our experiences would be diminished if we were subjected to the noise of sightseeing helicopters.

Susan Orlansky
Mile 129.7 Parks Highway

2141 Esquire Dr.
Anchorage, AK 99517
907-952-1668

From: sbsommer@mtaonline.net
To: [Peggy Horton](mailto:Peggy.Horton); msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us; ricky.gease@alaska.gov
Subject: comments on helicopter tours over Denali State Park
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025 12:10:47 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Hi,

I've just learned about a new RV campground and resort being planned in Denali State Park at mile 135.7 of the Parks Highway. While I have used many of Alaska's road-accessible campgrounds over the years and am glad they offer recreational opportunities for everyone, I'm concerned about one particular aspect of this new project: helicopter tours in the area.

With up to 8 helicopter tours per day from May to September planned, that would definitely bother hikers or backpackers on local trails such as Curry and Kesugi ridges, canoeists paddling peacefully on Byers Lake, or anyone else trying to enjoy a quiet getaway in the area. I'm guessing the local wildlife wouldn't be thrilled either.

I've seen that area change significantly over the years. My parents, the Beemans, built that little old cabin along the shore of Byers Lake in 1959 before I was born; they lived in it the first two winters they were married. The legendary Don Sheldon flew them in and out from Talkeetna. When the Parks Highway was established, our family would drive up and visit our cabin. When Denali State Park expanded, my folks sold their property and cabin to the state; I still love taking friends to the cabin to tell them about it. It's living history, with trees growing tall from the sod roof. When Kesugi Ken Campground opened, I camped there and stayed in one of the cabins. This summer, I plan to backpack the new Curry Ridge Connector Trail and as many parts of Kesugi as the weather gods will let me. So I'm not against progress, but I am against increased noise for such a beautiful and still-wild place.

Please don't allow noisy helicopter tours to ruin that wilderness.

Thank you,
Susan Sommer

www.akwriter.com

907-862-7158

January 16, 2025

To All Concerned:

I am very concerned about a "RV Campground Resort" proposed to establish itself within the Denali State Park. Since this developer wants to include helicopter tours as one of the activities of this resort, I strongly oppose this and ask that the Matanuska-Susitna Planning Commission NOT approve this project.

The interruption to the pristine beauty and serenity of the park would be very disruptive to our people wanting to enjoy this national park. The animals, a huge draw for Alaskans and tourists alike, would lose the natural calm and peace the park provides for these animals to survive naturally.

I have enjoyed the park for years and have been grateful for the protections exercised for Denali Park. Personal vehicles are not allowed to enter the park roadways on a regular basis, the Park has bus tours for visitors to observe the beautiful landscape and view the amazing animals. Helicopters are loud and can dive down to get a closer view of the animals. That is so concerning. If we allow several flights daily via a noisy helicopter, what is next? Will we be letting personal vehicles (with or without a muffler) free reign along Denali Parks narrow roadways? Where will the obnoxious noise and pollution end?

Please take into consideration the wilderness, the quiet, the natural habitat for the animals, and so much more that will be effected by this proposed resort's use of helicopters. As a citizen and property owner in the Mat Su Borough for 26 years, I submit this letter as my opposition to this permit.

If you need to reach me, I have included my contact information.

Sincerely,

Lois Tidwell

2787 S Althea Street, Wasilla, AK 99654

Phone #907-631-8008

Comment on Resolution 24-33, CUP within DSP

From Steve Charles <scharles@mtaonline.net>

Date Thu 1/16/2025 2:46 PM

To MSB Planning Commission <msb.planning.commission@matsugov.us>

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Hello,

I would like to comment on my opposition to the use of helicopters for within Denali State Park as proposed in the application for a CUP from the developers of a campground/resort. A heliport and accompanying helicopter tours, as proposed by the developer, is inappropriate for the Park, especially being adjacent to the popular Kesugi' Ken Campground and the Curry and Kesugi Ridge Trails. Folks from Alaska, the nation and the world come to Denali State Park to enjoy the serene wilderness. And they spend money here and tell their friends about the Alaska Wilderness.

To hear the thumping of helicopters every hour destroys that image of wildness that folks come from all over the world come to experience. I appreciate the efforts by the developers to address bear protocols and other important features of the campground, but the heliport and helicopter use should not be included in the development.

Steve Charles

Willow, AK

FW: Helicopter tour activity in Denali State Park

From Jason Ortiz <jason.ortiz@matsugov.us>
Date Wed 1/15/2025 1:58 PM
To Lacie Olivieri <Lacie.Olivieri@matsugov.us>

FYI,

Public comments.

Jason Ortiz

Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Deputy Director - Planning & Land Use Department
350 E. Dahlia Ave
Palmer, AK 99645
907-861-7854

From: Angie Hamill <angie.hamill.ak@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 12:51 PM
To: Alex Strawn <Alex.strawn@matsugov.us>; Maija DiSalvo <Maija.disalvo@matsugov.us>; Jason Ortiz <jason.ortiz@matsugov.us>
Subject: Helicopter tour activity in Denali State Park

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Hello, I am writing today in **opposition of any helicopter tour activity within Denali State Park**. The quiet and natural environment of the state park is one reason the park was established for the enjoyment of residents and guests of Alaska. Helicopter tour activity would highly degrade the experience of those spending time in and around Denali State park. One hiking and sitting atop Kesugi Ridge does not want the peace and beauty interrupted by the sound and vision of tour helicopters. Just the thought of the invasion of the peace enjoyed in nature is enough to make me feel nauseous.

I know that there are some developers who want to build a commercial RV Park on a private inholding within Denali State Park and that they want to be able to offer helicopter tours. I beg you to **deny the conditional use permit for this helicopter tour activity**. It is incompatible with the experience intended for the enjoyment of Denali State Park.

Thank you,
Angie Hamill
Chugiak, AK

From: [Joel Bennett](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us
Subject: Conditional Use Permit for Denali State Park resort project
Date: Friday, January 17, 2025 10:37:00 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To: Peggy Horton
Matsu Borough Planning Commission

From: Joel Bennett
15255 Point Louisa Rd
Juneau, AK 99801
907-723-8961

January 17, 2025

Dear Mrs Horton and members of the planning commission,

This is to oppose authorization of commercial helicopter tours as part of a conditional use permit that authorizes a RV campground resort in Denali State Park.

As a long time user of Alaska's wild lands and State Parks, I believe the values they represent must be carefully safeguarded. This includes reasonable restrictions on human activities that adversely impact wildlife and the quiet enjoyment of the land by the public.

Aircraft noise is an issue in many public places, but the sound of helicopters is particularly extreme in a back country setting like Denali State Park. This affects wildlife in particular, and you must assume that the clientele that helicopter tours would cater to would want to view wildlife as close as possible. As a result, this activity would compromise wildlife viewing for hikers and other park users, as well as creating a known disturbance to animal movements and behavior. I have some experience with this issue, having served for over 13 years on the State Board of Game. Since statehood, Alaska's wildlife hunting regulations have prohibited helicopter use to assist hunting activities in any way, in part because of the disturbance factor. Small fixed wing aircraft are not similarly restricted.

In short, commercial helicopter tours originating from an inholding facility in Denali State Park are simply not compatible with the values for which the Park was created. I strongly urge you to prohibit this activity in the conditional use permit under consideration.

Sincerely,

Joel Bennett

From: [Wayne Hall](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#); msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us
Subject: Denali State Park Helicopters
Date: Friday, January 17, 2025 11:52:45 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Greetings,

Please deny a permit request by Ark LLC to operate helicopter tours of Denali State Park out of their proposed commercial RV resort on the Parks Highway. Helicopter use is not compatible with the values currently provided by Denali State Park to thousands of visitors as well as wildlife in the park. The location of the proposed heliport is also across the Kesugi Ken campground, day use area and State Park cabins and will directly negatively impact the experience for visitors and users of that publicly-funded facility. Without doubt, if the permit is approved, the next step would be helicopter landings within the State Park with even more negative impacts on existing users and wildlife. And all of the negative impacts of helicopter use on thousands of other users would be for the speculative financial benefit of very few.

Again, please deny the permit for Denali State Park helicopter use.

Thank you.

Wayne Hall
Anchorage



Virus-free www.avg.com

From: [Halverson](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: No Helicopters in Denali State Park!!
Date: Friday, January 17, 2025 2:11:56 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Ms. Horton,

I'm writing to ask the planning commission to reject the developer's proposal for building an RV Campground Resort on a private inholding within Denali State Park. At the very least, the proposal should be modified to prohibit all helicopter tours. The noisy, motorized intrusion of helicopters in and around the state park will negatively affect the park's wild nature, the wildlife within the park and the experiences of most park visitors.

I am a long time Alaskan who enjoys our unparalleled state park system. Denali State Park is a treasure. I spent a few days there this fall in the public use cabin with the sod roof. I paddled on the lake each day and saw mergansers and a pair of swans. In the evening I sat on the cabin porch and listened to loons calling. It would be terrible to have helicopters buzzing over head, disrupting the quiet and interrupting the experience of the wilderness. Please work to protect Denali State Park from this incursion. The Kesugi Ridge and Curry Ridge areas adjacent to the park also deserve protection from noisy motors. Quiet is a resource. Helicopters are loud. Quiet spaces need protection from noise.

Thank you,
Eileen Halverson

From: [Tami Hamler](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: No helicopters in Denali State Park
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025 10:25:46 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

I am firmly against allowing helicopter flights of any kind in Denali State Park. The sound and sight of these machines would detract from what is a remarkable terrain.

Thank you for protecting the park for the benefit of all who are privileged to visit.

Tami Hamler
3000 Alder Circle
Anchorage 99508

From: [Cynthia Hendel](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Helicopter permit in Denali State Park
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025 6:50:17 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Ms. Horton,

I would like to express my extreme concern and opposition to the requested permit for helicopter tours in Denali State Park and Curry Ridge.

I'm a property owner in the Denali View Subdivision and also Talkeetna and enjoy many outdoor activities in nature in this area. This would greatly disturb the wildlife and numerous species of birds, as well of the tranquility of those camping or using their cabins .

Please do not approve this permit!!!

Sincerely,

Cynthia Hendel

From: [Marilyn](#)
To: msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us
Cc: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Conditional Use Permit for helipad and helicopter tours in Denali State Park
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025 9:25:27 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Greetings –

I am writing to express my OPPOSITION to permitting the construction of a helipad and operation of helicopter tours from an inholding in Denali State Park as part of a proposed RV park along the Parks Highway. The owners of the inholding have the right to develop their property as an RV park (though I do not support it) but they do not own the airspace and do not have the right to impose the noise of helicopters on other users of DSP. Natural soundscapes are the most endangered sound and we must do our best to preserve what we have. In addition, the noise from helicopters, especially flying at low altitudes, impacts wildlife, often frightening and eliciting fleeing behavior. I find the noise and wash from a helicopter distressing and I understand what it is so it is not surprising that it is disturbing to wildlife.

Helicopters have their place and utility but they should not be permitted to fly within DSP except for emergencies and perhaps research. I have hiked and backpacked the Kesugi and Curry Ridges and the noise from helicopters would be intrusive.

I am well acquainted with the intensity of helicopter noise because I have lived near Providence Hospital and Merrill Field in Anchorage for more than 40 years.

Certainly any landings within Denali State Park must be expressly prohibited.

Please do not approve the helicopter element in the Conditional Use Permit. Thank you.

Marilyn Houser
Anchorage
lostinspace@matnet.com

From: [G Nelson](#)
To: [MSB Planning Commission](#); [Peggy Horton](#)
Cc: ricky.gease@alaska.gov
Subject: Helicopter Tours at Denali State Park
Date: Friday, January 17, 2025 10:55:11 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Good morning,

Denali State Park, Kesugi Ridge Trail and Kesugi Ken Campground are at the top of my list of favorite places in Alaska. I thoroughly enjoy the area for its remoteness, (yet easy access from the Parks Hwy) the spectacular views even on cloudy days, the beautiful trail, and most importantly the essence of quiet and still it provides. We send anyone who comes to visit us from outside Alaska to Denali State Park. They are always blown away by its splendor and magic.

I am extremely concerned about the possibility of hourly helicopter tours, May to September from a proposed campground complex within the state park and directly across from Kesugi Ken Campground. A proposed RV/Tent campground complex to provide more people with the opportunity to experience this gem of a state park is a fine idea. A heli-pad with flights in and around and across Denali State Park with high noise decibels that cut into that serene experience for campers, hikers, fishers will never be a good idea.

Recently, the Curry Ridge trail was established as an extension of the wonderful Kesugi trail and I am excited to hike this new section of trail as soon as possible. I appreciate that MatSu Borough, Alaska State Parks and other entities have created this world class recreational experience of solace, and beauty that offers users a place away from our busy, noisy lives.

I urge you to do everything within your power to maintain the character, value and integrity of our gem....Denali State Park.

Thank you for you attention and diligence,
Gretchen Nelson
3039 Alder Cir Anchorage, AK

From: [Marianne Pedersen](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Ark@Denali application to develop RV Campground - comment
Date: Thursday, January 16, 2025 6:04:00 PM
Importance: High

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

I have reviewed the documents regarding the development of an RV campground with cabins and service facilities at milepost 135.7, 4852 North Parks Highway. I have also reviewed Ark@Denali's YouTube Video and Facebook page.

In the video, Yolanda D'Oyen claims she wants people to have access to the spectacular views of Denali from her property. I will start by saying that people already have access to view Denali from several sites nearby: Denali View South, Denali View North, Mary's Mt. McKinley View, Kesugi Ken Campground, Mt. McKinley Princess Wilderness Lodge, and various trails in the area.

I am a frequent user of Kesugi Ridge and Curry Ridge. I use the areas year-round for hiking, running, skiing, and snowshoeing, and in 2020 we bought property within the state park where I spend extensive time. Denali State Park is a unique area due to its wildlife and bird habitat, quietness, and in the wintertime, darkness. The darkness makes it possible to enjoy the stars and the aurora and the magic of the full moon.

When we received the letter from the municipality regarding the permit request, it didn't seem like a big deal; however, reading the application made me realize that it will have a huge impact on the area and state park users.

Helicopter tours:

The noise from helicopters possibly doing 8 tours a day (16 times taking off/landing), will create noise that will affect business owners in the area, users of Kesugi Ken Campground, property owners, and people recreating on Curry Ridge.

Kesugi Ken Campground is already highly affected by traffic on the highway, and adding noise pollution will affect the experience for people recreating, either they spend time at the campground or use the trails in the area.

Another issue, that I hope will be addressed by Alaska State Park officials, is the issue of having a private company running helicopter tours in a state park, that also borders a national park. This is not appropriate from my perspective. I strongly ask the planning commission to deny this request.

Winter camping for snow machine users:

I frequently use snow machine trails for skiing and hiking and I am not against snow

machining. I am, however, skeptical about establishing a campground that will increase the use of snow machines in the area, and the reason is that it will add users to existing trailheads used by cabin owners. It will also add noise pollution. Currently, there is limited parking for snow machine use, and increased use will create competition between cabin owners and visiting recreational users for parking spots, specifically around mile 127 and mile 131.

Curry Ridge and Kesugi Ridge are fragile alpine areas. It is always windblown in the wintertime, with large areas without snow. As it is now, there is limited snow machine traffic on these ridges, and I believe that increasing the use of snow machine traffic is not sustainable.

Wildlife habitat:

The area is rich in wildlife. Migrating birds enjoy stopovers at the lakes on the ridges, and I see tracks of bears, wolves, lynx, snowshoe hares, moose, and wolverines.

I am concerned about the suggested building of cabins by the river and the use of the river area. Just a little bit north of the proposed RV Campground is Lower Troublesome Creek. The state park typically closes the area in the fall due to high bear activity. The river area, which is just a little bit upstream from the proposed RV park, provides an important food source for bears. When the bears move out, the wolves move in and feed on the leftover salmon carcasses. And the birds also get their share. There is actually an eagle's nest just south of the main area where the bears feed on fish. I am concerned that the development of tourist hot spot in this area will have a negative effect on wildlife.

Light pollution:

The permit request indicates that the RV Campground will be lighted in the wintertime. This will affect properties in the area as well as users of Kesugi Ken Campground (cabins) and evening/night users of Curry Ridge, and is, in my opinion, not compatible with the nature experience state park users are seeking.

In a time when it is challenging to find places in nature without noise and light pollution, and when wildlife habitat is declining, I am opposed to the current development plans put forward by Ark@Denali at mile 135.7 North Parks Highway for the reasons described above. I believe that the current facilities in the area provides adequate and sustainable access for recreation in the area. Any new development in the area should focus on sustainability and be aligned with the interests of Denali State Park and current property holders.

Sincerely,

Marianne Pedersen

Property Owner at Denali View Homeowner Association

Frequent user of Denali State Park

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From: [Cari Sayre](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Cc: msb.planningcommission@matsugov.us; ricky.gease@alaska.gov
Subject: Denali State Park and helicopter tours
Date: Friday, January 17, 2025 11:39:58 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

To Whom It May Concern,

We are adamantly opposed to the issuance of a conditional use permit allowing helicopter use for ANY purpose other than search and rescue within the boundaries of Denali State Park. The K'esugi Ridge Trail and the trails on Curry Ridge (from the K'esugi Ken campground) are widely used by people seeking **quiet** recreation opportunities away from the hustle and bustle and airplane noise of Anchorage and other towns.

The Mission Statement of Alaska State Parks is as follows:

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation provides outdoor recreation opportunities and conserves and interprets natural, cultural, and historic resources for the use, enjoyment, and welfare of the people.

This accessible wilderness should be preserved, for the human users (enjoyment of the wilderness should not require earplugs or noise-canceling headphones!) and, more importantly, for the wildlife who call it home and have no say in this matter.

When we hiked the NaPali Coast trail on the island of Kauai in 1992 we were definitely impacted in a negative way by the noise of a helicopter sightseeing tour offshore. It is not something one forgets. And that was just once in 3 days. I can't imagine the impact of up to 8 flyovers in a single day!

When the DSP crew (Dave Johnston, Pete Robinson and George Menard) laid out the K'esugi Ridge trail in the mid-late 1970s they had high hopes for sharing all the beauty they experienced as they worked to find the route with the best views, water sources, easy topography. They did a spectacular job and many, many people have approached Dave to thank him for their efforts in the 50 years since. We're proud that an annual race is now being held on K'esuge Ridge as well, bringing even more folks into the family of DSP lovers.

In addition to the Public Use Cabins, other concessions in DSP base their livelihoods on **quiet** recreation, including canoe rentals, guided day-hiking opportunities, etc. All of those are in the category of Quiet Recreation. How awful would it be for someone in a canoe on Byers Lake, quietly watching swans or listening to loons to be suddenly in the midst of helicopter noise...?

Please, please do not allow this travesty!

Yours,

Cari Sayre and Dave Johnston (former/retired Denali State Park Ranger 1974-2002)

From: [John](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Denali State Park CUP PC resolution 24-33
Date: Friday, January 17, 2025 11:04:22 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Peggy, this is for the record in the event I am not able to attend Monday's hearing. Thank you.
January 17, 2025

Dear Planning Commissioners:

Denali State Park is a back-country park, a mixture of wilderness and natural areas, bounded by the Susitna River on the east and Denali National Park on the west. The Chulitna River bisects the Park.

Denali State Park is inhabited by both grizzly and black bear, wolves, moose, and many species of small mammals, including fox and lynx. The stream running thorough the subject property contains salmon, which attract bears and other wildlife.

Denali State Park draws visitors from Alaska, the lower 48, and abroad who come to enjoy its world class vistas, natural soundscape, and hiking trails that lead through undisturbed forests to alpine tundra. Rafters use the Chulitna River.

People come to the Park to enjoy this natural environment. They come to get away from the noise and bustle not to have it shoved in their face. The problem is not just one passing helicopter. The problem is the ARK plan, which includes up to 4 operations per hour (an operation is a takeoff or landing), eight hours a day, every day from May 15 to September 15.

This is a lot of noise directly across from the heavily visited Kesugi Ken campground and its Curry Ridge trail to the alpine tundra. The natural quiet park that visitors seek would be continually disrupted.

This is why you have received roughly 45 comment letters, all but one of which objects to helicopters.

The Denali State Park Management Plan: "Noise from fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters travels long distances, disturbing ground-based recreationists seeking quiet and solitude." Everybody knows helicopters make undue noise.

ARK would derive considerable benefit from being located within Denali State Park. Their guests would have a world class trail system right across the street. But with benefit comes responsibility... to be a good neighbor; to not detract from the quality of the park user

experience which is enjoyed by so many.

This is a quasi-judicial case and your decision is final. It's a weighty responsibility. Your duty per Code (17.17.040) is "... to assure that the conditional use will be compatible with the surrounding area and in keeping with the character and integrity of the Denali State Park." This stipulation cannot be met without listening to those who use the park and would be directly and adversely affected by a development of this nature and scale.

The problem is helicopters. Helicopters are incompatible with the character, integrity, and use of the Park and should not be allowed there.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Strassenburgh
PO Box 766
Talkeetna, AK 99676

From: [charlianne witt](#)
To: [Peggy Horton](#)
Subject: Concerned Local on the RV Campground Resort
Date: Friday, January 17, 2025 12:01:22 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

A Concerned local citizen

If an RV Campground Resort in Denali State Park was approved by Matsu Borough's Planning Commission it would be detrimental to the park's natural wildlife. It brings in disruptive noise, pollution of all kinds and conflicts with the locals making them more susceptible to vandalism. We need to be respecting the boundaries set by generations of people and not interfere with our great park system's wildlife over expanding tourism that has little benefit on a larger scale.

As a local growing up rural and choosing to continue this way of life, the peace and tranquility it brings is unmatched. People living in and around the park area love and cherish their peace and don't want to see helicopters in and out hovering over them so disruptively

Denali helicopters

From Susan Derrera <susanderrera@gmail.com>

Date Fri 1/17/2025 9:21 AM

To MSB Planning Commission <msb.planning.commission@matsugov.us>

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Helicopters at Denali National Park would be an anathema to the experience of the wild and beautiful nature of the area, disturbing animals and visitors alike for the “benefit” of a minority who have the resources to experience the park at a remove. I encourage you to keep the park free from helicopter tourism.

Thank you,

Susan Derrera

John Duffy, PhD, AICP, CM

P.O. Box 459, Palmer, AK 99645 | 907-830-7307 | jduffy@alaska.edu

January 16, 2025

Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Planning Commission
350 E. Dahlia Ave.
Palmer, Alaska 99645

RE: Conditional Use Permit in Denali State Park, milepost 135.7, 4852 North Parks Highway

To the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission:

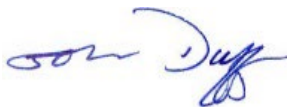
The proposed helipad and associated helicopter request are activities that do not meet the general standard articulated in 17.17.180 for conditional use permits, that “(1) the conditional use will not detract from the value, character or integrity of Denali State Park.” The proposed use definitely will detract from the value, character AND integrity of the park.

For individuals seeking a flightseeing experience there is no shortage of opportunities for flightseeing experiences in the area that minimally affect the State Park, with flights originating in Talkeetna, Healy, and outside the Denali National Park entrance.

Please support the many of us who enjoy the Park’s peace and deny the portion of the CUP application for helipads and helicopter flights.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Duffy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Duffy, PhD, AICP, CM
907-830-7307