

Agenda

Planning Commission - Committee of the Whole City and Borough of Juneau

July 13, 2021
Virtual Meeting Only
6:00 PM

This virtual meeting will be held by video and telephonic participation only. To join the webinar, paste this URL into your browser: <https://juneau.zoom.us/j/92097499673>. To participate telephonically, call: 1-346-248-7799 or 1-669-900-6833 or 1-253-215-8782 or 1-312-626-6799 or 1-929-436-2866 or 1-301-715-8592 and enter Webinar ID: 920 9749 9673.

- I. ROLL CALL
- II. REQUEST FOR AGENDA CHANGES AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
- IV. BRIEF REVIEW OF THE RULES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
- V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS
- VI. ITEMS FOR RECONSIDERATION
- VII. CONSENT AGENDA
- VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
- IX. REGULAR AGENDA
 - A. Off Road Vehicle and Montana Creek Recreation Master Planning Update from Parks & Recreation
- X. BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
- XI. OTHER BUSINESS
- XII. STAFF REPORTS
- XIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS
- XIV. LIAISON REPORT
- XV. CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS
- XVI. PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS
- XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION
- XVIII. ADJOURNMENT



TO: Michael LeVine, Chair Planning Commission
FROM: Michele Elfers, Parks & Recreation Deputy Director
DATE: June 29, 2021
RE: Off Road Vehicle Working Group and 35 Mile Parcel

Last fall, after significant public comment from off-road vehicle (ORV) recreation enthusiasts on the Montana Creek Road closure request, Parks and Recreation (P&R) staff initiated meetings with various ORV groups in Juneau. This working group includes representatives from the Jeep Club, Motocross Club, and the Juneau Off-Road Association (JORA). The group's goals are to *identify ORV (Off Road Vehicle) riding sites, create a sustainable management structure, support safe riding, and build durable infrastructure that protects the natural and built features of the facilities.*

There has been considerable effort over the last twenty years in identifying and evaluating sites around Juneau. The work group is not intending to replicate previous efforts but rather use existing data to build on the previous work. P&R has facilitated the discussion and planning by the user groups to help them navigate the process required to develop and manage riding sites.

Areas of interest identified by the user groups include:

- 35-mile CBJ parcel that was previously studied for ORV riding by a CBJ hired consultant
- Montana Creek area off of the Montana Creek trail on DNR land
- S&S Pond, private land along Lemon Creek and adjacent to Egan Drive
- Old sand and gravel pit behind Home Depot, CBJ owned
- Other privately owned lands

The ORV groups have very different interests in riding, including a track for motocross, a riding park that is designed with jump and play features for ATV's, and remote trails for riding jeeps and ATV's to camping spots and overlooks. It is unlikely that one location would be able to accommodate all of these types of recreation. The Juneau Off-Road Association (JORA) has expressed interest in working with CBJ on developing the CBJ parcel at 35 mile for riding. The riding at this site would be focused on remote trail development to campsites and overlooks but may have enough space in previously logged and developed areas by the road for a small riding park or youth training area.

P&R partners with many user groups to facilitate recreation on CBJ lands. Typically we develop a relationship formalized through a management agreement. Hank Harmon Public Range, the Archery Range, Community Garden, Treadwell Historical Park, SAIL Ropes Challenge Course at Amalga Park, AWARE Totem Pole, Juneau Nordic Ski Club, and Juneau Mountain Bike Alliance are all examples of

facilities or user groups with agreements for recreation on parklands. P&R does not have the resources or capacity to develop and manage all of the incredible facilities we have around Juneau, so we rely on our community partners to do this.

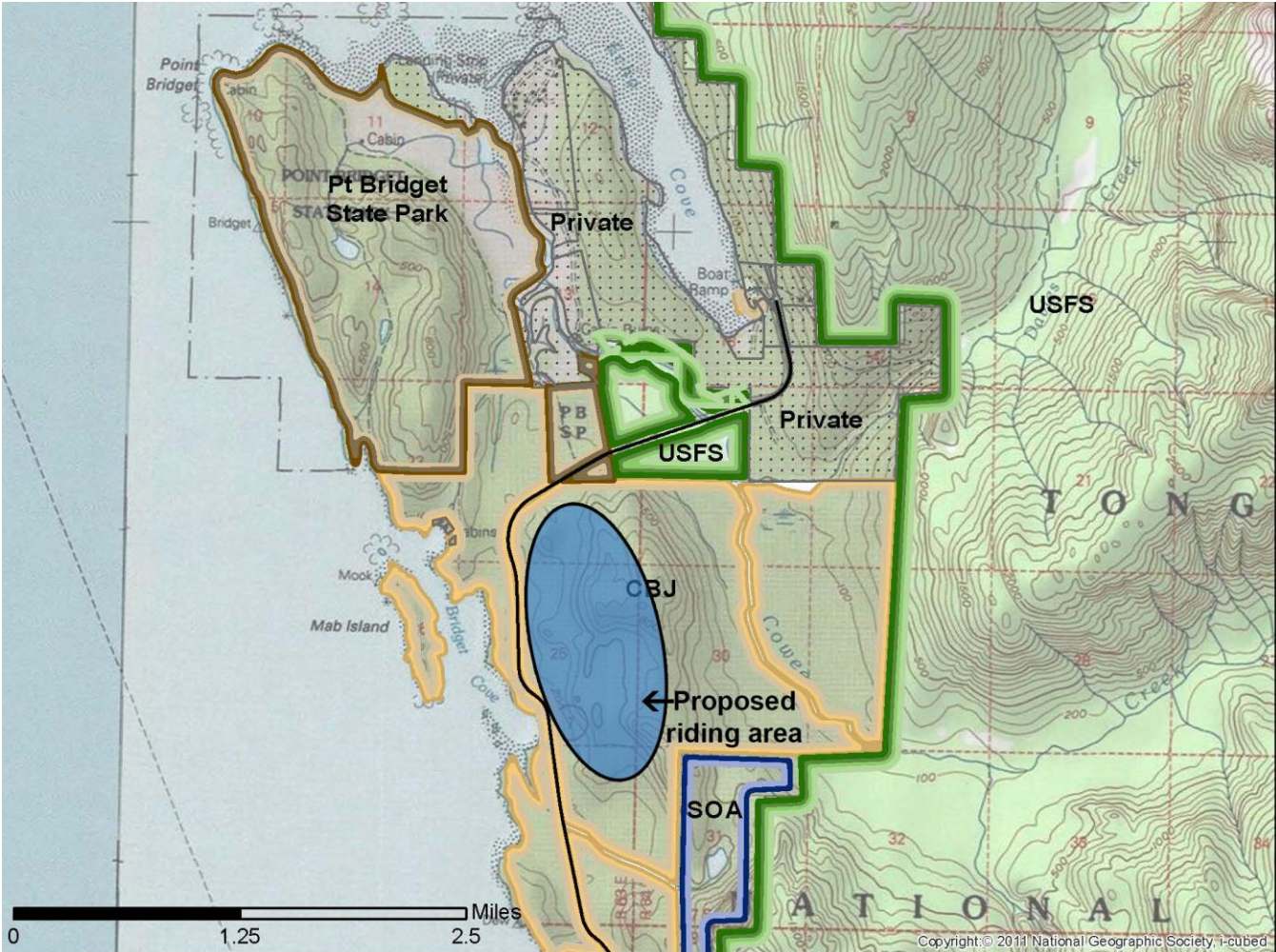
A community ORV riding facility can follow a similar partnership model for development and management as the facilities mentioned previously. A typical management agreement is with a non-profit organization and would include:

- Intent and Purpose of Facility for Public Recreation as aligned with existing CBJ plans
- Development Requirements – technical and environmental standards for construction, plan of development attached, all permits required as part of the agreement
- Management and Operational Requirements – duties required to minimize and mitigate for site impacts, including environmental considerations, site access, regulations and rules, fees charged by the user group, maintenance of improvements
- Reporting requirements – Annual operating plans submitted
- Roles and Responsibilities of CBJ – often in partnerships CBJ assumes a role as well such as allowing signage to be posted, reviewing rules, providing maintenance or development resources when able
- Insurance Requirements – entities are typically required to insure the activities occurring at the facility during development and operation
- Indemnification – CBJ applies standard indemnification language to agreements
- Term of Use – The agreement has an expiration date with terms for extensions
- Map – Shows use area

P&R staff is beginning to work with JORA to outline what a development and management agreement could look like for use of the 35 mile parcel. To determine if a partnership is feasible and the 35 mile parcel is appropriate for this use, the research and mapping previously performed on this parcel will be used to understand the opportunities and impacts of developing an off road trail system. Additional information may be obtained. For example, P&R will work with Trail Mix and JORA using these maps and some in-the-field GPS work to evaluate site access, trail locations, and site security. Preliminary trail and riding area layout work by Trail Mix can be funded through the existing Off Highway Vehicle CIP. Opportunities that exist on this parcel include an old network of logging roads and a parking area as well as steep topography that separates the watershed of the parcel from the Cowee Creek watershed. Challenges that need to be considered are the proximity to the Cowee Creek watershed and Héén Latinee experimental forest, and how to ensure site area control.

Upon evaluation of this site and the drafting of a development and management plan, the next step is likely a conditional use permit from the Planning Commission and approval of a management agreement from the Assembly by resolution. Staff will continue to work with JORA and anticipates providing additional information to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, the Lands, Housing and Economic Development Committee, and the Planning Commission as evaluation progresses.

Site Location and Land Ownership Map – 35 mile parcel is labeled as CBJ





TO: Michael LeVine, Chair Planning Commission
FROM: Michele Elfers, Parks & Recreation Deputy Director
DATE: June 29, 2021
RE: Montana Creek Master Plan and State of Alaska Juneau State Land Plan

Recreational activity and interest in the Montana Creek valley has been increasing in recent years. Hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, biking, harvesting, archery, shooting sports, Nordic skiing, snowshoeing and ORV riding are all occurring in the area. User groups have requested increased parking, new trails for motorized and non-motorized recreation, and a biathlon facility in the area with Parks and Recreation over the past year. Staff will be leading a Master Planning process for the area with the US Forest Service (USFS), Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Trail Mix, user groups and the general public to better understand existing uses, infrastructure needs, future recreational community interests and the connection of this area to Spaulding Meadows and the Windfall Lake area. Work will begin this summer and fall with plans to complete the plan at the end of the year.

The USFS and DNR have also received comments from user groups on increasing uses and facilities in the area. DNR is currently reviewing an application for an easement for a motorized use trail on state lands in Montana Creek. As part of this review, DNR has shared the Juneau State Land Plan from 1993 with P&R staff. This plan guides the Department's management of state lands with the intent to meet the "economic, social, and cultural needs of Alaskans." It recommends transferring management of state lands in Montana Creek to CBJ under a cooperative agreement. The plan can be found here: http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/areaplans/juneau/pdf/juneau_state_land_plan.pdf

In the plan, Montana Creek state land is designated to be managed for recreation, habitat and harvest values as well as mineral locations. Attached to this memo is a land ownership map for the Montana Creek area.

Parks and Recreation staff (P&R) met with DNR Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW) to discuss the state land plan and the management recommendation. DMLW often pursues cooperative management agreements with municipalities or other entities when use of a specific area increases and they recognize that a local entity will better be able to manage the use. Recently, DMLW completed a Cooperative Resource Management Agreement (CRMA) with the City of Gustavus to allow the city to transfer authority to the City to manage a popular beach area near the ferry terminal. CBJ has a similar management agreement with State Parks to manage the Perseverance Trail area. For this area, DMLW has a management agreement with DNR State Parks. State Parks and CBJ then signed a Memorandum of Understanding to allow P&R to manage the area. On Perseverance Trail, P&R maintains the trails, pursues grants for restoration work, works with trail users to mediate bike, pedestrian and wildlife

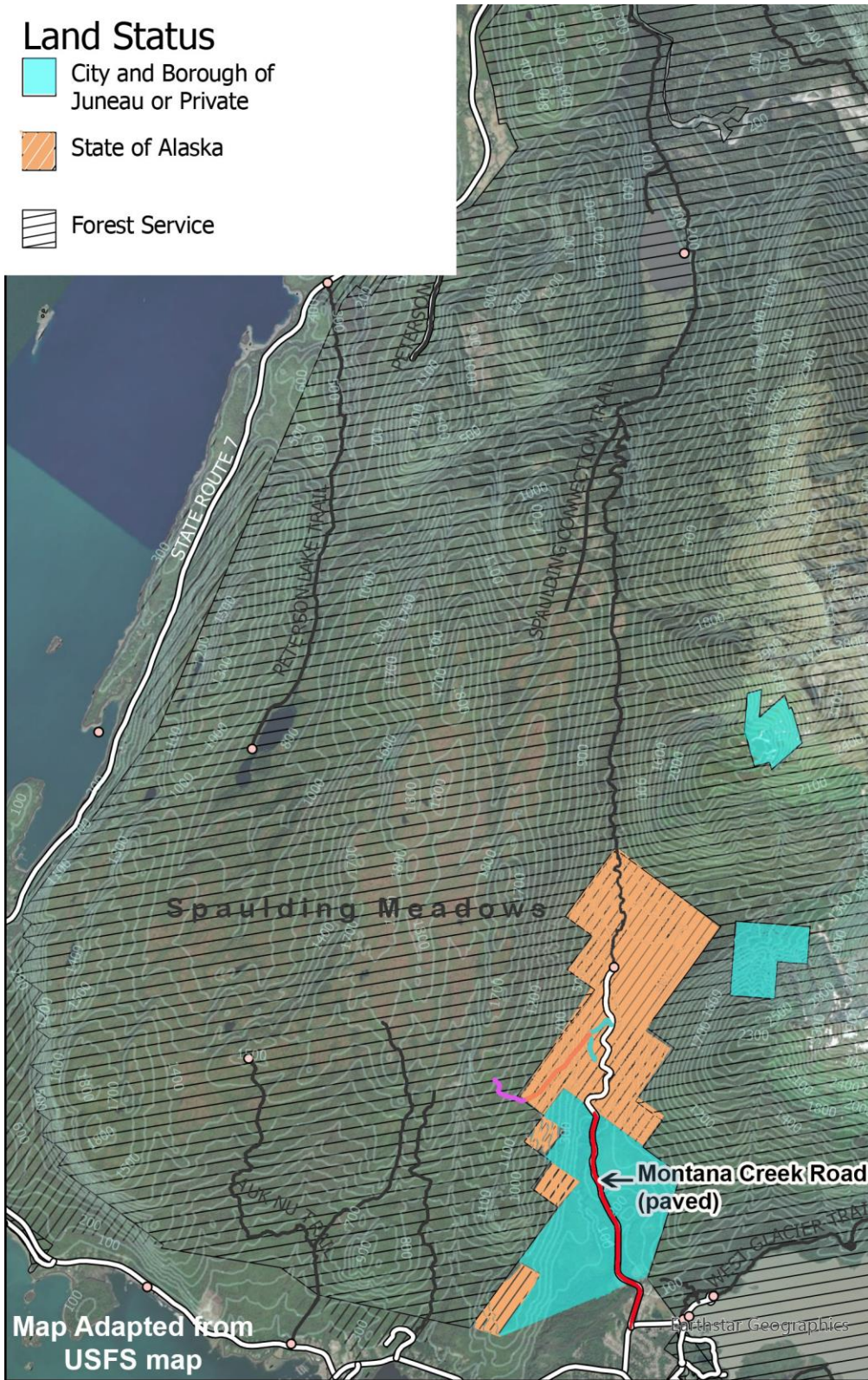
conflicts and monitors usage and hazards. It is unlikely that State Parks or DMLW has the resources to manage the high use on Perseverance Trail currently.

In the Montana Creek valley, CBJ manages the access to state and federal lands on the paved portion of the road and surrounding natural areas. As use increases in the valley, CBJ will have to manage the increased impacts of this use, such as parking, trash, and conflict management. The master plan and cooperative management agreement proposal present an opportunity to look at current and future use of the land. A cooperative management agreement with the state may be a good option given that CBJ is already managing impacts of use and any increased activity will lead to more pressure on CBJ facilities and land.

CBJ staff will continue discussions with DMLW staff to understand how a cooperative management agreement could be developed and continue with the interagency and public master plan process.

Land Status

-  City and Borough of Juneau or Private
-  State of Alaska
-  Forest Service



ORV Working Group

Juneau Douglas Motocross Association, Southeast Jeep Club, Juneau Off-Road Association

- Motorized and non-motorized user conflicts in the Montana Creek area have resulted in significant public comment to the Parks and Recreation department about the public's desire for riding areas
- Informal meetings with user groups since fall 2020 to discuss recreational opportunities



“Essential Partners in a Healthy Community”

History

For at least 20 years, various efforts have been made to identify and evaluate lands for riding

1970s-1990s ORV and Motocross riding Thane, Dredge Lakes, Airport, Eagle River and Lemon Creek Industrial Areas. All of these areas are shut down to riding.

2001 USFS, CBJ, Trail Mix, and the State evaluated many sites for riding and ultimately focused on N. Douglas Quarry and Lemon Creek area behind the jail. There was some grant money, but both projects fizzled out and grant money was lost.

2009 Many sites evaluated and top proposal for the Fish Creek quarry riding park was unsuccessful due to neighborhood concerns.

2013 Study on 35 mile CBJ parcel for riding. Project was deemed too expensive

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Goal

Identify ORV (Off Road Vehicle) riding sites, create a sustainable management structure, support safe riding, and build durable infrastructure that protects the natural and built features of the facilities.



“Essential Partners in a Healthy Community”

Sites Identified

Facility types:

Backcountry trail riding

Riding Park with track and features for motocross

Riding Park for 4 wheeler use with features and play area

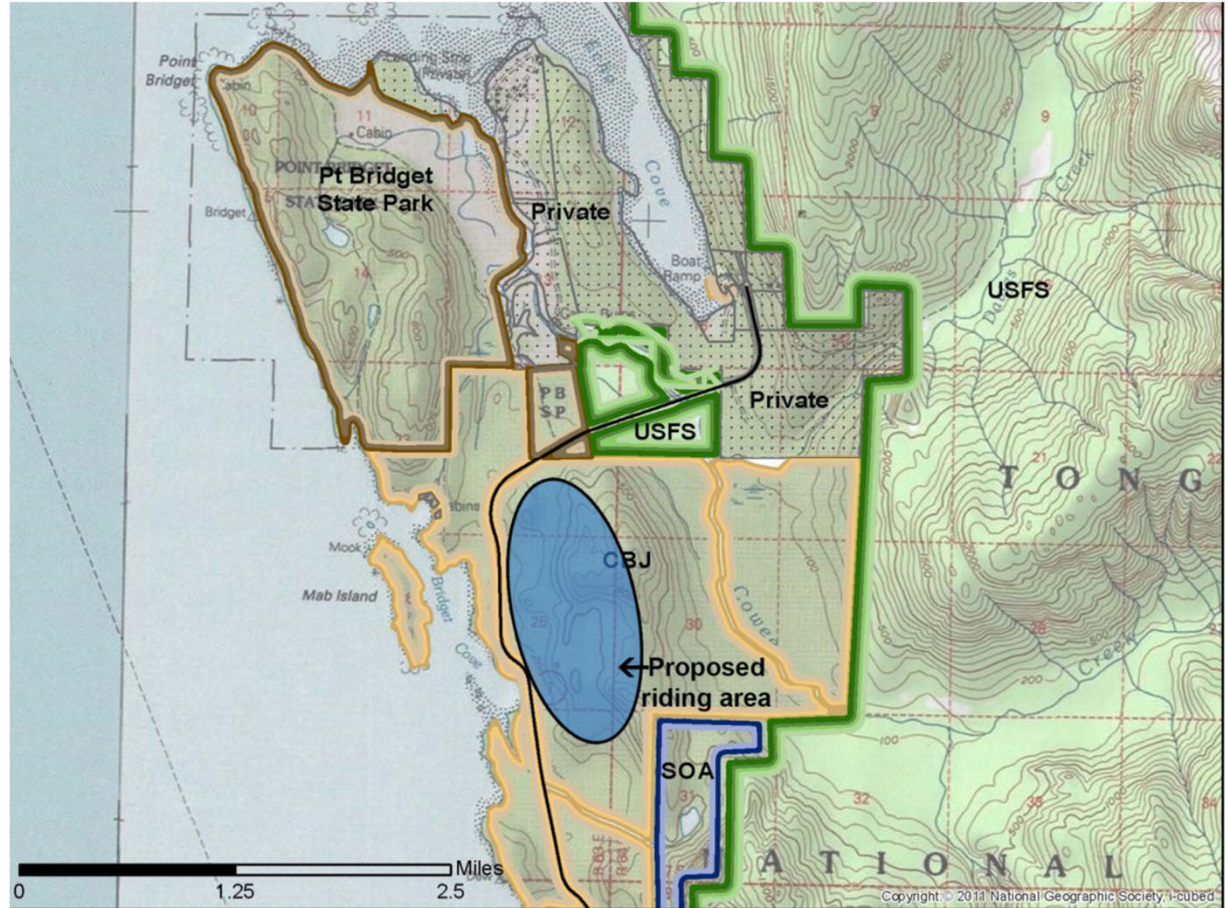
- 35 mile parcel for trail riding, CBJ land
- Montana Creek area for trail riding, State of Alaska DNR land
- S&S Pond Lemon Creek, private land
- Sand and gravel pit behind Home Depot, CBJ land
- Echo Cove, Goldbelt Land
- Other privately owned lands

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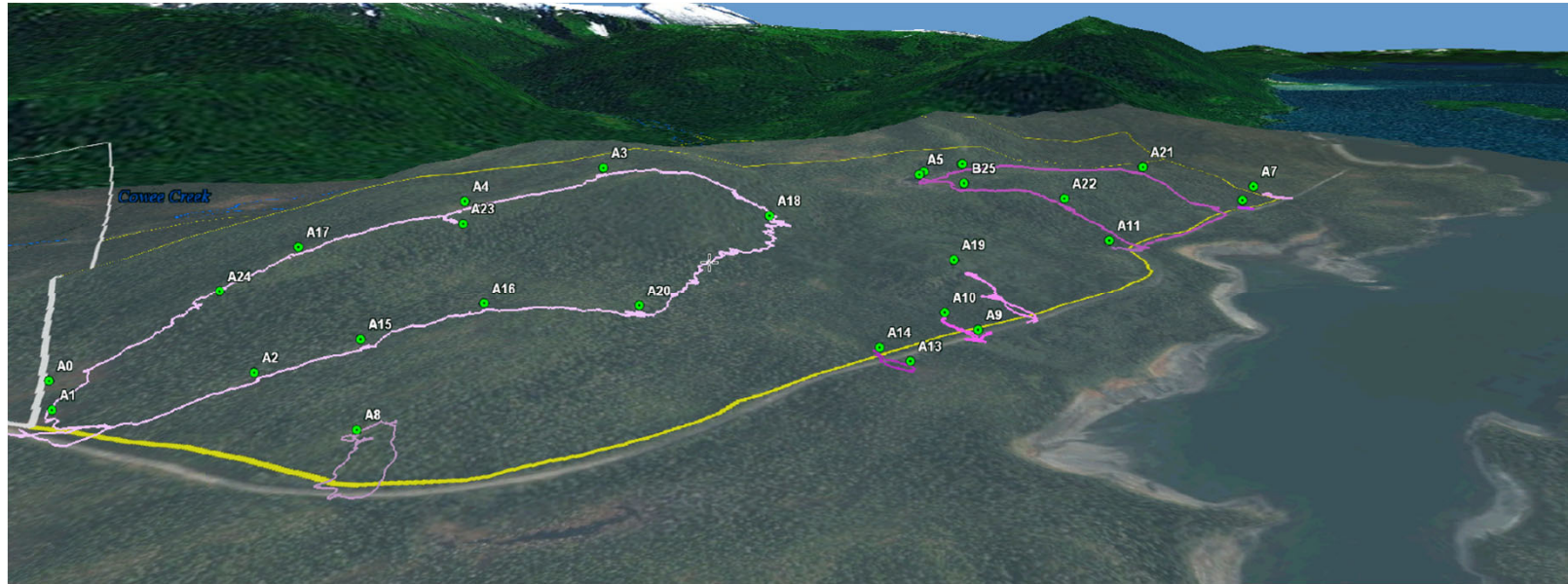
35 Mile Land Ownership

- 35 mile parcel for trail riding
- Previously identified by CBJ as a riding site
- Studied by CBJ and consultants in 2013
- Project died because cost was too high for CBJ to develop and no partner organization to work with



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35 Mile Size and Topography



- Total size of parcel is 1505 acres
- In 2013, 530 acres identified as suitable for riding in environmental analysis, 975 acres unsuitable
- Adjacent to Cowee Creek and Héen Latinee Forest, separated by a ridge

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Partnership Approach

Management Agreement for Recreational Use

- Development and Environmental
- Management and Operational
- Reporting
- Insurance
- Terms of Use
- Maps, Project limits, site boundaries



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Juneau State Land Plan

1993 State Land plan by Alaska Department of Natural Resources recommends transferring management to CBJ of the lands under a cooperative management agreement “to ensure efficient management”.

- The management intent is “high recreation, habitat, and harvest values.”
- The reason is because the land has “primarily recreation values – closer to Juneau urban center – adjacent to CBJ lands.”

