



Homer Soil and Water Conservation District

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Memorandum to: Homer City Council

From: Tara Schmidt, District Manager, Homer Soil and Water Conservation District

Subject: Diamond Creek

Date: May 22, 2013

Introduction: Homer Soil and Water Conservation District, with funding from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, has worked with the Homer Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission to develop the Diamond Creek Recreation Area (DCRA) Plan. This plan has been reviewed and adopted by the Homer Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission and the Homer Advisory Planning Commission.

Brief history: The City acquired the 273 acres between the Sterling Highway and Diamond Ridge in 2007, with the help of Kachemak Heritage Land Trust and funding from many sources, including the State Forest Legacy Program (FLP). The FLP requires the City to have a conservation easement filed for this parcel, and to develop a multi-resource management plan. A conservation easement was filed in 2010. The DCRA Management Plan will satisfy the final requirement.

Adopting the plan will have the added benefit of enabling the City to undertake improvements to the DCRA, as recommended under Goals and Objectives, without having to receive state approval on a project-by-project basis. Having an adopted plan will also enhance opportunities to apply for funding from a variety of sources to accomplish the goals identified in this plan.

The DCRA is adjacent to the state-owned Homer Demonstration Forest (HDF). The Homer Soil and Water Conservation District has an agreement with the State to oversee HDF management through the HDF Steering Committee, which includes the state Division of Forestry. The plan for the DCRA integrates with the plan for the HDF. Managing the two areas in a consistent and coordinated way will facilitate effective management for environmental, educational, and recreational benefits.

Conclusion and Requested Action:

The first step toward any trail or recreational development on the City property is adoption of a management plan, and approval by the state as required by Forest Legacy Program. The City Council will need review the plan and make any recommended changes. The council will need to pass a resolution, adopting the plan. Once the plan is adopted it will be forwarded to State for approval.

Homer Soil and Water Conservation District looks forward to continuing our partnership with the City of Homer, to seek funding, and to assist with accomplishing the objectives and goals as outlined in this plan.