



AGENDA ITEM REPORT

Ordinance 24-06, An Ordinance of the City Council of Homer, Alaska, Amending the FY24 Capital Budget by Appropriating \$25,000 from the Homer Accelerated Roads and Trails (HART) Trails Fund to Contract Engineering Services for Preliminary Design of Non-motorized Trails and Trailhead Connecting City of Homer Diamond Creek Property to the Proposed Highway Underpass. Davis.

Item Type: Backup Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
Date: 08 January 2024
From: Melissa Jacobsen, MMC, City Clerk

With the introduction of Ordinance 24-06 Council requested a copy of the Diamond Creek Recreation Area Multi-Resource Management Plan be provided for the next meeting.

The plan is available on the City's webpage through the Parks and Recreation link under Departments, and I've included a link to access the document.

<https://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/publicworks/diamond-creek-recreation-area>

Planning Technician Steffy provided the pages related to Recreation Objectives and map that are attached.

Strategies

Monitor forest health, in partnership with the Kenai Peninsula Borough and the DNR, Division of Forestry. Include the DCRA within any local wildfire risk assessments.

Where appropriate, route non-motorized public access through forested areas so as to promote strategic firebreaks (motorized vehicles are restricted except for maintenance and grooming unless approved by the City).

Conservation Objective 2:

Preserve and protect wetlands and riparian zones within the DCRA.

Strategies:

Plan new routes for public access through the DCRA in a manner and location that minimizes impact(s) to wetlands.

Seek funding for bridge upgrades and maintenance at trail-stream crossings, and for proper trail-hardening through wet areas.

Regulate and minimize non-winter motorized travel through the DCRA except for city-approved management activities.

Conservation Objective 3:

Preserve the natural scenic qualities of the DCRA.

Strategies:

Design and install signage so as not to detract from local scenery with sign height, color, material, or placement.

Provide maps of the area near trailheads, so they are not necessary along public-access routes. Use as few trail markers as necessary.

Encourage users to pack out trash.

Prohibit overnight camping.

Identify and maintain functional landscape and ecological linkages between the DCRA, the HDF, and surrounding lands that have been protected through conservation easements or other mechanisms.

Ensure that the DCRA remains a viable wildlife corridor by protecting important habitat features and avoiding obstructions to wildlife movement.

Recreation

Recreational development within the DCRA should be focused primarily on summer use at this time, since winter access is already well-established.

However, certain recreational objectives detailed here will benefit users on a year-round basis. Care should be exercised during all phases of recreational development to protect the environmental attributes of the DCRA, as well as the interests of surrounding landowners.

Recreational Objective 1:

Improve controlled, non-motorized recreational access to the DCRA.

Strategies:

Support efforts to enlarge the parking area at the Rogers Loop trailhead.

Work with the Kenai Peninsula Borough's Land Management Division to formalize year-round access from the DOT trailhead to the DCRA.

Provide a parking area and trailhead facilities at the western border of the DCRA.

Develop a preliminary plan with the AK-DOT, and seek funding, for a non-motorized route across the Sterling Highway near MP 168, in order to extend the recreational corridor to the Diamond Creek State Recreation Site on the south side of the Sterling Highway. (A pedestrian underpass at this location associated with an improved road-stream crossing should be investigated.)

Recreational Objective 2:

Construct summer-use trails within the DCRA.

Strategies:

Develop a summer trail system through and connecting upland areas (“forest islands”) within the DCRA, including a route paralleling Diamond Creek (Map 1). Extend DCRA trails to the Sterling Highway and current HDF trails as shown on Map 1.

Develop summer access from the Sterling Highway-DOT trailhead to the DCRA, with trail-hardening through wet areas.

Plan and develop multi-use “loops” or trails, to include bicycling and equestrian users, where soils and slopes are suitable.

Education

Educational Objective 1:

Encourage area schools, local organizations, and area visitors to use the DCRA in sustainable ways that promote education.

Strategies:

Identify areas for observing scenery and wildlife and provide minimal-disturbance facilities (such as widened trail segments, lookouts, benches, or informational signage) to enhance visitor experiences.

Help to organize and promote educational events on significant dates, or during appropriate community events, to enhance public knowledge of forest and wetland ecology.

Map 1 - Diamond Creek Recreation Area Access and Development

