

Wolf Lake Community Park

Discussion with Mat-Su Borough Parks, Recreation & Trails Advisory Board

Prepared: June 23, 2025

Background

The State of Alaska is considering / planning for disposal of approximately 13-acres of property on the Southeast corner of Wolf Lake. Their plan is to subdivide this property for disposal in up to 15 parcels, no smaller than 40,000 SF or one nominal acre. A copy of the State's Project Summary is included as Attachment 1.

Representatives from the State DNR did a presentation to the North Lakes Community Council (NLCC) on March 27, 2024. There was strong public opposition to the State's plan.

Area residents would much prefer the property be dedicated as a Borough owned and well-managed day-use Community Park including controlled public access to the lake. The park land could ultimately be owned by the Mat-Su Borough and, through partnership with the Community Councils, become a well managed day-use community park. The park would be managed consistent with local community values, aligned with the Wolf Lake - Lake Management Plan and respectful of the aviation activity in the area.

The State has initially indicated they have no interest in such land use.

Also at the May 20 meeting, Barbara Doty of D.E. NorthFork LLC, owner of the Wolf Lake Airport, presented a concept to install several new float plane slips in the wetlands area of the subject State property. She also indicated support for the community park concept as long as it was operated in a way consistent with the aviation community and with the lake management plan. Her concept received positive feedback from many members and guests at the May NLCC Meeting.

The NLCC provided email feedback to the State of Alaska on March 28, 2025 and provided a copy to our subscribers and Facebook neighborhood groups.

Since then, we have continued to advocate with the Fishhook Community Council, the Mat-Su Borough Administration, and through our State Senator to encourage the Borough and State to consider the greater public interest and need for parks and recreation in this now significantly developed area of the Valley.

We initiated a hard-copy and on-line survey of local area residents and the results so far are:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| • Total Responses: | 433 | |
| • In favor of Community Park | 401 | 93% |
| • Opposed to Community Park | 32 | 07% |
| • Live within 3 miles of Wolf Lake | 394 | 91% |
| • Live beyond 3 miles of Wolf Lake | 39 | 09% |

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The NLCC met with Borough Manager, Mike Brown and Land Manager, Joe Metzger. They both expressed support for this concept and felt it was worthy of further evaluation. We testified to the Borough Assembly recommending seeking their support. At least two of the members expressed strong support and ultimately the Assembly agreed unanimously to have the Administration look into it and report back.

Community Park Concept

We have developed a sketch showing the concept envisioned for the Wolf Lake Community Park (see attached). The vision is for a partnership that results in a well-managed and maintained day-use-only Public Park that is aligned with the needs of the local community, respectful of the Wolf Lake Management Plan and the local aviation community.

Request of MSB Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board (PRTAB)

The NLCC is requesting the PRTAB support this concept and prepare a resolution to that effect.

We appreciate your interest and for inviting us to participate in your Advisory Board meeting this evening. We also stand-by for further coordination and any assistance we can provide to advance this much needed recreational opportunity.

North Lakes Community Council
Rod Hanson, President
907-841-8735
president@nlakes.cc

Department of Natural Resources

Division of Mining, Land and Water



Fact Sheet: State Land Sales Process

The Department of Natural Resources land sale project development process is a multi-year decision making process involving multiple procedural steps and points of public participation.

Planning

Land sale projects begin with a review of State land use plans to determine locations for potential land sales. Land use plans allocate state land to a variety of uses, such as agriculture, forestry, and settlement, and they specify criteria that affect potential development. The land use plan is established through a public process. It begins with land status and resource research, followed by consultation and information gathering from multiple units within DNR, other state and federal agencies, affected interest groups, and through public scoping meetings. A draft plan is then prepared and distributed for review within DNR, other state agencies, and the public. Typically, numerous public meetings are held within the land use plan region. The draft plan is almost always modified because of this public and agency review process, and a revised plan is subsequently submitted to the DNR Commissioner for adoption. State land must be classified settlement prior to sale although, DNR may identify lands for potential sale which are not classified settlement, but the classification of the land, as well as the land use plan itself, must be changed to settlement prior to sale.

Land use plans also provide management intent, guidelines, and policies for land management, usage, and development in accordance with the classifications. Land use plans provide specific recommendations and requirements for the development, design, and sale of land classified settlement.

Research

Once a project area is identified, DNR researches the applicable land use to identify the management intent, guidelines, and conditions for that project. In addition, DNR researches the physical conditions of the land (topography, soils, wetlands, etc.), land title, access, and other information. This information is compiled and presented for internal division review and sent to other state agencies for review in their field of expertise. This step is called Agency Review.

Preliminary Decision

DNR compiles the research and information gathered from the above steps and summarizes this information in a Preliminary Decision (PD). The PD is DNR's written proposed determination that the project is in the state's best interest. The PD contains information about the known conditions of the land; existing uses; proposed and existing easements and rights-of-way; proposed title reservations; lands to be retained; the proposed method of sale; and the proposed conditions of sale and development. The PD includes a summary of comments received during Agency Review and responses to those comments, a Vicinity Map, and the public comment notice. If there are any related proposed actions (such as Mineral Orders, Land Classification Orders, or Area Plan Amendments), these documents are also drafted and included with the PD.

Public Notice and Comment

DNR then notifies the public of the PD, and any related proposed actions, and invites public comment in accordance with AS 38.05.945 Notice. The notice includes directions on how to obtain the PD, how to submit comment, provides deadlines for public comments, and explains eligibility to appeal a final decision. The PD is posted on the State Public Notice website and the Alaska State Land Sales website. The PD may also be available at any DNR Public Information Center. Copies of the public notice are mailed to interested parties, landowners, municipalities, Native and community organizations, in the vicinity of the offering. DNR may also request posting in various other public areas or may request notification via media outlets. Social media may also be utilized to make the public notice known.

A public comment period lasts a minimum of 30 days after issuance of the PD. While DNR considers comments received after the deadline for public comments, such comments will not be directly addressed in the final decision. Depending on accessibility, timing, public interest, funding, and other factors, DNR may also hold a public meeting in communities near the offering. Public meetings offer the public an in-person opportunity to meet with DNR staff to learn and share

information about a project prior to the comment period deadline.

Final Finding

Once the public comment period has ended, DNR evaluates the comments received and considers any issues or concerns raised. If issues can be eliminated or mitigated, and if the department still believes the proposal is in the best interest of the state, DNR drafts a Final Finding and Decision (FFD) in accordance with *AS 38.05.035(e) Powers and Duties of the Director*. The FFD incorporates and revises the PD. The FFD will describe any new information or modifications to the proposal, and how DNR will proceed with the land sale. The FFD also contains the department's response to all comments received during the public comment period. If the land sale requires any related actions (such as Mineral Orders, Land Classification Orders, or Area Plan Amendments) these will be issued concurrently with the FFD. If the proposal requires a significant change, or if the scope of the project increases, DNR will revise the PD accordingly, reissue public notice, and allow additional opportunity for public comment on the amended proposal. If DNR determines that the proposal is not in the best interest of the state, a FFD is typically not issued.

Once approved, the FFD is signed and issued by DNR. Parties who submitted comment during the public comment period will receive a copy of the FFD. The FFD also contains information on appealing the decision or requesting reconsideration by the Commissioner, as applicable. The FFD will also be posted on the Alaska State Land Sales website.

Development, Appraisal, and Offering

Subdivision Sales:

If the FFD is issued, DNR may proceed with development of the project. This includes design, survey, platting, and appraisal. The project design and survey will conform to the conditions described in the FFD. DNR will typically contract for a subdivision survey. Local platting authorities, usually boroughs, provide for further public input before a preliminary plat is fixed. Once a final survey plat is complete, DNR may proceed to appraisal and sale offering. All parcels must be appraised within two years prior to offering, AS 38.05.05.840 Appraisal. The appraisal may be conducted by DNR or may be contracted. Parcels are then offered for sale to the public per AS 38.05.05.045 Generally.

Remote Recreational Cabin Sites program:

If the FFD is issued, DNR may make available a limited number of authorizations to eligible Alaskans for entry to the project area. This is done by an application and drawing process. Individuals who receive an authorization to stake a parcel will receive additional instruction on the guidelines for staking during the specified staking period. After staking, authorized participants must submit a lease application. If approved, they may lease the site for up to four years while the state surveys and appraises the property. DNR requires a rental fee for the lease and payments toward a deposit to pay for the survey and the appraisal of the leased parcel. Once the survey and appraisal are completed and approved, the lessees may convert from a lease to a sale, paying appraised fair market value for the surveyed parcel.

Both programs:

A borough/municipality typically exercises platting authority, and DNR and the contract surveyor will work with the local platting or planning departments for approval of the subdivision plat. Although borough/municipal ordinances vary, this process typically includes opportunity for public review of the action and an additional public notice and opportunity for public comment per relevant borough/municipal ordinances. In the Unorganized Borough, DNR is the platting authority and will approve any subdivision plat in accordance with state subdivision requirements.

DNR can finance the purchase of parcels offered under both programs, depending on the eligibility of the purchaser and the amount involved. Financing the purchase of state land makes buying land a possibility for most purchasers who otherwise may not be able to afford to buy undeveloped land.

For more information, visit the DNR Land Sales website at
<https://landsales.alaska.gov/>

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF MINING, LAND, AND WATER

PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE

**Proposed Land Offering in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Wolf Lake Shores Subdivision– ADL 233753**

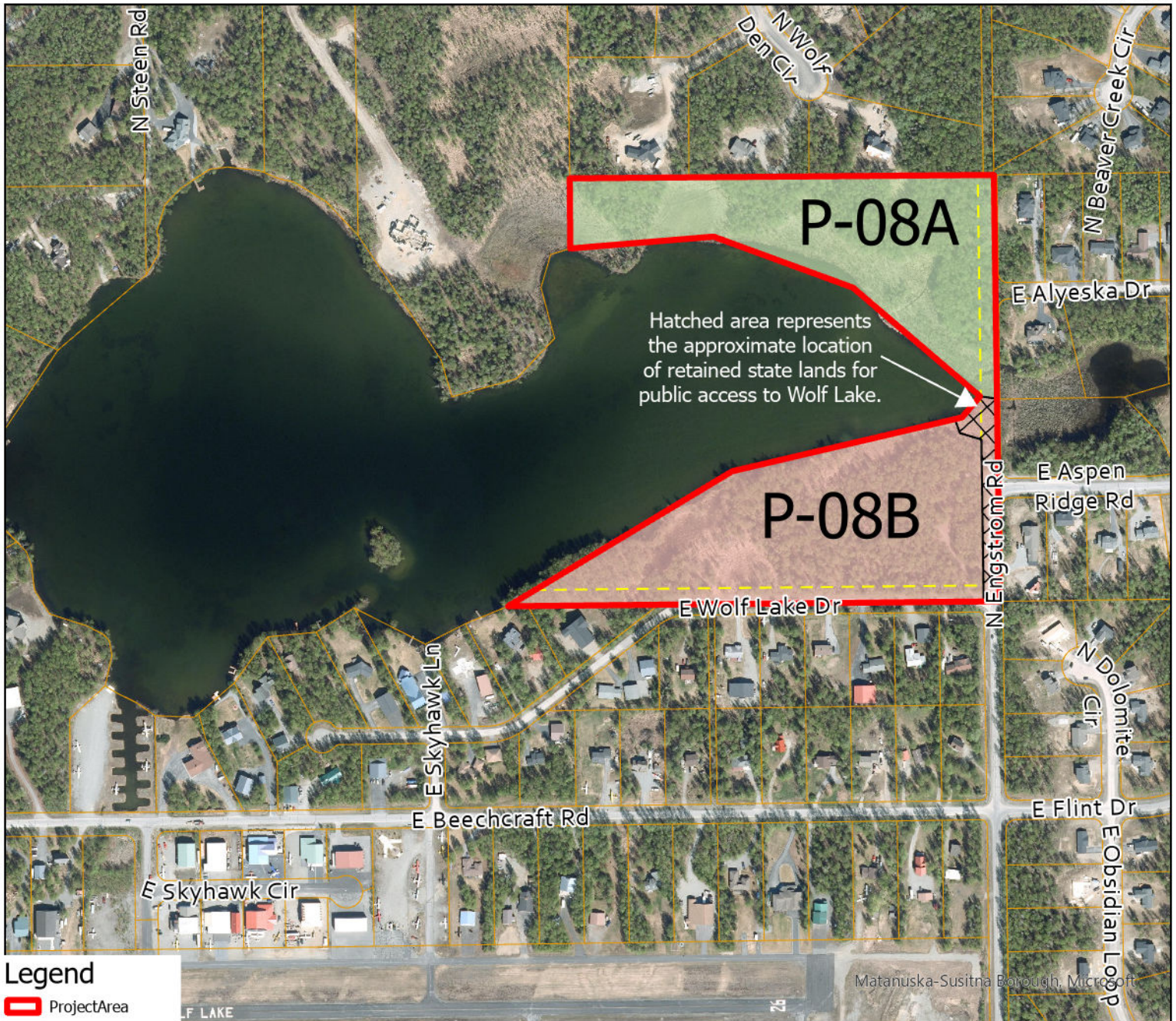
| | |
|--|---|
| Location | Land southeast of Wolf Lake between E Wolf Lake Drive and N Engstrom Road |
| Legal Description | Lot 3 of Section 16, Township 18 North, Range 01 East, Seward Meridian, Alaska according to the plat approved by the U.S. Surveyor General's Office, Juneau, Alaska, on April 2, 1915, containing 22.81 acres more or less, as depicted on the attached map. |
| Project Area Size | Project area contains approximately 23 acres total, approximately 13 acres identified for disposal |
| Proposed Number of Parcels/Size | Up to 15 parcels, no smaller than 40,000 square feet or one nominal acre |
| History | 1965: Bureau of Land Management transferred the lot to State ownership. 1984: Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) leased the lot and created Wolf Lake State Recreation Site. 2019: DPOR relinquished the land lease. By default, DNR's Southcentral Regional Office took over land management. DNR is seeking to establish a balance between retaining public access to Wolf Lake and creating parcels for sale that would be consistent with the nature of the surrounding neighborhoods. |
| Current Area Plan and Classification | Southeast Susitna Area Plan (adopted 2008), Unit P-08 Land Classification – Reserved Use Land |
| Proposed Related Actions | SSAP Amendment, Land Classification Order, Mineral Order (closing) |
| Retained Lands | DNR will retain a minimum of six contiguous acres in the northern portion of the project area for public recreation requirements outlined in the SSAP. Additionally, public access to Wolf Lake will be retained in the area of disposal for public activities and ADF&G fish stocking. |
| Public or Navigable Waters | Wolf Lake is navigable, therefore AS 38.05.127 applies and will be subject to access reservations in accordance with AS 38.05.127 <i>Access to Public or Navigable Water</i> . |
| Setbacks, Reserved Areas, Easements, and Conditions | <p>Parcels may be subject to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public access easement(s) • utility easement(s) • a 50-foot-wide section line easement on each side of surveyed or protracted section lines on State-owned land in accordance with AS 19.10.010 <i>Dedication of Land for Public Highways</i> and 11 AAC 51.025 <i>Section-line Easements</i>; section-line easements may be vacated under AS 19.30.410 <i>Vacation of Rights-of-Way</i> and 11 AAC 51.065 <i>Vacation of Easements</i> as part of the subdivision development • a 50-foot continuous easement upland from the Ordinary High Water (OHW) of public or navigable water bodies in accordance with AS 38.05.127 <i>Access To Navigable or Public Water</i> a 50-foot continuous to-and-along easement upland from the OHW of public or navigable water bodies in accordance with AS 38.05.127 <i>Access To Navigable or Public Water</i> • a minimum 100-foot building setback from the OHW of public or navigable water bodies, in accordance with the area plan • a 5-foot survey easement from the nearest practical point on the property boundary to control monuments within the parcel and an easement with a radius around the control monument, and as applicable, a 5-foot direct line-of-sight easement from the control station to an azimuth mark or other control monument • additional reservations and/or restrictions required through the Mat-Su Borough |



Attachment A: Vicinity Map

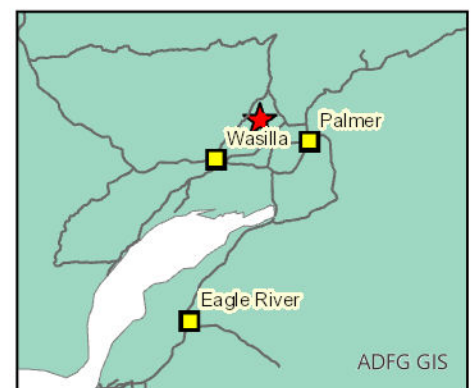
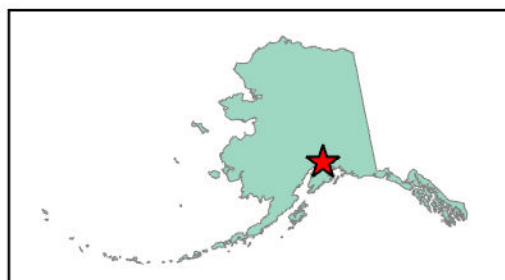
Wolf Lake Shores Subdivision

ADL 233753



0 250 500
Feet

Section 16, Township 18N,
Range 01E, Seward Meridian



JB 3/4/25



STATE OF ALASKA

Department of Natural Resources
Division of Mining, Land, and Water
Land Conveyance Section

State Land Sales Process

Subdivision Sales

The Decision Process

| Planning | Research | Agency Review | Preliminary Decision | Public Notice and Comment | Final Finding & Decision |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Settlement land is identified through the multi-year Area Plan process | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Multiple factors are researched to create a proposal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Input is sought from various local and State agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none">The initial proposal is updated and a Preliminary Decision is drafted | <ul style="list-style-type: none">LCS notifies the public of the proposal and solicits comments | <ul style="list-style-type: none">If the land disposal is determined to be in the best interest of the state, a Final Finding & Decision is issued |

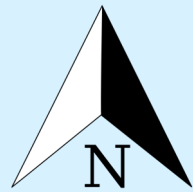
Continued Development

| Design | Survey | Platting | Appraisal |
|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Subdivision design is refined | <ul style="list-style-type: none">DNR typically contracts for the subdivision survey and a preliminary plat is produced | <ul style="list-style-type: none">The preliminary plat must be approved by the platting authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none">The platted parcels can now be appraised to determine fair market value |

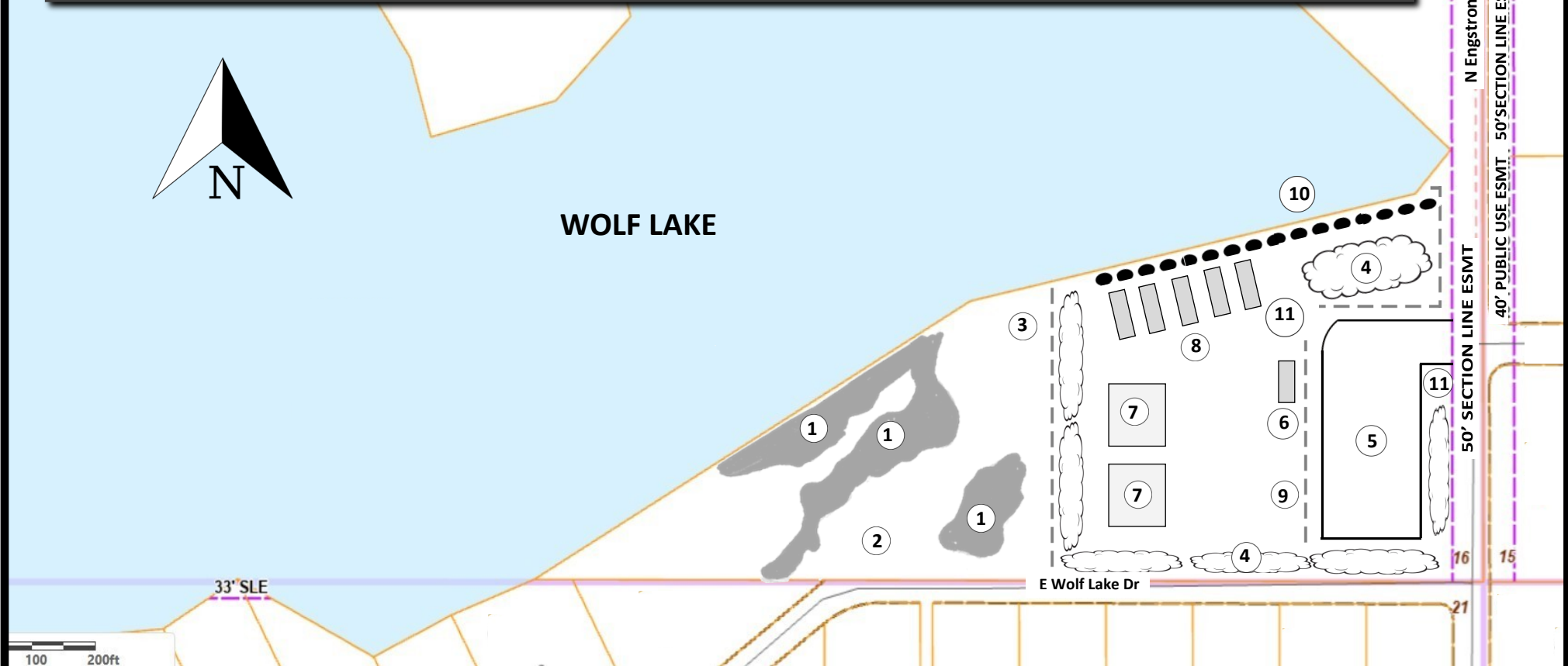
The completed parcels can now be offered for sale to the public. Subdivision parcel sales are typically conducted on an annual basis through a sealed-bid auction.

WOLF LAKE COMMUNITY PARK CONCEPT

NORTH LAKES COMMUNITY COUNCIL | June 23, 2025



WOLF LAKE



- 1 Existing Wetlands
- 2 Property for FLOAT PLANE SLIPS
- 3 Chain Link SECURITY FENCE
- 4 VEGETATIVE BUFFER
- 5 PARKING LOT W/Security Gate
- 6 RESTROOM

- 7 PAVILLION/BBQ GRILL
- 8 GRASSY AREA with PICNIC TABLES
- 9 SPLIT RAIL FENCE - (NO Vehicle Access)
- 10 LARGE BOULDERS - (NO Boat Launching)
- 11 SIGNAGE – (Lake Rules, Float Plane Info, Park Hours, etc.)

By: Alex Strawn
Action:

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD
RESOLUTION NO. 25-01**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDING MSB 17.02 - MANDATORY LAND USE PERMITS, MSB 17.55 - SETBACK AND SCREENING EASEMENTS, MSB 17.65 - VARIANCES, AND MSB 17.125 - DEFINITIONS.

WHEREAS, the 75-foot waterbody setback was originally established in 1973 by assembly ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the setback was temporarily reduced to 45 feet in 1986 but reinstated to 75 feet by voter initiative in 1987; and

WHEREAS, over time, enforcement of the 75-foot setback has been limited, resulting in widespread noncompliance, environmental impacts, and real estate complications; and

WHEREAS, between 1987 and present, over 700 shoreline structures have been built in violation of the 75-foot setback ordinance, many of which went undetected due to limited permitting requirements and enforcement options; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 25-073 offers a pragmatic solution by allowing structures to be built within 75 feet of a waterbody, provided they are designed and built in accordance with plans

developed by a qualified professional that ensure water quality is protected; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) continues to experience sustained residential, commercial, and recreational development near its lakes, rivers, and wetlands, increasing the need for clear land use regulations to manage growth while protecting environmental resources; and

WHEREAS, waterbodies in the MSB provide significant public benefits, including clean drinking water, fisheries, recreation, scenic values, and ecological services that can be negatively impacted by unmanaged development, impervious surfaces along waterbodies, and pollutant discharges; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 25-073 requires land use review and permitting procedures for mechanized development within 75 feet of a waterbody, providing the MSB the opportunity to evaluate drainage and infiltration in order to protect water quality; and

WHEREAS, the ordinance develops several new general standards for development within 75-feet of a waterbody to ensure pollution is minimized.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks, Recreation and Trails Advisory Board hereby recommends Assembly adoption of Ordinance 25-073.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Parks, Recreation
and Trails Advisory Board this 23rd day of June, 2025.

James Jones, Chair

ATTEST

Sarah Thomas, Staff Support

YES:

NO:

DRAFT