



GOVERNMENT PEAK RECREATION AREA

Management Plan | June 2026

Matanuska-Susitna Borough





TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Introduction
4	Existing Conditions
9	GPRA Development Goals
11	Strategy for Future Development
21	Process for Selecting Future Projects
24	Public Engagement Summary
28	Funding Opportunities
A1	Appendix A - Conceptual Renderings & Current Projects
B1	Appendix B - Survey Results
C1	Appendix C - Public Comments



INTRODUCTION

The Government Peak Recreation Area (GPRA) is a year-round community recreation hub in the rapidly growing Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB). Tucked against the base of Government Peak, the recreation area was officially established in 2012 and has steadily gained popularity since.

Before becoming GPRA, the land was managed by the State of Alaska's Department of Natural Resources. Situated within the Southern Sub-Unit of the Government Peak Unit of the Hatcher Pass Management Area, the land remained largely undeveloped for many years despite periodic efforts at development.

A major shift came in 2010 when portions of the Government Peak Unit, including the 1,420 acres that are now known as GPRA, were approved for conveyance to MSB under the State of Alaska's municipal entitlement program. This approval granted MSB management authority over the land while the conveyance process was underway. Building on this momentum from the year prior, MSB and Alaska's late Congressman Don Young secured \$6 million in Federal Transit Administration funding for the area. Those funds went to support the construction of the access road and the Chalet,

which opened in 2012. Following the transfer of management authority, volunteers played a crucial role in establishing GPRA's Nordic ski trails. This strong volunteer effort has continued ever since, and the success of the area is due largely in part to a robust community of volunteers. As the trail system continued to develop, and expanded into other modes like biking and hiking, the number of visitors continued to rise. In March 2025, the State of Alaska issued a patent for the land, formally conveying ownership of the lands to MSB.

In 2017, the MSB published a two-page management plan outlining goals and ideas for the future of the area. **Today, this 2026 GPRA Management Plan builds on that foundation and replaces the 2017 plan. This Management Plan establishes a strategic framework for future capital improvements and management decisions. Detailed design, engineering, and cost analysis will occur during project-specific implementation phases.**

Although GPRA sits on borough owned land, it remains within the state's broader Hatcher Pass Management Area, so all development must comply with the guidance of the 2012 Hatcher Pass Management Plan as well as the joint state and MSB's 2012 Government Peak Unit Asset Management & Development Plan.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

A 1,420-acre four-season recreation area, GPRA attracts approximately 80,000 users per year and is owned and managed by the MSB. The area features rolling, hilly terrain with mixed spruce, birch, and poplar forests. Streams, ravines, and areas of poorly drained soils are located across the property, requiring wooden footbridges along some trail segments. These conditions can make trail construction and maintenance difficult. Snowpack typically persists from October through April, though seasonal conditions vary. As a borough-owned facility, users are required to pay for parking. Borough rates and fees are set by the assembly every year. As of July 1, 2026, a single use day fee is \$6, or parking is covered by the MSB annual trailhead parking pass for \$45.

GPRA hosts a wide variety of biking, hiking, running, and skiing events each year, ranging from recreational outings to Olympic qualifying races. Clubs, user groups, and tour operators are key planners and organizers of these events. These same clubs and community organizations such as the Backcountry Horsemen, Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers, and the Mat-Su Ski Club not only have members that frequently use the area, but have dedicated volunteers who help plan, construct, and maintain trails.

As a requirement of the Federal Transit Administration for grant funds obtained in 2009, the MSB must provide transit service to GPRA until 2064. In 2026, a free shuttle service ran from both Palmer and Wasilla to GPRA on Saturdays from early January to late March.

An approximately 4,000 square foot heated and plumbed Chalet facility can accommodate up to 324 people (per fire code), but may comfortably fit fewer depending on how the venue is set up. At the writing of this plan, the Chalet is being operated by a third-party concessionaire

and is available for rent at rates set by the concessionaire. The Chalet does not currently have standard operating hours for use by the public. Groups like the Fishhook Community Council, Mat-Su Ski Club, and other users will occasionally rent out the space for meetings, and it is also a popular wedding and event venue.

MSB will start operating and managing the Chalet in January 2027 at the conclusion of the contract with the current concessionaire.

GPRA At-A-Glance



~80,000 annual visitors



Over 10 miles (16 kilometers) of Nordic ski trails (3.73 lighted miles) (multi-use in the summer)



Over 8 miles of bike trails



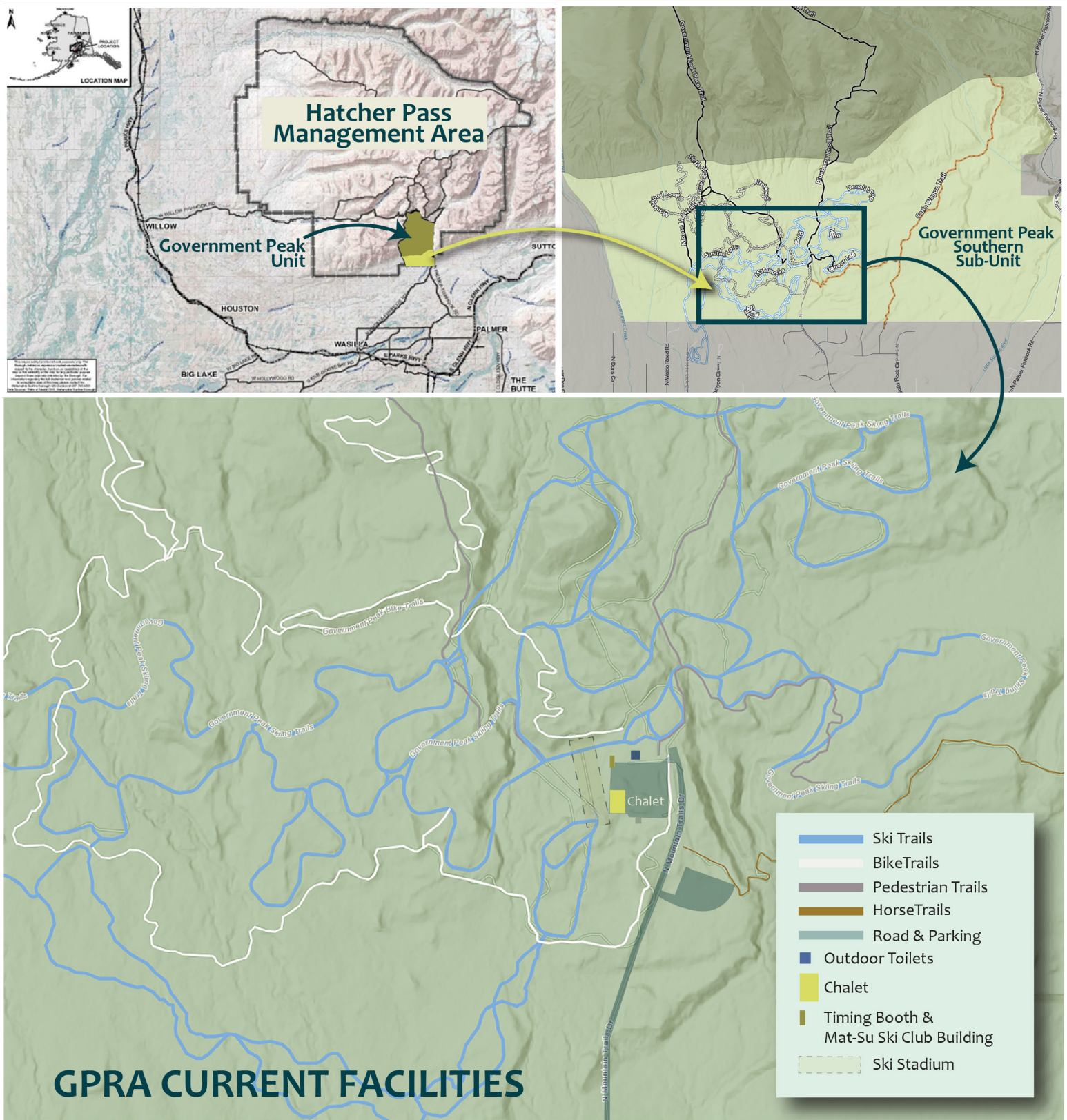
Over 6 miles of hiking trails



2 miles of pack and saddle horseback trails

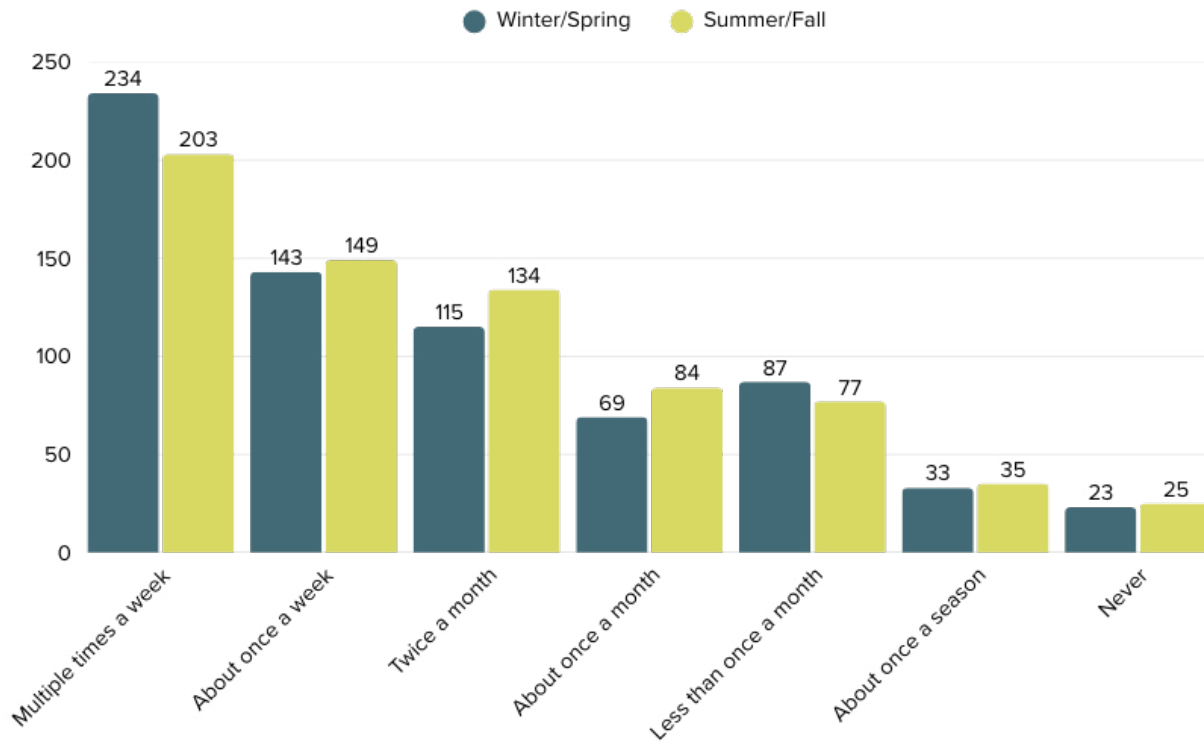
OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING:

- **One ~4,000 square-foot Chalet**
- **Two outside vault toilets**
- **Ski timing tower, ski club building, and viewing stadium**
- **Two parking lots**
- **Picnic tables**
- **Sledding hill**



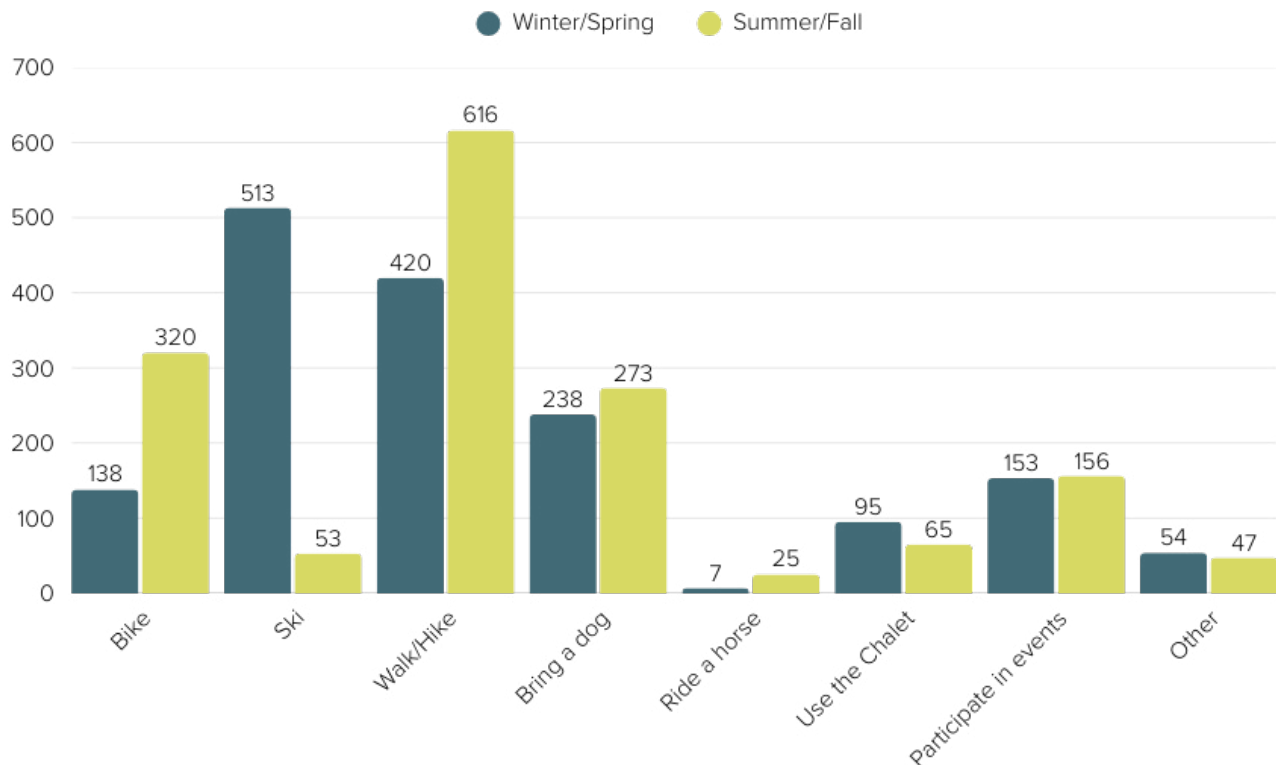
For a detailed map of the trails in the area visit trails.matsu.gov and click on the [interactive trails map](#).

How Often Do You Visit GPRA?



Fall 2025 survey user results for frequency of visitation. 709 total responses.

What Do You Do At GPRA?



Fall 2025 survey user results illustrating common user activities. 709 total responses.

Existing Conditions Review By Users

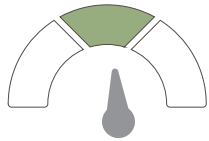
As part of a GPRA user survey released during this planning process, users ranked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the current state of GPRA. Full survey results are in Appendix B - Survey Results.

From a total of 709 responses, more than 65% of respondents reported feeling “satisfied” or “very satisfied” about the following:



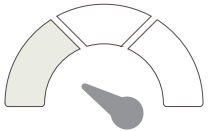
- » Summer/fall trail system maintenance (85%)
- » Winter/spring trail system maintenance (84%)
- » Amount of parking (84%)
- » Cleanliness of facilities (78%)
- » Amount of groomed ski trails (69%)
- » Wayfinding and signs (70%)
- » Amount of groomed walking trails (67%)

About half of all respondents were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with:



- » The amount of biking trails (50%)
- » The amount of multi-use trails (49%)
- » Recreational programs and opportunities for adults (45%)
- » Recreational programs and opportunities for children and teens (44%)

Lower levels of satisfaction, either “not satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied,” were reported for:



- » Connectedness to nearby trail systems (39.2%)
- » Availability and opportunity to use the Chalet (29%)

Some aspects of the area left most people with no opinion, with 65% of respondents saying they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the recreational programs and opportunities for seniors and 81% with no opinion on the number of equestrian trails.

While it’s important to look at the feelings of the group as a whole, it is also important to filter results by sub-user groups. This allows for a closer look at how specific sub-groups feel. For example, only about 50% of the 709 respondents reported feeling satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of biking trails. At face value this could make it seem like users aren’t overwhelmingly satisfied with the biking trails. However, not everyone who answered the survey rides a bike; 35% of all respondents had no opinion on the amount of biking trails. Looking only at the 322 people who reported biking at GPRA, about 69% were either satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of biking trails, with 24% feeling somewhat satisfied, and only about 7% not feeling satisfied, **showing relatively high levels of satisfaction amongst the biking community.**

Conversely, a lot of people who report having no opinion on conditions can obscure dissatisfaction in a certain sub-group. For example, 81% of people had no opinion on the number of equestrian trails, so only about 4% of all users reported being not satisfied. However, for the 25 people who reported riding horses at GPRA, only one person (4%) was very satisfied with the number of trails, 9 (36%) were somewhat satisfied, and the remaining 15 (60%) were dissatisfied, showing the equestrians are overwhelmingly dissatisfied.



**GPRA Upper Parking Lot
September 2025**



Outside Vault-Toilets



**Payment Kiosk
Near Chalet**



Mat-Su Ski Club Timing Tower



Mat-Su Ski Club Building



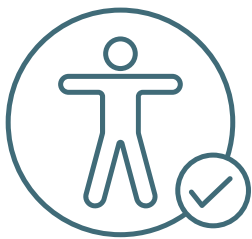
GPRA DEVELOPMENT GOALS

These goals are based on the goals listed in the 2017 development plan and have been updated based on community feedback gathered during the in-person open house and virtual workshop.



Compliance Goal

Comply with adopted plans including the borough-wide Comprehensive Plan, Fishhook Community Comprehensive Plan, the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, the state's 2012 Hatcher Pass Management Plan and the joint state/ borough's 2012 Hatcher Pass - Government Peak Unit Asset Management & Development Plan.



Accessibility Goal

Create recreation opportunities that make the area accessible and welcoming for users of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Balance the needs of various interests and user groups.



Growth Goal

Strive to meet the evolving recreational interests of a growing region, providing a diverse range of healthy, non-motorized outdoor recreation activities.



Balance Goal

Maintain a strong sense of the site's natural setting but lean toward giving more people the chance for healthy active outdoor activity.



Sustainability Goal

Invest in sustainable trails, buildings and other facilities. Minimize future maintenance and management costs through high quality, up-front design and construction.



Partnership Goal

Continue to improve facilities through active partnerships with user groups and other volunteers while maintaining strong borough oversight, involvement, and approval during the process.



Maintenance Goal

Link approval of user group projects to responsibilities for ongoing maintenance. Clear the backlog of deferred maintenance and strive for consistent routine maintenance.





STRATEGY FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Community feedback and the GPRA development goals were considered while developing the strategies in this section. Each community-driven strategy aligns with borough priorities and ties back to at least one of the GPRA development goals. Each strategy has actionable steps that can be taken to achieve success.

Need to Know: Public Input Related to Future Development

Through the GPRA user survey, community members were able to rank ideas on how the MSB could prioritize future development of GPRA.

The top three ways people wanted to prioritize development in GPRA were to:

- 1 Build new trails to connect to other recreation areas (like Skeetawk)
- 2 Improve and maintain existing trails and infrastructure
- 3 Build new trails within the recreation area

The top three facilities that people said would make their experience more enjoyable included:

- 1 Restrooms
- 2 Warming Huts
- 3 Trail Lighting

The user survey released during this planning process asked respondents to think about the biggest unmet needs at GPRA and what the MSB could do to make the area more accessible to all users. **The themes listed below commonly arose in the survey, through conversations at the in-person open house, and via feedback at the virtual workshop:**

- » A need for beginner, family-friendly, and accessible trails
- » Strong desire for regular access to the Chalet
- » Confusion over current trail rules and a need for clear trail etiquette to be taught/enforced
- » A need for more multi-use, dog-friendly trails, especially in winter
- » More facilities and amenities, including things like picnic areas, playgrounds, pump tracks, etc.
- » Balance support for user groups while not favoring one over the other

These ideas were used to develop the following strategies and actions to achieve the development goals listed in this plan.

Overall, I'd love to see more multi-use trails and a trail that connects to Skeetawk. Also, I've hiked the equestrian trail in summer and it's completely overgrown through the swampy areas--probably a hard place to fix, but maybe boardwalks or matting could be added?

[Re: challenges]
Littering on trails.
Lack of directional signs on trails.

Indoor space that is routinely available, especially during skiing and running events.

Somehow helping people understand and be more familiar with the trails and where they lead/connect/ and what you can do on them would be nice.

Kiosk of organizations that support ongoing maintenance [and info on] how to volunteer

Flat trails to ski on for those who are learning. More access to the chalet on cold days to use the restroom.

I love GPRA! I do wish more could be done to encourage seniors to use and enjoy. I also would like to see efforts to expand outreach to people with disabilities, families, and other segments of the community. I also wish the Chalet facilities were better utilized and more accessible. GPRA is such a great resource for all of our community!

Warming huts, more hiking trails of varying difficulty, better signage (existing signage can be confusing, not done well), picnic shelters

Here's what some people had to say...

Strategy A: Data-Driven Development and Condition Monitoring

Intent: Conduct on-site surveys to ground-truth usage statistics, trail conditions, and user behaviors. Use this information to help inform future development. This survey will establish a baseline for trail usage and conditions.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports all GPRA development goals.

- » Action: Continue and identify new methods to collect usage and condition data, including but not limited to in-person trail counts, condition surveys, trail cameras/counters, and on-site user interviews.
- » Action: Collect summer and winter trail usage and condition data across multiple trail use types. Leverage relationships with volunteer groups for extra support collecting data if needed.
- » Action: Work with the MSB geographic information system (GIS) team to publish data on the GPRA website.
- » Action: Establish a schedule for continued monitoring and trail condition inventory.
- » Action: Document data collection methods for tracking the number of annual users to the area.



Strategy B: Avoid Future Deferred Maintenance and Clear Current Backlog

Intent: Prioritize maintenance and improvement of existing trails and facilities prior to advancing new infrastructure, and establish a method for avoiding maintenance backlogs in the future.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the maintenance goal.

- » Action: Use data gathered from trail condition surveys, user input, and feedback from user groups to create a prioritized list of trails that need maintenance.
- » Action: Continue to support partner organizations' efforts to improve the efficiency of trail and facility maintenance operations, including the development of a shared maintenance building in the lower parking lot and an emergency route to improve access to outlying mountain bike trail areas. (See Appendix A for conceptual drawings of the maintenance building)
- » Action: Prioritize trail maintenance over new trail construction until the highest priority maintenance has been completed, and a maintenance plan has been put in place to address remaining high-investment needs.
- » Action: Explore funding opportunities to support maintenance needs, including requesting regular funding in the borough budget. (See section on funding opportunities)
- » Action: Continue to maintain and advertise the [MSB Problem Reporter](#) as a tool that can be used to report issues on MSB trails.



Strategy C: Improve Visitor Experience Through Enhanced Signage, Wayfinding, Information Access, and Aesthetic Upgrades

Intent: Reduce user confusion and conflicts by enhancing wayfinding signs, providing education on trail etiquette and available services, and set users up for success by providing necessary information and resources about the area.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the accessibility goal, growth goal, and partnership goal.



- » Action: Develop a central trailhead to serve as the main entrance to GPRA trails from the existing parking lot.
- » Action: Include trail etiquette information on the central trailhead sign.
- » Action: Add trail information, area history, and a community events board to the Chalet entryway.
- » Action: Identify critical points on the trails where installing dog owner stations may be appropriate, including dog waste bags and information on leash rules.
- » Action: Work collaboratively with partner organizations and the MSB GIS team to standardize signs along the trails and install directional signs at all decision points. Phase out non-standard signs.
- » Action: Update the GPRA website to provide clear background information, trail rules, maps, access to this management plan, and more. Include links to the [interactive MSB trails map](#), and [winter grooming map](#).
- » Action: Add information about the free shuttle service to the website and on signs at GPRA.
- » Action: Create an events calendar that is hosted on the GPRA website that lists upcoming races, practices, and other events.
- » Action: Host seasonal “Welcome to GPRA” events, providing an opportunity for the borough and user groups to interact with all users, with a focus on orienting new users to the area.
- » Action: Work with the MSB Public Works department to remove and explore alternatives to the concrete barriers at the current terminus of North Mountain Trails Drive.
- » Action: Research grants and potential funding opportunities to install interpretive signs along the trails. Topics could include the cultural history of the area, information on local plants and animals, and more.
- » Action: Explore new partnerships with local museums, tribes, or other groups to bring permanent visual displays and information to the area or temporary installations to the Chalet.



Strategy D: Strengthen Public Safety by Prohibiting Trapping and Hunting

Intent: Promote a safe recreation area by formally prohibiting trapping within GPRA (Government Peak Southern Sub-Unit). Discharge of firearms is already prohibited under [11 AAC 96.014\(b\)\(3\)\(E\)](#) and under [5 AAC 92.500](#) trapping is restricted within 50 yards of designated trails unless trails meet specific conditions (elevated, enclosed, or underwater). Even so, additional restrictions are necessary to address other forms of hunting, including archery, within this heavily used recreation area.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the balance goal, partnership goal, and accessibility goal.

- » **Action:** Draft and introduce an amendment to [MSB Code 2.85.020](#) (Closures and Restrictions) adding GPRA to the list of MSB lands where trapping is prohibited for MSB Assembly consideration and approval.
- » **Action:** Seek MSB Assembly adoption of this Management Plan to establish policy direction that hunting activities, including bow hunting, is not an allowed activity within GPRA due to public safety concerns and incompatibility with a high-use recreation setting.
- » **Action:** Engage with interested parties, partner groups, and members of the public to present the proposed trapping and hunting restriction, gather feedback, and request a formal letter of support.
- » **Action:** Upon adoption, update all public-facing information, including on-site signage, website content, maps, and user materials to clearly communicate trapping restrictions.
- » **Action:** Coordinate with MSB Code Compliance and enforcement partners to ensure they are fully informed of the codified restriction and prepared to respond appropriately to reported violations.

Strategy E: Improve Availability of Inside Space

Intent: Assume and maintain control of the Chalet facility.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the accessibility goal, growth goal, balance goal, and sustainability goal.

- » Action: At the expiration of the current contract MSB starts operating the Chalet.
- » Action: Open the Chalet for free public access at set times and during major events and races.
- » Action: Explore maintaining public access to the Chalet restrooms when building is not otherwise open to the public.
- » Action: Maintain access to private rentals at affordable rates.
- » Action: Invest funds collected from private rentals in GPRA facility maintenance.
- » Action: Maintain an online booking system for private rentals of the Chalet and make it available on the GPRA website.



The MSB will operate the Chalet.



All ages and abilities should be able to enjoy GPRA

Strategy F: Identify Suitable Areas for Developing Entry-Level, Family-Friendly, and Inclusive Trails

Intent: Make GPRA trails more welcoming for first-time visitors, less advanced users, people with limited mobility, and families by creating a system of shorter, gentler, multi-use trails close to parking.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the accessibility goal, growth goal, balance goal, and sustainability goal.

- » Action: Seek funding to support construction of new entry-level, family-friendly, accessible trails.
- » Action: Work with advocacy groups and users to identify suitable locations and trail features that meet the needs of target user groups including families and those with mobility challenges and other disabilities.
- » Action: Explore feasibility of designing and constructing the trails in-house while leveraging support from volunteer groups or outside contractors as needed.
- » Action: Prioritize the planning and eventual construction of one new trail of this style before setting aside land for additional advanced trails.

Strategy G: Strengthen Volunteer Relationships

Intent: Bolster relationships with current volunteer groups to continue leveraging their knowledge, support, and dedication to the area while ensuring they have adequate support from the MSB to be successful in their efforts.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the partnership goal and growth goal.

- » Action: Review trail management agreements with each volunteer group and update as necessary.
- » Action: Create a working group with representatives from all active volunteer groups. Meet at least two times per year to discuss the borough's vision for the area, trail planning, and maintenance needs.
- » Action: Make yearly capital budget requests in the borough budget for allocations to support volunteer groups' work toward GPRA development and maintenance.
- » Action: As budget and staffing allow, borough staff participate in user-group planned activities at GPRA, for example events like the ski club's Tree Tour.
- » Action: Support user groups in their applications for funding GPRA projects including offering technical support, signing as a co-applicant, or offering a portion of matching funds when feasible.



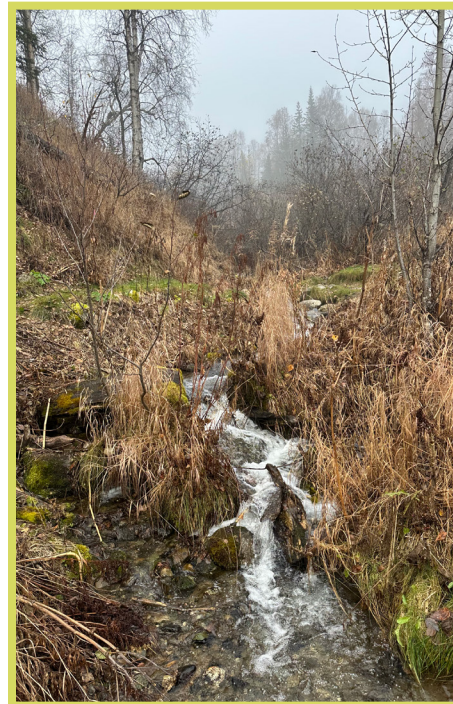
Want to add your volunteer group to this line-up? Talk to MSB staff!

Strategy H: Expand and Improve Trail System and Facilities Within GPRA

Intent: Pursue projects that benefit a wide range of users while recognizing that the area has limited space and avoid overdevelopment.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the growth goal, sustainability goal, and balance goal.

- » Action: Install lighting in the Chalet parking lot.
- » Action: Plan, design, and build more trails while maintaining a strong sense of the site's natural setting, with a near-term emphasis on multi-use trails.
- » Action: Explore suitability of constructing a permanent crossing over the ravine east of the lower parking lot to help open recreational opportunities in the eastern portion of GPRA, where areas of poorly drained soils currently constrain use and development.
- » Action: Evaluate the need to permanently open the lower overflow parking lot.
- » Action: Coordinate installation of lighting, fee payment kiosks, and restrooms with the potential permanent opening of the lower parking lot once other projects are developed and increased use is anticipated.
- » Action: Explore the need, public support, and feasibility of constructing facilities that serve users year-round such as picnic shelters or a playground.



Strategy I: Connect GPRA to Nearby Areas

Intent: Expand opportunities to access GPRA by identifying and planning for future trail connections and access points that respond to evolving recreational demand, land use, and community needs

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the growth goal, sustainability goal, and balance goal.

- » Action: Continue pursuing the feasibility of a trail through the eastern portion of GPRA to connect to Skeetawk and Hatcher Pass State Recreation Area including procuring services for site survey, design, and construction.
- » Action: Evaluate whether improvements to existing legal access points to the GPRA trail system are appropriate, including potential trailhead facilities, parking, and signage, while considering feasibility, infrastructure needs, potential impacts, and public input.



Strategy J: Streamline Project Application and Event Scheduling Process

Intent: Standardize the way that volunteer groups submit project ideas. Make information for event permitting requests easily available on the GPRA website.

Goal-oriented: This strategy supports the compliance goal, accessibility goal, growth goal, and partnership goal.

- » Action: Add a link on the GPRA website to the MSB's Recreation Services & Library Division for obtaining an Outdoor Recreation Facility Use Permit.
- » Action: Implement the project selection process outlined in this plan.
- » Action: At least once a year check in with the volunteer working group established in Strategy G to discuss the effectiveness of the process. Revise as necessary.





PROCESS FOR SELECTING FUTURE PROJECTS

MSB has trail management agreements with volunteer groups for building, maintaining, and grooming GPRA trails. Current agreements are in place with the Mat-Su Ski Club and Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers. The Backcountry Horsemen are in the process of setting up an agreement. Other groups, such as the Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation, also help organize programs and activities at GPRA, including events like the Winter Discovery Days, but don't have trail care agreements. **The expertise, input, and labor from these organizations is invaluable for maintaining and developing GPRA.**

In addition to continuing these partnerships, the MSB looks forward to taking a more active role in planning, constructing, and maintaining

borough facilities at GPRA. To that end, the MSB is standardizing the process for groups to submit project proposals for MSB review and approval.

Groups who want to develop projects at GPRA must complete the Phase 1 Preliminary Application process as outlined below prior to starting work. Project applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. MSB commits to reviewing Phase 1 applications, issuing a go/no go decision, and/or following up with additional questions within one month of receiving a Phase 1 application.

Prior to launching this new application process, MSB will create a survey form or interactive website that allows applicants to compile and submit materials and link information on the GPRA website.



Project Application Process



1. Applicants Submit Phase 1 Preliminary Online Application

- » Through an online form, applicants will address the following:
 - How does the proposed project support the goals and strategies listed in this plan?
 - Does this project meet the design criteria listed in the Hatcher Pass Government Peak Unit Asset Management Plan?
 - Is there potential future development that could be in conflict with this project?
 - Is coordination with other agencies needed? Are permits needed (like Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans, Fish Habitat Permits, or Wetland Fill Permits)?
 - Has funding been secured for the proposed project? If not, what are potential funding sources?
 - What is the expected timeline for design, permitting, and construction?
 - What are the long-term maintenance plans for this project?
 - How does this project benefit the community and overall GPRA experience?
- » To the extent feasible, applicants are encouraged to submit the following:
 - Preliminary cost estimates
 - Conceptual designs
 - *Note: These supplemental materials are optional and are not meant to burden the applicant or cause the applicant to incur substantial costs related to developing these materials.*

2. MSB Issues Go/No Go Decision

- » MSB Land & Resource Management staff will review the Phase 1 application.
- » MSB will document all decisions in a decision rubric.
- » If more information is needed prior to issuing a decision, MSB staff will reach out to the applicant for more information.
- » If MSB staff issue a “go” decision, staff will send the applicants a link to the Phase 2 application. MSB will also provide any letters of support or approval letters that applicants might need to pursue further grant funding to develop and design the project.
- » If MSB staff issue a “no go” decision, staff will respond to the applicant with a completed decision rubric.

3. Applicants Submit Phase 2 Final Application

- » Applicants should submit the Phase 2 application within one year of receiving Phase 1 approval. If more than one year lapses, applicants will need to re-submit the Phase 1 application.
- » Applicants are required to submit the following materials:
 - A refined project description, including updated cost estimates and design information to describe the proposed improvements. Final design and engineering are not required at this stage.
 - A financial plan that includes funding sources, an anticipated schedule for receiving and spending funds, volunteer efforts and in-kind contributions.
 - An operations and maintenance plan that outlines anticipated maintenance needs and general cost considerations over time (for example, annual electric demand or periodic repainting).
 - Information on approach to construction management explaining whether the work will be competitively bid through the MSB purchasing department or privately through a non-profit. If bidding privately, provide applicant's qualifications and experience with procuring construction contracts. Detail who will oversee construction and explain the proposed process for how MSB will be integrated to provide a final determination that work is satisfactorily complete and safe for public use.

4. MSB Reviews Phase 2 Materials

- » If any clarification is needed on Phase 2 materials, MSB staff will reach out directly to the applicant.

5. Application Is Routed for Inter-Departmental Review

- » The MSB division responsible for collecting the applications, currently the Land & Resource Management Division, will forward the project application package to other departments and their respective divisions as necessary.
- » Inter-departmental review will typically take up to two weeks but may require additional time depending on the scope of the proposal and level of coordination needed among reviewing departments.
- » The purpose of this review is not for the divisions to make a decision on the project, but rather for their awareness and involvement in its implementation. For example, if the proposed project needs more engineering expertise, it will be routed to the borough's Public Works Department (which includes the Pre-Design & Engineering Division, Project Management Division, etc.).

6. MSB Gives Final Approval for Construction

- » MSB will draft a new agreement or amend an existing agreement to address construction responsibilities and long-term maintenance agreements.
- » Projects may proceed under an existing agreement while modifications are in progress.
- » New agreements must be finalized before project implementation.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Over the course of the GPRA Management Plan update, the project team implemented a multi-channel, accessible, and community-focused public engagement strategy with an emphasis on reaching diverse user groups, lowering barriers to participation, and maintaining consistent communication across in-person, digital, and media platforms. The review of this plan also included a 30-day public comment period. All comments received during plan development and the comment period can be found in Appendix C – Public Comments. Tactics that the team used to engage the public included:

- A project website
- Two focus groups with highly impacted users
- A user survey
- One in-person open house
- One virtual workshop
- A booth at the Mat-Su Ski Club Tree Tour
- Social media and news notifications
- Flyers
- Email notifications & community leader emails

Website

An MSB-hosted website was created specifically for this project and contained information about project scope, schedule, and listed opportunities to get involved in the planning process. It was available at all public engagement opportunities, linked in all emails, and used as a central resource for project information. Contact information for the project manager was provided, as well as a sign-up form for the project listserv. The website was periodically updated to include relevant information such as a link to the virtual workshop when it became available

Public Survey

The GPRA user survey was launched in early November 2025 at the beginning of the planning process. The purpose of the survey was to learn how people were currently using GPRA, what they envisioned the future of the area to be, and any concerns they had about the area. The survey was linked on the website, advertised on social media, was available for people to complete via hard copy at the in-person public open house, focus groups, and Mat-Su Ski Club Tree Tour, was advertised via paid ads in the *Frontiersman*, and was available via QR code on flyers posted at local establishments. Community members were

incentivized to complete the survey by being able to enter their email for a chance to win an MSB trailhead parking pass.

Users were also able to enter their email address to be added to the project listserv. **The survey received 709 responses before closing on January 9.**

Summarized survey results can be found in Appendix B – Survey Results.



Example advertisement for the GPRA User Survey



Photo Credit: Blind Eagle Creative

Booth Holiday Tree Tour

The Mat-Su Ski Club's Holiday Tree Tour hosted at GPRA on December 13 from 4 to 8 p.m. presented an opportunity to engage with people that the team may not have otherwise had the opportunity to connect with. The Mat-Su Ski Club graciously donated a booth at the event for the team's use. The Tree Tour had lower attendance than in years past due to high winds and a rescheduled date, but that didn't stop the team from making meaningful contact with people. **Approximately 30 groups of people stopped by the booth**, of whom about 25% had not previously heard about the project. Each Tree Tour participant was warmly greeted by a project staff member, provided information on the user survey, and was told how they could stay involved with the project.

Focus Groups

The team conducted targeted outreach to organized user groups to open a two-way channel of communication and gather valuable feedback from these groups who not only use the area but help build and maintain trails and plan community events. On December 2, 2025, the team met with representatives from the **Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers, Mat-Su Ski Club, Skeetawk, Revel Treks and Tours, and Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation**. Attendees discussed what they value most about the current area, what needs they see as being unmet if the area wants to be inclusive of multiple user groups, and provided insight into how their groups currently work with the Mat-Su Borough. Representatives from the Backcountry Horsemen were unable to attend this focus group meeting, but MSB staff met with them separately to have a similar conversation.

Community Leader Emails

At the beginning of the project, November 11, 2025, the team sent out an informational email to community leaders with an update on the GPRA Management Plan process. The email provided background information on the area and 2017 plan, outlined the planning process and let them know what their constituents could expect from the team, shared an anticipated schedule, and invited them to engage with the planning process. Emails were sent to the following:

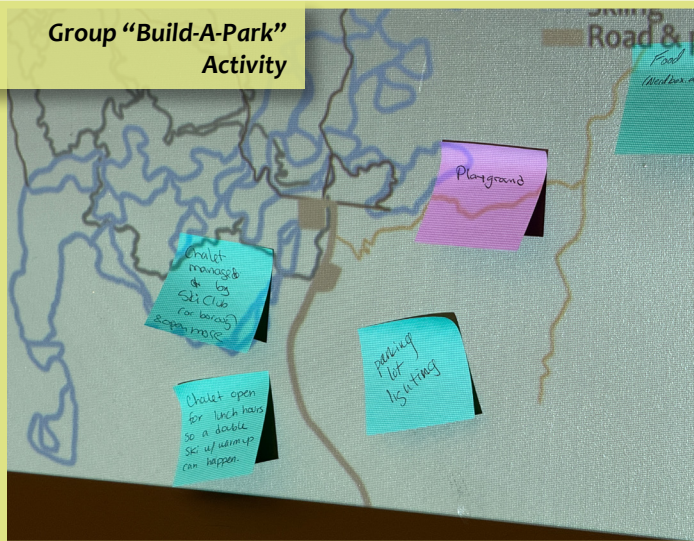
- Senator Shelley Hughes (District M)
- Senator Mike Shower (District O)
- Senator Robert Yundt (District N)
- Representative Kevin McCabe (Big Lake, District 30)
- Representative George Rauscher (Sutton, District 29)
- Representative DeLena Johnson (Palmer, District 25)
- Representative Elexie Moore (Wasilla, District 28)
- Representative Jubilee Underwood (Wasilla, District 27)
- Representative Cathy Tilton (Wasilla, District 26)
- MSB Mayor Edna DeVries
- MSB Planning Commission
- MSB Parks, Recreation, & Trails Advisory Board

Open House

The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the planning process, gather information on how people currently use GPRA, solicit feedback about what people think the future of GPRA should look like, and share the rest of the project schedule. The meeting was held on-site at the Chalet and followed an open house format with multiple topic-based stations, including a welcome area where attendees signed in, a background and history of the GPRA, a station to workshop the goals of the plan, and a station for an interactive “build a park” activity. This activity allowed attendees to “build a park” by adding stickie notes with project ideas to a map of the current area. Attendees were also able to create personal “build-a-park” maps by adding their ideas to 8.5x11 coloring sheets of the area. This hands-on activity provided another avenue for participation for people who may have been less inclined to verbally voice their feedback.

The open house was originally scheduled for December 10 but had to be rescheduled to January 5 due to a power outage caused by a windstorm. The original meeting was advertised on flyers, digital ads in the Frontiersman, via the MSB’s social media accounts, through direct emails to user groups, on the email listserv, media pitch to news agencies, and by direct email to user groups. The rescheduled meeting was advertised using the same methods except for Frontiersman digital ads. A strong turn out of about 35 attendees participated in the open house. **Meeting attendees included representatives from key user groups, nearby residents, members of the broader community, and some people who just happened to be recreating at GPRA at the time of the open house.**

Group “Build-A-Park” Activity

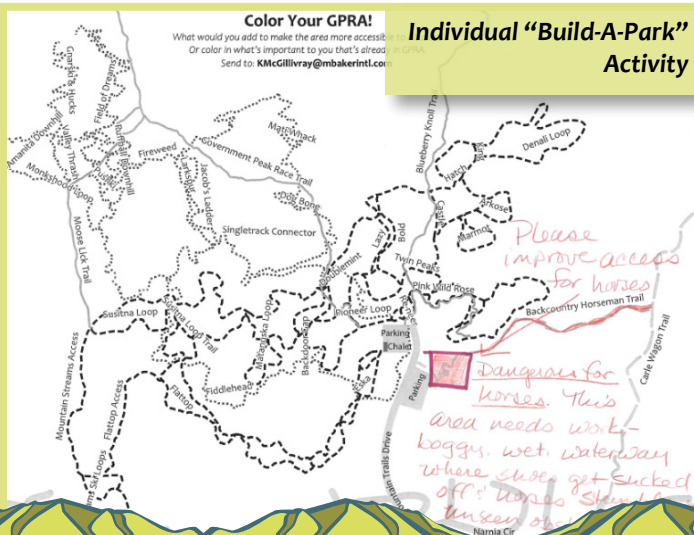


Open House Attendees Spoke with MSB Staff

Color Your GPRA!

What would you add to make the area more accessible?
Or color in what's important to you that's already there.
Send to: KMCGillivray@mbakerint.com

Individual “Build-A-Park” Activity



Goals & Timeline

mats.gov/plans/2025-2026-government-peak-recreation-area-plan-update

HECK-IN ON THE CURRENT GOALS FROM 2017

meet the evolving recreational interests of a growing riding a diverse range of healthy, non-motorized recreation activities, including skiing, biking, walking, & riding, disc golf, bathlon, and associated support and related facilities.

a strong sense of the site's natural setting, but on balance with the goal of giving more people the chance for healthy outdoor activity.

sustainable trails, buildings and other facilities; minimize maintenance and management costs through high quality, design and construction.

to improve facilities through active partnerships with user and other volunteers. Link approval of user group projects and initiatives for ongoing maintenance.

in identified, prime future residential development areas to tent feasible in the “reserve area”. Extend GPRA trails into some areas after more specific residential development plans are implemented and approved.

Do the goals from 2017 need to be updated?

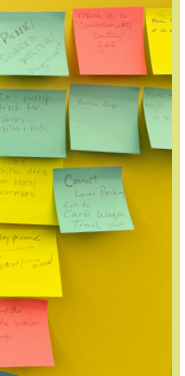
How well has the area been meeting these goals?

Do you think there are any goals that are no longer necessary?

What new goals would you add?

Attendees Provided Feedback on GPRA Goals

Add a sticky with your thoughts



Virtual Workshop

On December 22, 2025 an [interactive online workshop](#) was released through a public StoryMap. This workshop provided the same content as the open house and allowed users to review materials and submit comments at their convenience. It was promoted on the borough website, emailed to the project email distribution list, emailed directly to highly impacted user groups, and posted to social media. **To date it has been viewed over 900 times.** Users could view a live dashboard of the user survey results, click on a link to take the survey if they hadn't already, submit feedback on goals, participate in a virtual "build-a-park" activity, and sign up for the email list.



The virtual workshop let people interact on their own schedule

GovDelivery Email Announcements

Throughout the planning process, project information was repeatedly released through the MSB's govDelivery email service. Users were able to sign up to receive emails by entering their information on the project website, at the end of the user survey, via the virtual and in-person open houses, or by emailing project staff to be added. **By the end of the project over 400 people were included in the email list.** Emails on the following topics were sent:

- **November 26, 2025:** Introduction to the planning process and initial in-person open house invitation (sent to 269 people)
- **December 9, 2025:** Reminder invitation for in-person open house (sent to 324 people)
- **December 10, 2025:** Notice of in-person open house postponement due to weather (sent to 326)
- **December 22, 2025:** Advertising new date for in-person open house and releasing virtual workshop (sent to 363)
- **January 2, 2026:** Follow-up invitation to in-person open house and reminder that virtual workshop is available (sent to 386)
- **January 6, 2026:** Notice that user survey would be closing soon, reminder about virtual workshop (sent to 398)
- **April 20, 2026:** Notice that Draft GPRA Management plan was open for 30-day public comment (sent to 412)
- **May 18, 2026:** Reminder that 30-day public comment period would be closing (sent to 419)



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

This resource can help identify and compare funding opportunities for projects across GPRA. It is designed for borough departments and partner organizations to quickly assess basic eligibility, typical match requirements, and next steps. Because program terms change, staff should verify deadlines, amounts, and requirements with the current program notice before initiating an application.

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Program State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides funding for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation spaces. Through LWCF grants, communities can protect public lands, create parks, and improve recreational facilities to expand access to outdoor recreation, preserve natural landscapes, and ensure that these resources are available for future generations.	State, regional or local governments, and federally recognized tribal governments, with the legal authority to provide park and recreation services on public lands, are eligible to apply for LWCF assistance.	1:1 match requirement. Minimum award is \$25,000, max \$125,000
Multi-Use Trails Program (Now under Alaska Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities (DO&PF), formerly under Alaska DNR)	Multi-Use Trails funding may be used for trail maintenance and restoration, trailhead and facility improvements, equipment purchases, environmental protection, safety and education programs, and other eligible trail-related activities.	Nonprofits, educational institutions, and state/local/tribal governments (and in some rounds Federal land managers) are eligible applicants.	Competitive, reimbursable grants (traditionally 90% Federal / 10% match in Alaska)

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation Grants	New trails and parks, physical improvements or development of trails and trailheads, parks, and recreation sites. Trail, park and playground amenities, equipment and signage. Planning and surveying.	Non-profits, tribes, government entities	Various matching guidelines dependent on grant size, ranging from no match to 2:1 match.
Tier 1 Grants Rasmuson Foundation	Tier 1 grants are intended to assist with capital needs and one-time investments. These are typically things that you can build, buy, fix, or create. Rasmuson Foundation generally does not fund projects associated with core government functions such as roads, utilities and public safety, K-12 education, deficits or debt reduction, endowments, scholarships, fundraising events, sponsorships, and reimbursement for items already purchased.	Organizations must be actively working in Alaska. Eligible organizations will either be an established 501(c)(3) (and classified as “not a private foundation”), or a local or Tribal government.	No deadline to apply, rolling grant. Most awards range from \$5,000 to \$20,000.
Community Support Grants Rasmuson Foundation	Community Support grants are for capital and non-capital projects with broad community impact. Some examples of eligible projects: • Construction, renovation, and furnishings • Equipment, tools, and technology upgrades • Historic preservation projects • Playgrounds, parks, and trail improvements • Pilot projects or program expansion • Some types of match funding • Some pre-development	Community Support grants are typically for organizations that have received a past award or grant from the Foundation. First-time applicants are encouraged to start with a Tier 1 proposal .	No fixed match percentage is required for Rasmuson Foundation Community Support Grants.

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Legacy Grants Rasmuson Foundation	Legacy grants support capital projects, programs of strategic importance, and innovative solutions to issues of community or statewide significance. Examples of projects: • Construction, renovation, and furnishings • Large-scale creative works • Buildings, equipment, and vehicles • Historic preservation • Pilot projects or program expansion • Some types of match funding Rasmuson Foundation generally does not fund projects associated with core government functions such as roads, utilities, and public safety, K-12 education, deficits or debt reduction, endowments or scholarships, fundraising events or sponsorships, and reimbursement for items already purchased.	Organizations must be actively working in Alaska. Eligible organizations will either be an established 501(c)(3) (and classified as “not a private foundation”), or a local or Tribal government. An organization may have one active Legacy or Community Support grant at the same time as a Tier 1 grant, provided they are for different projects.	Applications are reviewed twice a year. Awards are more than \$250,000 (often \$500k+ depending on project).
Mat-Su Health Foundation Healthy Impact Grant	Healthy Impact Grants fund program and service costs that improve health and social drivers of health; nonprofit financial sustainability and operating support; capacity building and technical assistance for organizational and leadership development; capital projects, improvements, and equipment; and policy change efforts.	Prospective grantees must provide services or benefits to Mat-Su residents and be a tax-exempt organization in good standing, faith-based, governmental, educational, community council, or tribal entities.	Healthy Impact Grants: over \$25K Target Wellness Grants: less than \$25K

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Mat-Su Borough Capital Improvement Program (CIP)	Community infrastructure that benefits residents and visitors (bike/pedestrian paths, trail and trailhead improvements, park facilities, restrooms)	Any MSB department or member of the public can nominate a project.	Projects must: • fall within areawide Borough powers, • not be considered routine maintenance nor equipment replacement, • have minimum cost of \$20,000, and not to exceed \$1,000,000, • have a lifespan of >5 years, • Align with a plan adopted by the MSB Assembly

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Mat-Su Borough Winter Trail Care and Grooming Grant	Supports winter trail grooming and maintenance for dog mushers, Nordic skiers, snowmachiners, and other winter recreation groups. Note: link availability may change, but applicants can always contact the Borough's Land and Resource Management Division office at lmb@matsugov.us or (907) 861-7869 for updated information	501(c)(3) nonprofits, or businesses able to demonstrate capacity for winter trail grooming and maintenance Eligible expenses include fuel, oil, equipment maintenance, trailhead plowing, grooming labor, and pre-season work (e.g., brush hog rental).	Project must: • Fall within areawide Borough powers, or trail systems connected to trail systems within the Borough • Grant cycle opens mid-July • Grant requires documented 50% match, which can include in-kind volunteer hours, value of snow machine rental, cost of maintenance items, etc. • Requires Commercial General Liability insurance and Auto Liability insurance (if applicable). The specific requirement is included on the grant website.
Alaska Community Foundation (ACF)	Competitive grants from ACF Affiliates (e.g., Palmer Community Foundation and Jessica Stevens Community Foundation) for hyper-local community projects, often including parks, trails, signage, amenities, and small capital items.	501(c)(3) nonprofits, schools, tribes, and (in some cases) local governments via fiscal sponsor; cycles and amounts vary by affiliate.	Recent Mat-Su affiliate grants have supported picnic tables at GPR, trail signage/education, and other hyper-local amenities.

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)	Funds transportation projects that cut traffic related air pollution and congestion—e.g., transit upgrades, bike/pedestrian facilities, diesel engine replacements/retrofits, EV charging, shared micromobility, and other clean transport technologies. It can also support projects that improve safety and apply new technologies. Projects must demonstrate emissions reductions; routine maintenance is ineligible.	State DOTs, local governments, transit agencies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and other public entities with projects located in or benefiting designated nonattainment/maintenance areas. Note: As of February 2026 the MSB is not in a nonattainment or maintenance area.	Alaska’s sliding-scale 9.03% match may be required.
Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)	Funds projects that reduce on-road transportation CO₂—examples include active transportation networks, transit enhancements, traffic-flow improvements, LED streetlighting, and EV infrastructure—aligned to the State’s Carbon Reduction Strategy (2024–2028).	Standard Federal-aid entities (State DOT, local governments, tribes, MPOs, transit agencies).	Alaska’s sliding-scale 9.03% match may be required.
Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)	Broad, flexible surface-transportation funding—including some bicycle/pedestrian and recreational-trail connections (when they function as transportation), safety, and resiliency projects.	State DOT and eligible local/tribal governments (per state program rules). Projects must be in, or advanced to, the STIP. Coordinate with DOT&PF area planners to scope, schedule, and estimate (SSE).	Alaska’s sliding-scale 9.03% match may be required.

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	Funds for bicycle/pedestrian facilities, recreational trails, Safe Routes to School, viewing areas, and community improvements—wayfinding/signage and amenities are eligible when tied to the transportation network or trails.	Local governments, regional transportation authority, transit agency, natural resource or public land agency, school district, local education agency, or school, tribal government, MPO, non-profit, other local/regional governmental entity, state DOT	Alaska's sliding-scale 9.03% match may be required, federal share ceiling of \$5 million.
AARP Community Challenge	Quick-action micro/flagship grants to make tangible livability improvements.	IRS-recognized nonprofits 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), 501(c)(6); government entities.	Microgrants: \$2.5k Flagship awards: \$10k–\$15k
Community Change Grants - America Walks	Grassroots projects that advance walkability.	IRS-recognized nonprofits 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), 501(c)(6); government entities.	Awards \$2,000–\$2,200
Alaska Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance	No funding distribution, but planning and community design help for trails, signage systems, and park connectivity. This program can help package a corridor plan and sign family that strengthens later applications.	Eligible applicants include local governments, along with community groups, nonprofits, tribes, and other agencies.	Annual Alaska application: traditionally due around March 1
Trail Accelerator Grants - International Mountain Bicycling Association	Awards planning, design or education services.	Eligible applicants include local governments, along with community groups, nonprofits, tribes, and other agencies.	Requires 1:1 match (cash/services). \$10k–\$30k equivalent for planning or design. \$3k–\$10.8k for training, fundraising, or strategic planning.
KABOOM!	Covers a substantial portion of equipment, materials and provides project management for inclusive playgrounds, multi-sport courts, or nature play via community-builds.	Nonprofits and municipal agencies.	1:1 match and volunteers.

Funding Source	Focus Area	Eligibility	More Details
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation — Quality of Life Grants	Funds accessibility and inclusion projects, including accessible play features, surfacing, adaptive equipment, trail accessibility upgrades, and wayfinding for people with disabilities.	501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, municipal and state governments, school districts, recognized tribal entities, and other institutions such as community or veterans' hospitals	Direct effect grants up to \$24,999; larger tiers available for expansions.
Parks and Recreation Grants & Fundraising Resources	Monitor for park/play equity, nature play, and inclusion opportunities that can complement capital funds.	Often private philanthropic partnerships administered by NRPA	Funding match varies by program and by year.
USDA Rural Development — Community Facilities (CF) Loans/Grants	Loans and some grants for essential facilities in rural areas. Recreation-only facilities are generally ineligible, but eligible items can include restrooms at community facilities (ADA), site utilities, equipment, community gardens, and multi-use community spaces.	Public entities, community-based nonprofits, and federally recognized Tribes that serve rural areas with populations $\leq 20,000$.	Grant support is need-based and tied to population and median household income of the service area. Typical maximums range from 15% to 75% of eligible project costs.



APPENDIX A - CONCEPTUAL RENDERINGS & CURRENT PROJECTS

These renderings were created independently from this planning effort, but support the strategies and ideas presented in this document.

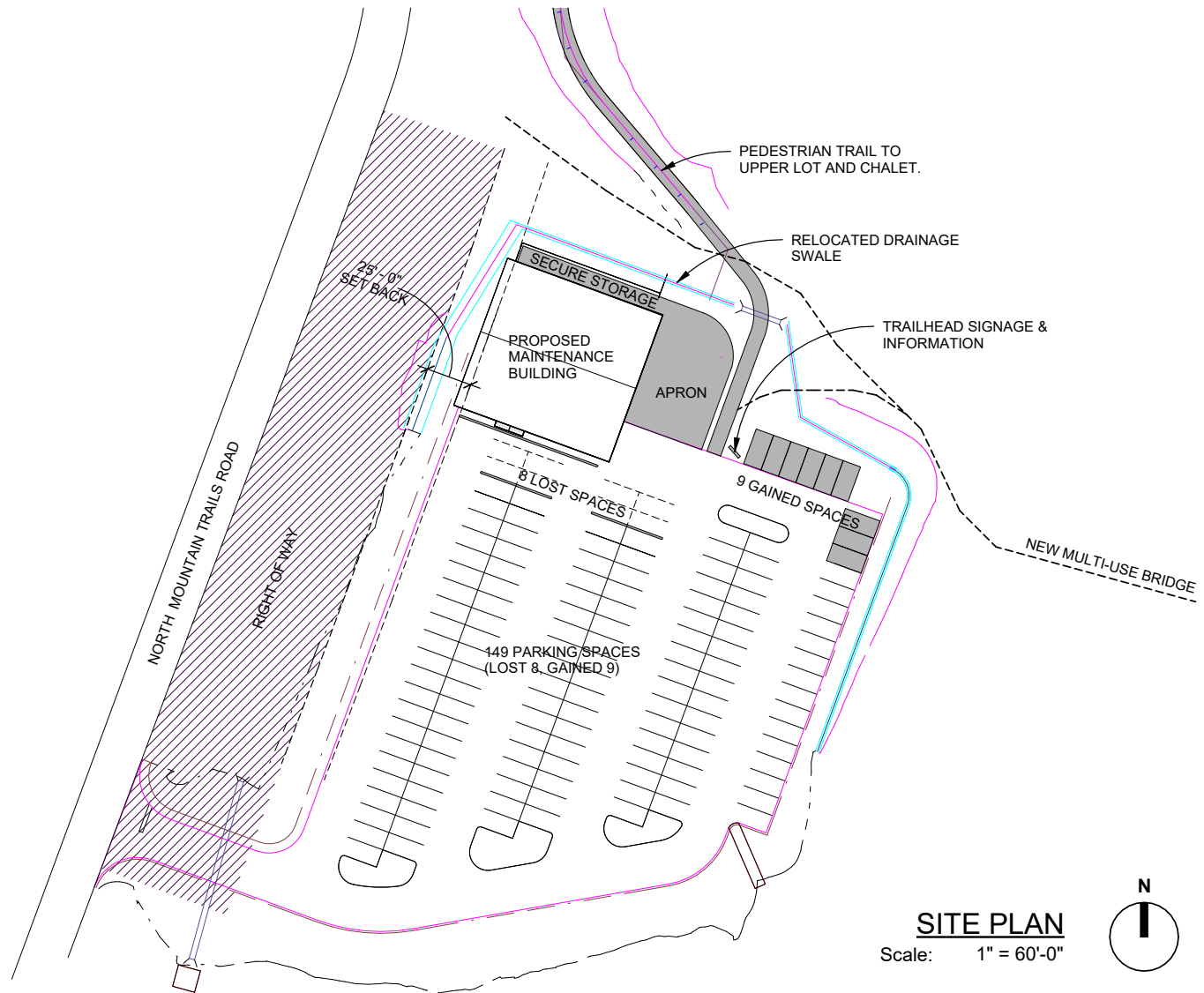


GPRA MAINTENANCE FACILITY CONCEPT

MAT-SU SKI CLUB

JAN 16, 2026

WOLF
ARCHITECTURE

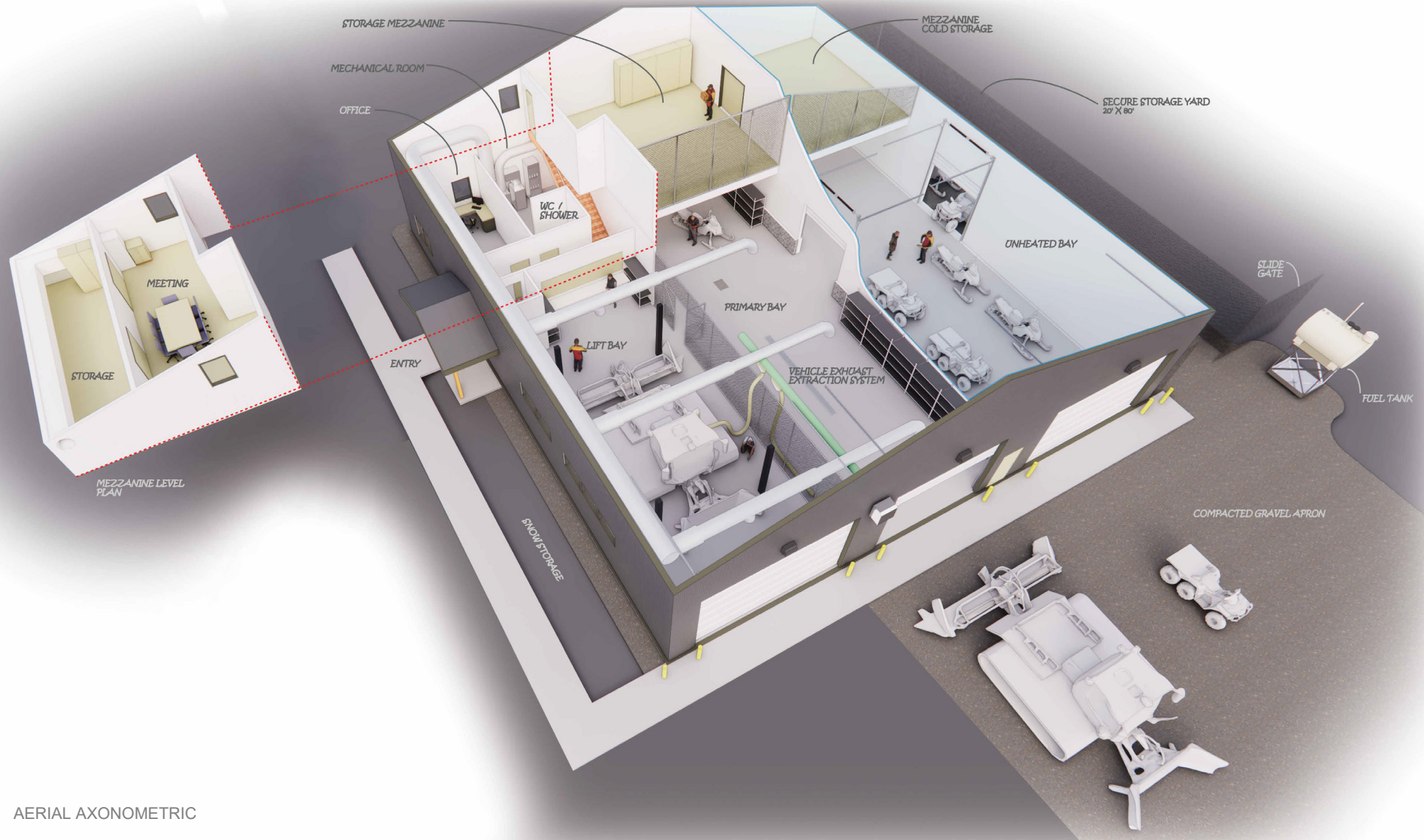


GPRA MAINTENANCE FACILITY CONCEPT

MATANUSKA SUSITNA SKI CLUB

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AERIAL AXONOMETRIC



GPRA MAINTENANCE FACILITY CONCEPT

MAT-SU SKI CLUB

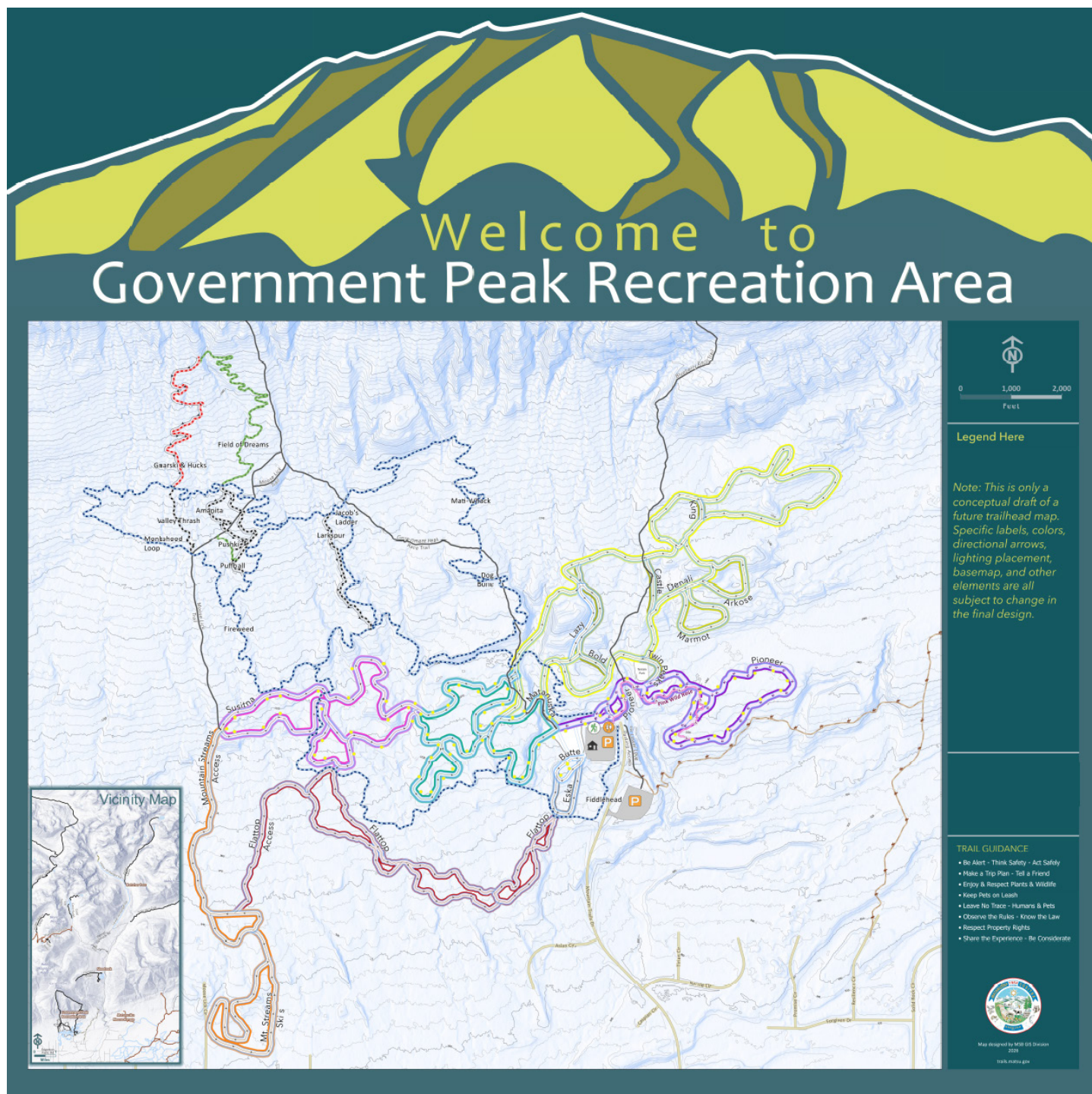
JAN. 16, 2026

W O L F
ARCHITECTURE

Conceptual Navigation Signs



Conceptual Trailhead Sign



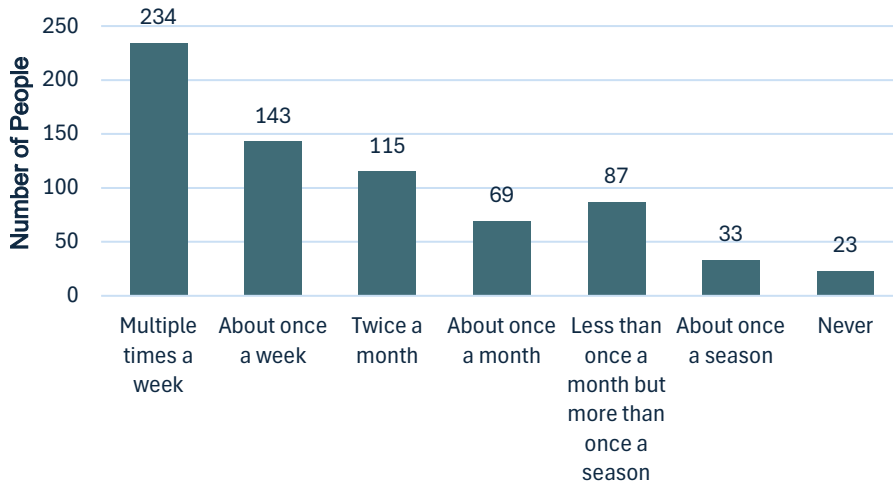


APPENDIX B - SURVEY RESULTS

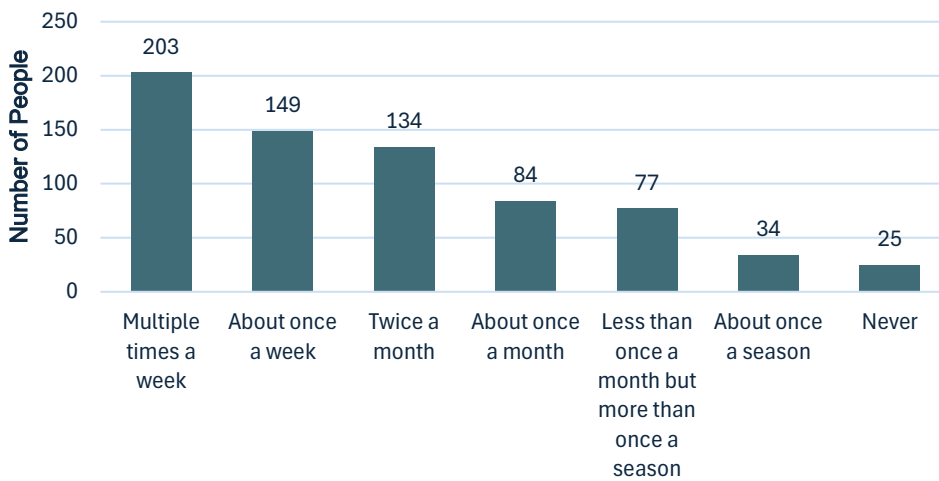
Thank you to all 709 people who responded!



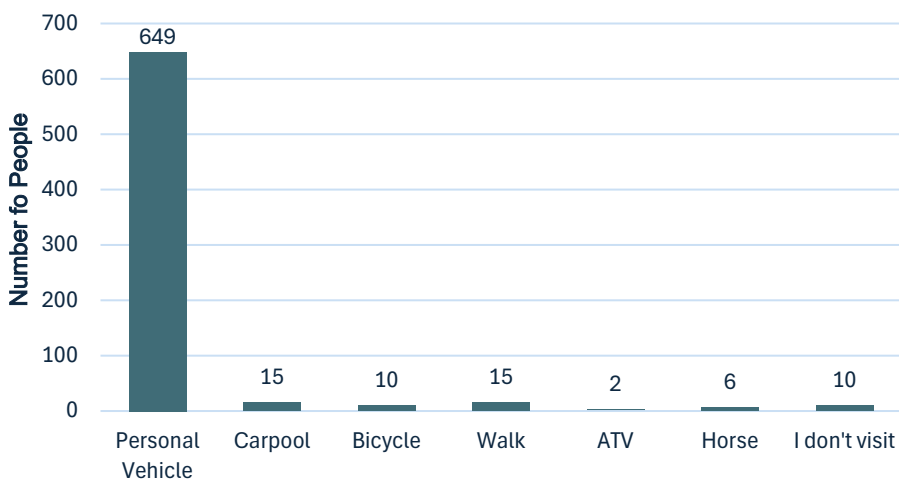
How often do you visit GPRA in winter/spring?



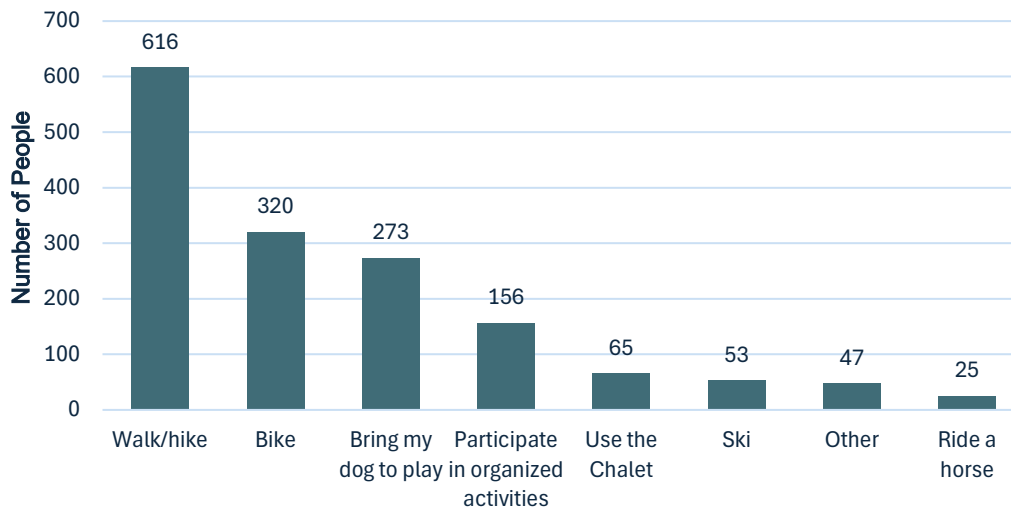
How often do you visit GPRA in summer/fall?



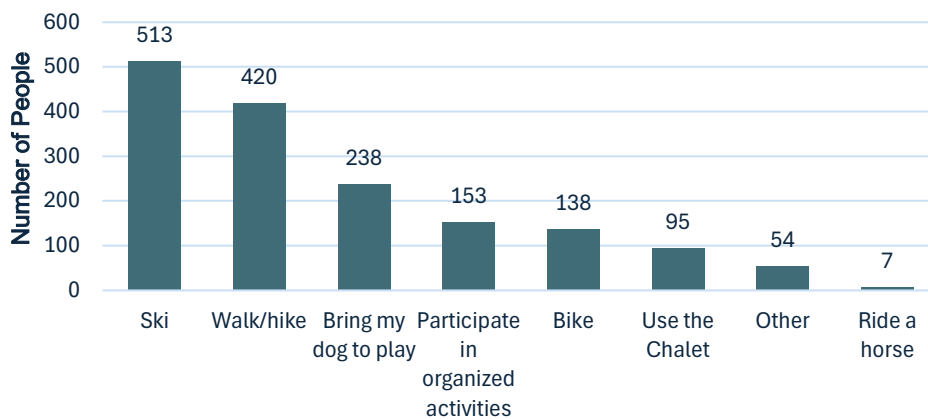
How do you usually get to GPRA?



What do you do at GPRA in the summer and fall?

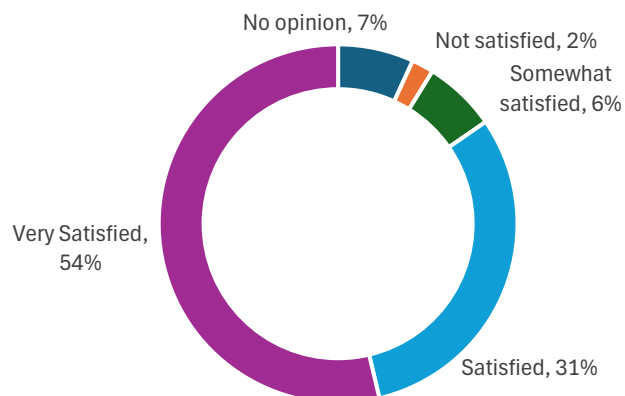


What do you do at GPRA in the winter and spring?



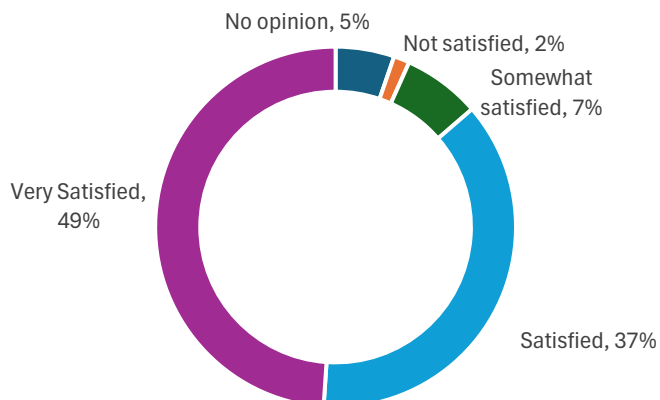
How satisfied are you with...

Trail system maintenance in winter and spring



■ No opinion ■ Not satisfied ■ Somewhat satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Very Satisfied

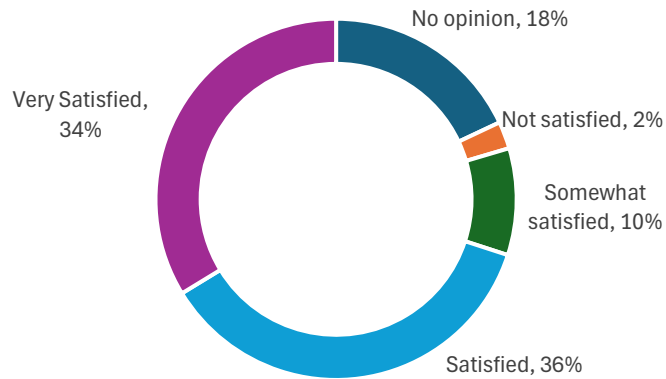
Trail system maintenance in summer and fall



■ No opinion ■ Not satisfied ■ Somewhat satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Very Satisfied

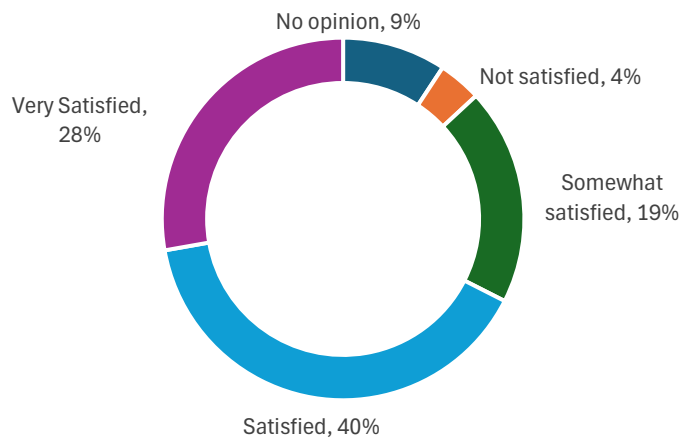
How satisfied are you with...

Amount of groomed ski trails



■ No opinion ■ Not satisfied ■ Somewhat satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Very Satisfied

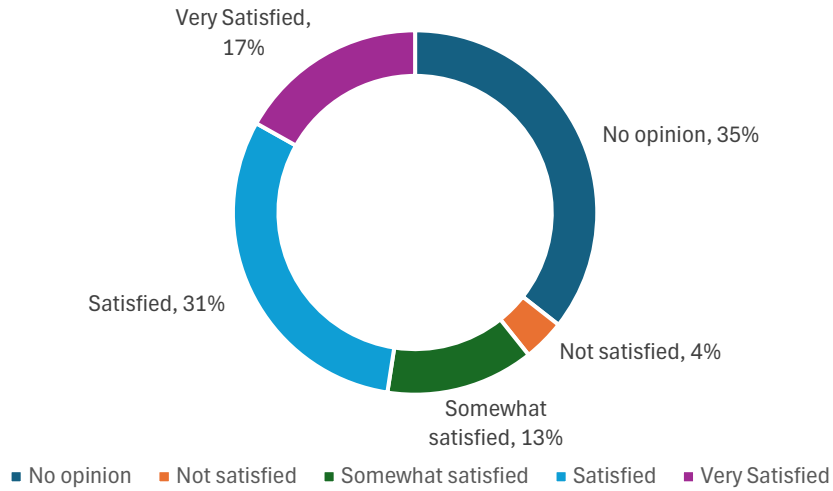
Amount of walking trails



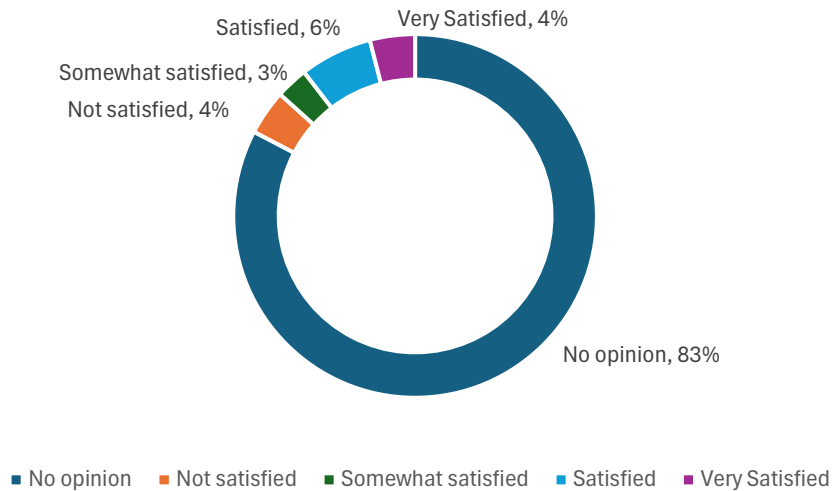
■ No opinion ■ Not satisfied ■ Somewhat satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Very Satisfied

How satisfied are you with...

Amount of biking trails

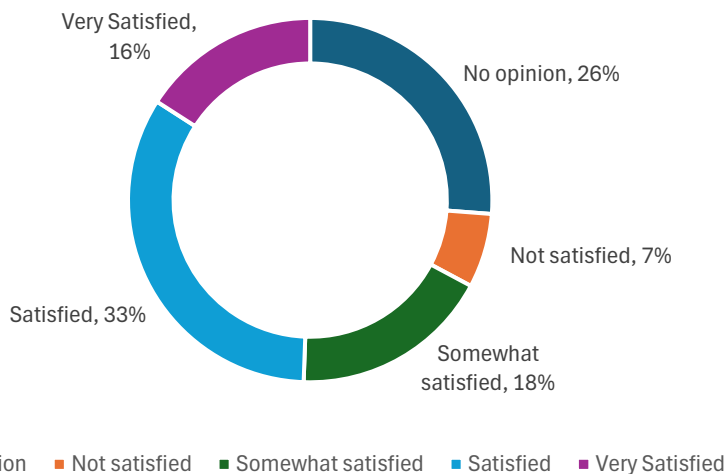


Amount of equestrian trails

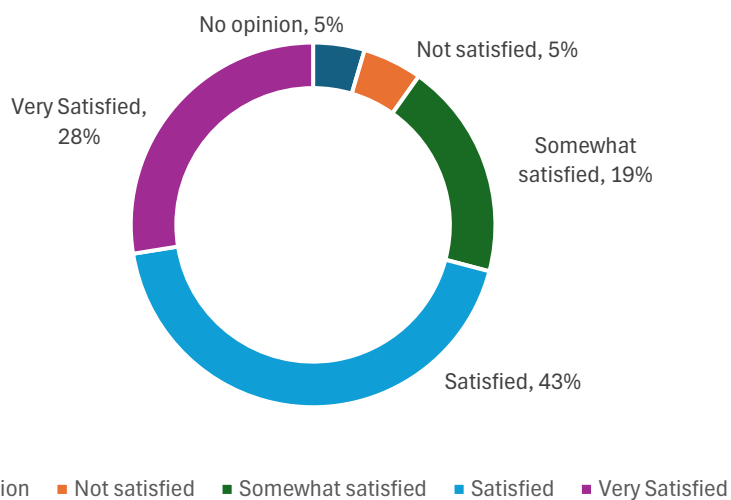


How satisfied are you with...

Amount of multiuse trails

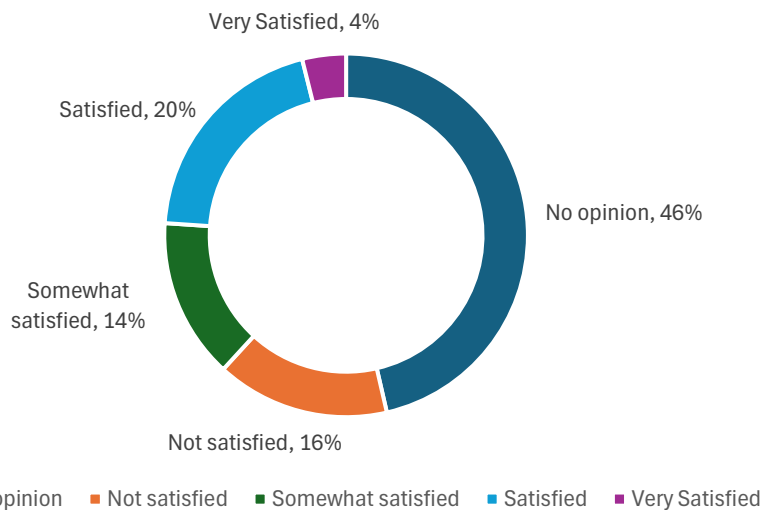


Wayfinding to help people navigate

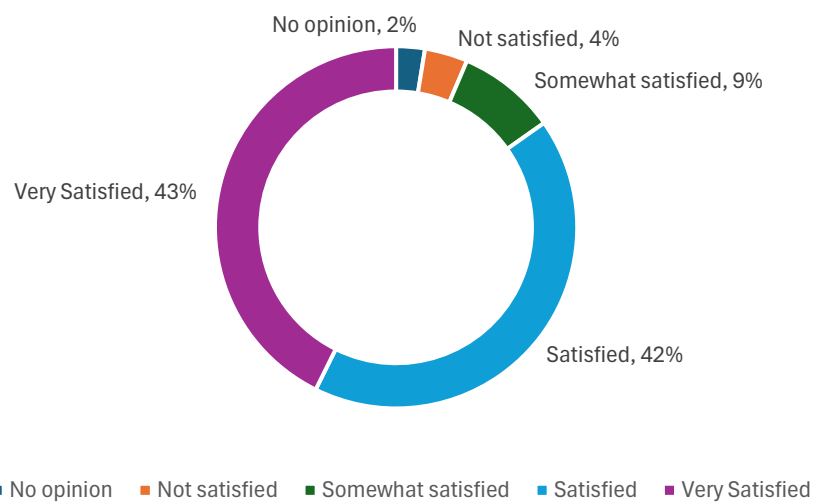


How satisfied are you with...

Availability and opportunity to use Chalet

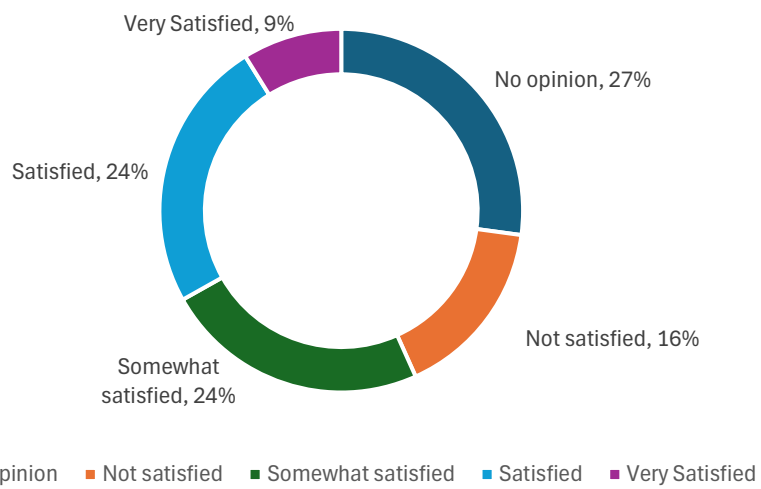


Amount of parking

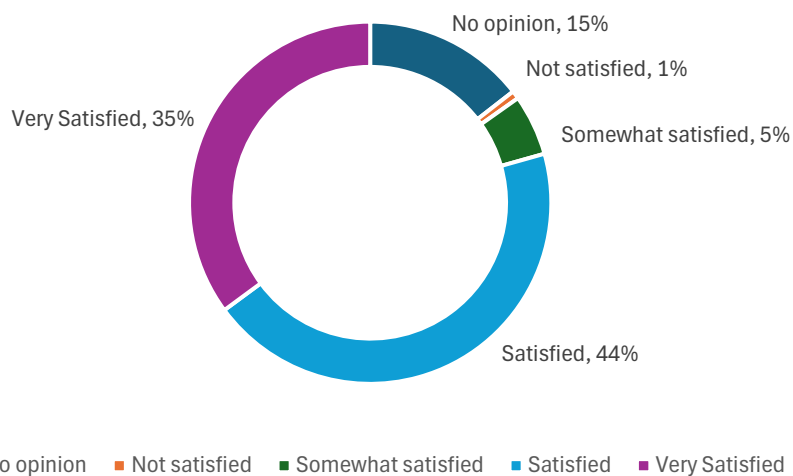


How satisfied are you with...

Connectedness to nearby trail systems

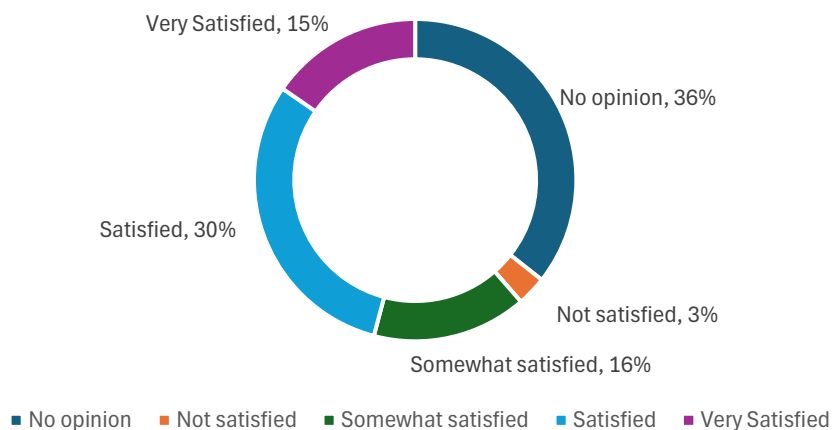


Cleanliness of Facilities

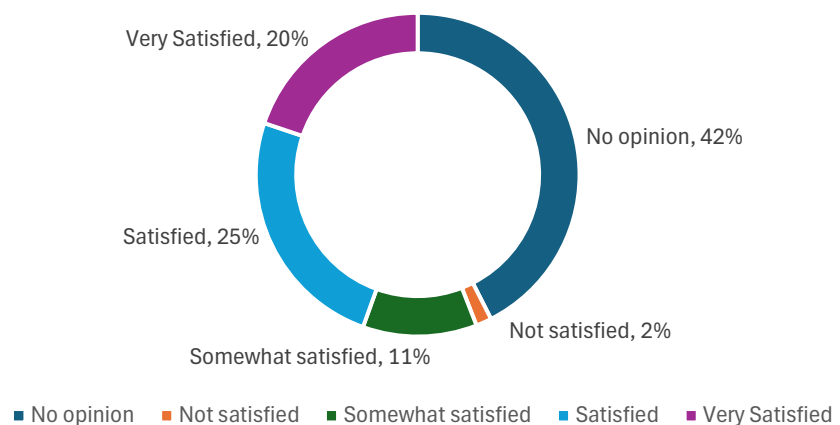


How satisfied are you with...

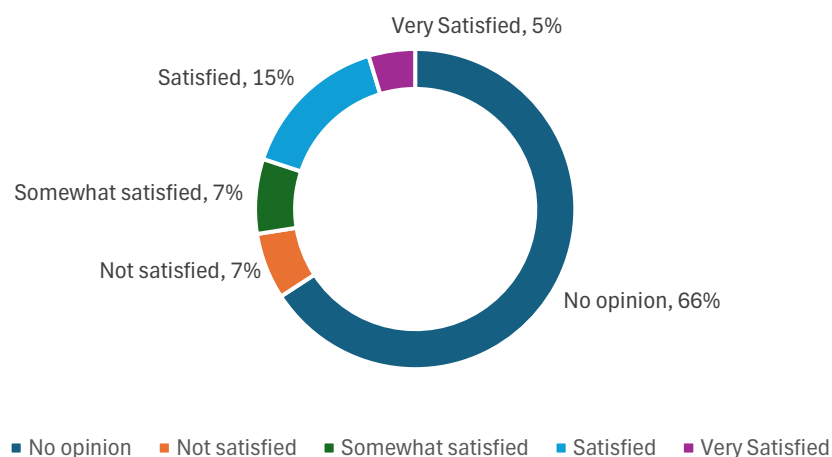
Recreational programs and opportunities for adults



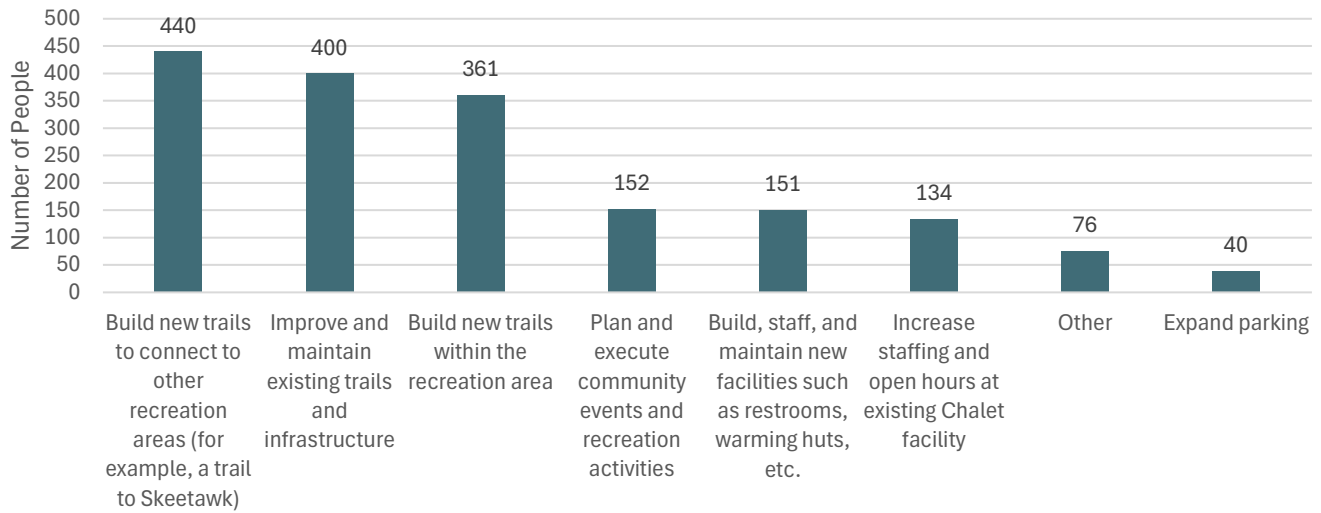
Recreational programs and opportunities for children and teens



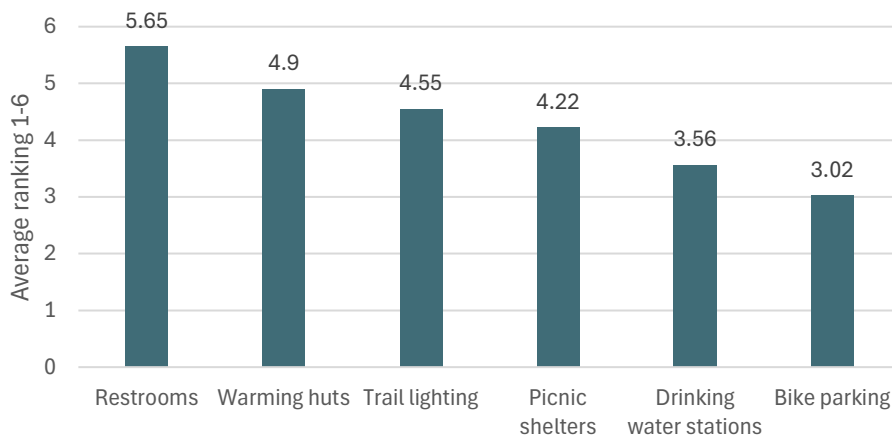
Recreational programs and opportunities for seniors



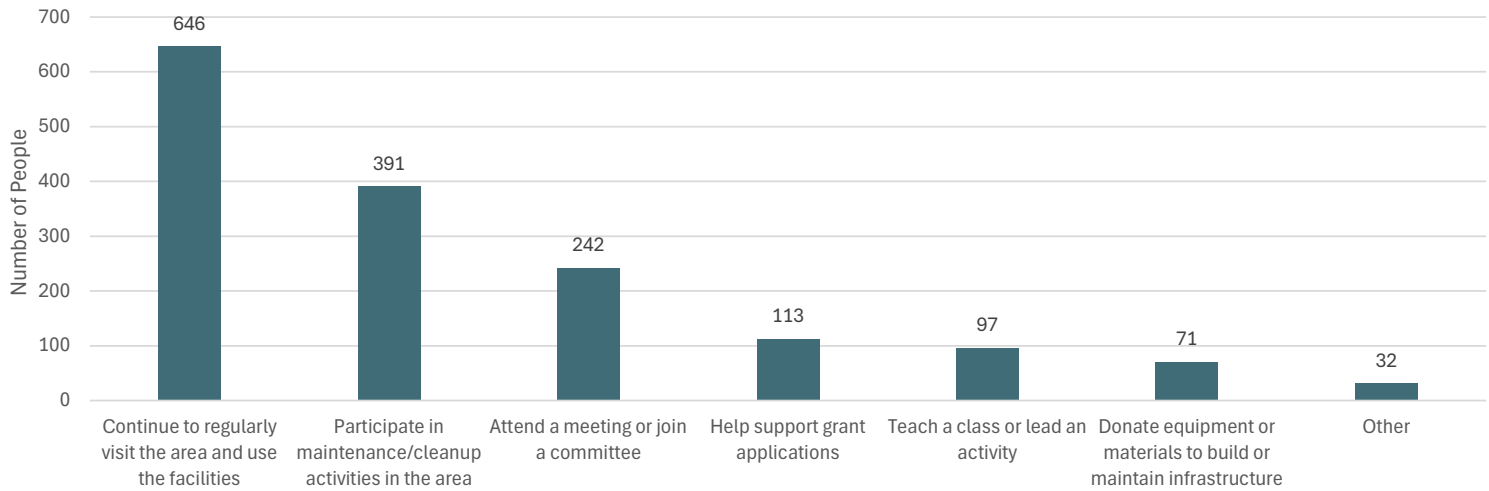
What should GPRA prioritize when deciding where funds should be allocated



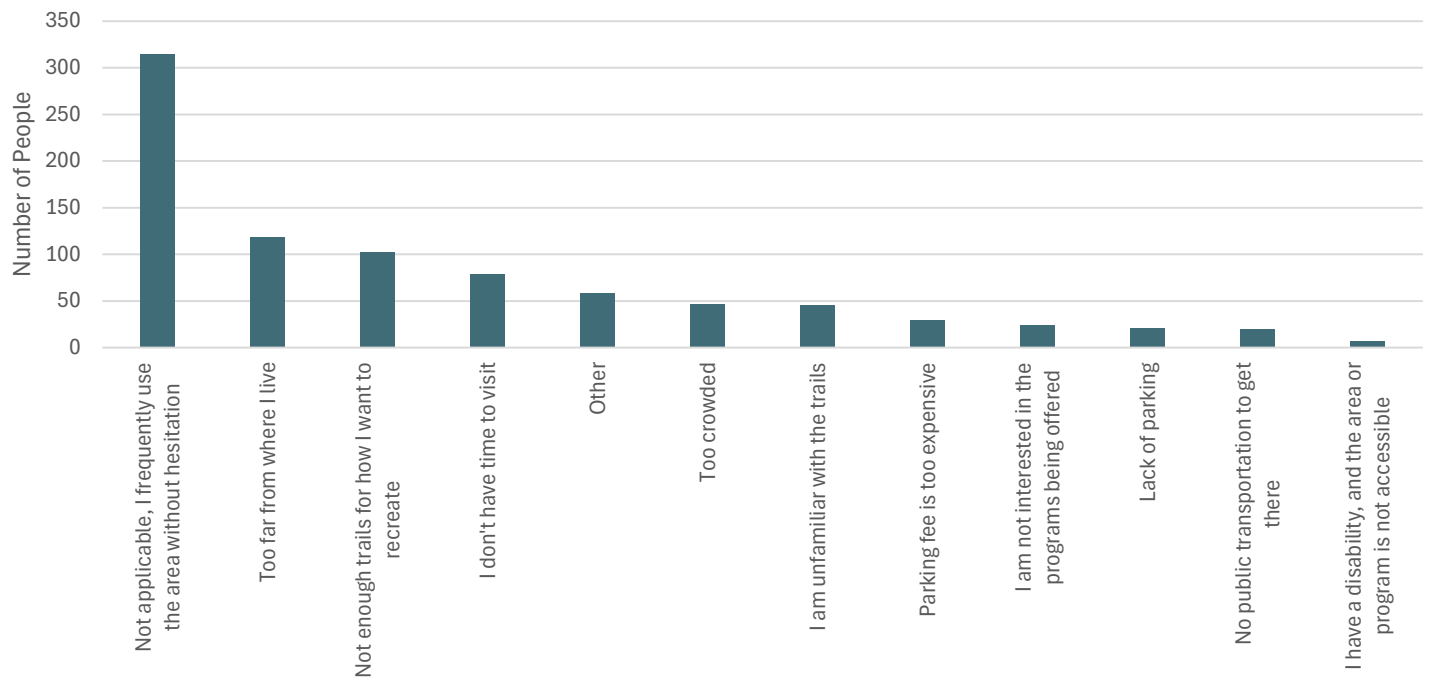
What facilities would improve your experience at GPRA?



How are you willing to help GPRA thrive?



What keeps you from visiting GPRA?





APPENDIX C - PUBLIC COMMENTS



Date Received	Format	Comment	Response Requested?	Response	Action
November 14, 2025	Voicemail	my name is xxxx and I'm with Big Cabbage Radio and we do something called Page 2. It's a morning broadcast and I would like to on Tuesday be able to broadcast a little bit about the GPRA recreation area plan update and the survey that's going on. And what is expected from the survey and how much that area has grown perhaps past/beyond expectations. So if you would like to give me a call that'd be great, my phone number is 907-xxx-xxxx. My name is xxx, Big Cabbage Radio. And I hope we can talk sometime, you know by Monday afternoon at the latest. Thanks a lot have a great weekend. Bye bye.	YES	MSB staff responded to schedule a radio interview.	None
November 23, 2025	Letter via email	On behalf of the Mat-Su Disc Golf Association (MSDGA), I would like to express our appreciation for the ongoing work to update the Government Peak Recreation Area (GPRA) Plan. We value the Borough's commitment to engaging user groups and ensuring the future of this important public space reflects the needs of the community. The MSDGA serves as the steward of the Alcantra Disc Golf Course and supports disc golf facilities at Meier Lake, Palmer High School, Butte Elementary, Houston High, and Sutton Elementary. With several established courses across the Valley and a large, growing membership, our organization is committed to developing and maintaining high-quality recreational assets in partnership with local agencies and land managers. A member of our club recently walked the area identified for disc golf in the existing GPRA Master Plan and noted that much of the terrain is wet and not ideal for future course development. Based on our experience designing and managing courses throughout the Borough, we believe GPRA has exceptional potential for a world-class disc golf course. We recommend that any future evaluation focus on the Pioneer Loop and a small portion of the Denali Loop, where the terrain and layout are more suitable and where a course could integrate smoothly with the existing trail system while minimizing user conflicts. At this time, the MSDGA is not seeking to construct a course at GPRA. However, we respectfully request that disc golf remain identified as a compatible recreational use in the updated Master Plan. Preserving this designation will keep the door open for future opportunities should community interest and appropriate conditions align. We would welcome the opportunity to provide input as the GPRA planning process continues. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your ongoing commitment to providing diverse, accessible recreational opportunities for Mat-Su residents and visitors.	YES	Thank you for reaching out on behalf of the Mat-Su Disc Golf Association and for sharing your thoughtful input regarding the Government Peak Recreation Area (GPRA) planning process. We appreciate your commitment to providing diverse recreational opportunities and your expertise in disc golf development across the Valley. Your feedback about terrain suitability and your recommendation to focus on the Pioneer Loop and a portion of the Denali Loop is very helpful. Preserving disc golf as a compatible recreational use in the updated GPRA Plan will remain part of the discussion, and your input will be considered as planning continues. We'll expect to share the draft GPRA plan for a 30-day public comment period later in March, and we'd love for you to review it and provide your thoughts. When the draft is ready, we'll send out an email, post updates on borough social media channels, and link the plan on the GPRA website so you'll have plenty of ways to stay informed and join the conversation. Thank you again for your engagement and for helping us shape the future of recreation in the Mat-Su Borough. Please feel free to reach out if you have additional ideas or questions.	None
December 2, 2025	Voicemail	this is xxx xxxx. I met with you, xxxx, and the head of the MatSu Ski Club and some other folks back in September there at the GPRA parking lot. You had mentioned that there were going to be the planning process and everything was going to be starting up somehow or another. I do plan on going to the one here on the 10th coming up but i see that the team has already been meeting and I wanted to be a part of that team. Then there was a couple of other individuals that were there at the parking lot with me that day when we had the meeting with Hugh that also would like to be a part of the planning committee. So I don't know if it's possible if if we can still become engaged in that process as you guys move forward. I see that you plan on trying to keep working forward and roll that plan out in March. But my number is 907-xxx-xxxx and my name is xxx. Thank you very much talk to you later, bye.	YES	This was a case of mistaken identity. This person spoke with someone else. However, the team contacted him and spoke with him at the open house event.	None
January 5, 2026	Open House, Written	Please improve access to the Equestrian trail. The first part that crosses the water is boggy, poorly signed, and full of obstacles both seen & unseen. This first part of the trail is an impediment to use of ANY other part of the equestrian area of GPRA. Very few riders will risk their horses wellbeing to get past this area. Wish List: Improve access through improvement of 1st part of trail; AND extend the trail that begins at GPRA all the way past the Carl Wagon Rd on to Independence Mine!	NO	No response requested.	None
January 5, 2026	Open House, Written	We spend probably ~10 hours a week here and as our family grows it will only [go up]. We live about 10 minutes away and have 2 small kids (so far). This area is incredible! Some thoughts: We'd love to see playground, picnic shelter, and pumptrack if we are dreaming big. Some policy questions include potentially expanding the areas where kicksledders can go in the winter since its a ski/walking hybrid tool. More signs about where dogs are allowed would also be nice. The chalet being open for the community would also be amazing - and opportunities like having a toddler storytime in deep winter would really serve the community! (Also - Sutton playground and library is an amazing inspiration.) Definitely disappointed about rate of the chalet rentals @ \$350 I feel like it still isn't cheap enough for true community events - and now there will be more weddings than ever.	YES	Thank you for attending the January 5 GPRA plan update open house at the GPRA Chalet and for taking the time to share your thoughts with borough staff. We truly appreciate your engagement and the perspective you bring as a frequent user of the area and as part of the TrailSprouts community. Your feedback about amenities such as a playground, picnic shelter, and pump track, as well as ideas for expanded winter kick-sled areas, clearer dogs-allowed signage, and community programming like toddler story time, is invaluable. These suggestions help us understand what families need to make GPRA even more welcoming and accessible. We also acknowledge your concerns regarding chalet rental rates and the impact on community events. Affordability and accessibility are important considerations, and your input will be included as we review future plans for the facility. In 2027, the borough will assume management of the GPRA Chalet when the current contract ends. Our goal is to increase accessibility for the public, and we hope this transition will create more opportunities for community use. We expect to release the draft GPRA plan for a 30-day public comment period later in March. We invite you to review the plan and share your feedback during that time. Notification of the draft's availability will be sent via email and posted on the borough's website and social media channels. Thank you again for your thoughtful comments and for being part of the conversation about enhancing recreation opportunities in the Mat-Su Borough. Please feel free to reach out anytime if you have additional feedback or ideas.	None
January 5, 2026	Open House, Written	I understand that summer weddings must be profitable, however, the summer is short and having the use of the chalet year-round for community events would be amazing. Finding better ways to use the lower parking lot would be great also. A covered picnic area down there, maybe a playground (think like Sutton's) also community gardens would be a great use around the parking area.	NO	No response requested.	None
January 5, 2026	Open House, Written	I have attended Fishhook community council meetings where they have stated that putting in a playground is out of their hands and with the Borough. There is not enough area in this community for very young children to play - not one playground in Fishhook neighborhood. Since GPRA is supposed to be recreation for everyone, it would make a lot of sense to have one here.	YES	Thank you for attending the January 5 GPRA plan update open house at the GPRA Chalet and for discussing your thoughts with borough staff. We appreciate your engagement and the time you've taken to share your perspective on recreation opportunities for young children in the Fishhook community. Your comments about the lack of playgrounds in the area and the importance of creating spaces for very young children are noted. GPRA is intended to serve the entire community, and your feedback helps us better understand how to make the area more inclusive for families. We will include your input as part of ongoing discussions about future improvements at GPRA. We expect to release the draft GPRA plan for a 30-day public comment period later in March. We invite you to review the plan and share your feedback during that time. Notification of the draft's availability will be sent via email and posted on the borough's website and social media channels. Thank you again for being part of this conversation and for helping us shape recreation opportunities in the Mat-Su Borough. Please feel free to reach out if you have additional ideas or questions.	None
January 5, 2026	Open House, Written	I'm concerned about the proposed biathlon/other range head is present in propellent and most projectiles. Many houses are downstream of the range area. What mitigation measures are being considered? What will be mandated by Muni, Borough, State, Federal? Who ensures compliance? etc.	YES	Thank you for attending the January 5 GPRA plan update open house at the GPRA Chalet and for discussing your concerns with borough staff. We appreciate your engagement and the time you've taken to share your perspective on the proposed biathlon and shooting range, especially as it relates to lead contamination and any necessary mitigation measures. At this time, the borough is not strongly pursuing the development of a biathlon course at GPRA, but we will continue to review community feedback and regulatory requirements before any decisions are made. A biathlon range is not a priority at this location at this time because prioritizing a biathlon range could delay or limit investment in projects that benefit a wider range of users, public input shows stronger support for system wide improvements and projects that serve more users on a year-round basis. Additionally, the project would have a high capital and safety consideration, with potential environmental impacts, and ongoing maintenance. The borough is committed to ensuring that any proposed activities meet all applicable municipal, state, and federal regulations. Environmental safety and community health are priorities, and your input will be included in ongoing evaluations and discussions. If a biathlon range is constructed in the future, it will be built to industry standard best practices to include lead abatement. We expect to release a draft GPRA plan later in March for a 30-day public comment period. We encourage you to review the draft plan when it is released and share your thoughts during that time. Notification of the draft availability will be sent via email, as well as shared on the Mat-Su Borough's social media channels and website. Thank you again for being part of this conversation and for helping us address these critical considerations. Please feel free to reach out if you have additional questions or would like updates as planning progresses.	None

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January 5, 2026	Open House, Written	We love the bike/running trails and we would enjoy the addition of a dirt pump track for all ages. The pump track at mirror lake is awesome! Also the kids of the Fishhook would love nature based playground made from natural features not plastic!	YES	Thank you for attending the January 5 GPRA plan update open house at the GPRA Chalet and for discussing your ideas with borough staff. We appreciate your engagement and the time you've taken to share your thoughts on recreation opportunities at GPRA. Your suggestions for adding a dirt pump track and creating a nature-based playground using natural features are valuable input and things suggestions we've heard from other community members as well. These ideas help us better understand how we could make GPRA more enjoyable for families and all ages. We expect to release the draft GPRA plan for a 30-day public comment period later in March. We invite you to review the plan and share your feedback during that time. Notification of the draft's availability will be sent via email and posted on the borough's website and social media channels. Thank you again for being part of this conversation and for helping us shape the future of recreation in the Mat-Su Borough. Please feel free to reach out if you have additional ideas or questions.	None
January 5, 2026	Open House, Written	I would like to see the mountain bike trail more well-maintained. Winter: The fat bike trail needs more frequent grooming/compacting especially after heavier snowfall. The fat bike trail also needs to be off limits for walkers, which severely disrupts the trail. Summer: There are a lot of water spots that have been filled with large gravel and needs proper draining. In the fall the trail can become pretty soupy.	NO	No response requested.	None
January 5, 2026	Open House, Written	Would like the Chalet to be open to the public. Have the MatSu Ski Club manage it and maintain hours open for skiers & hikers. Love the ski trails & hiking trails. Blueberry Knoll could use some TLC.	NO	No response requested.	None
January 5, 2026	Open House, Written	Let's get a biathlon Range built. I drafted the last proposed plans at the poor location I was allowed to use. There are better locations we identified and I will gladly volunteer my time again. My day job is as an Engineer and Land Surveyor. I can send 35% drawings from last design (2020?)	YES	Thank you for attending the January 5 GPRA plan update open house at the GPRA Chalet and for discussing your ideas with borough staff. We appreciate your engagement and the expertise you bring as an engineer and land surveyor, as well as your willingness to volunteer your time to support biathlon development. Your enthusiasm for building a biathlon range and your offer to share the previous design drawings are noted. At this time, the borough is not strongly pursuing the development of a biathlon course at GPRA, but your input will be considered as part of the broader planning process. A biathlon range is not a priority at this location at this time because prioritizing a biathlon range could delay or limit investment in projects that benefit a wider range of users. Public input shows stronger support for system wide improvements and projects that serve more users on a year-round basis. Additionally, the project would have a high capital and safety consideration, with potential environmental impacts, and ongoing maintenance. We expect to release the draft GPRA plan for a 30-day public comment period later in March. We invite you to review the plan and share your feedback during that time. Notification of the draft's availability will be sent via email and posted on the borough's website and social media channels. Thank you again for being part of this conversation and for your willingness to contribute your expertise. Please feel free to reach out if you have additional questions or would like updates as planning progresses.	None
January 5, 2026	Open House, Written	Biathlon is one of the fastest growing winter sports across the N hemisphere. New biathlon complexes at Brillam, WI; Bozeman, MT; Hayward, WI; Craftsbury, VT;. - Upgraded biathlon facilities at Lake Placid and Soldiers Hollow, UT. With the growing Nordic Ski programs and rifle clubs, biathlon is a good fit for the MatSu. Biathlon adds a sport opportunity and it teaches firearm safety, discipline, fitness, and a healthy lifestyles. The only Winter Olympic sport USA hasn't medaled in yet...	NO	No response requested.	None
January 7, 2026	Email	Also the existing GPRA plan references an "asset mgt plan (biathlon (per Asset Mgt. Plan)). What is this plan? Where can I find it? Thank you. v/r Steve Wilson	YES	See row 17 response (response to January 8 email)	None
January 7, 2026	Email	The link for the GPRA user survey does not work. I get a "bad link" message. Please provide the correct link. Thank you.	YES	Responded with link to survey.	None
January 8, 2026	Email	More comments for the GPRA. In support of a biathlon range and stadium at GPRA, a consideration could be target systems placed inside shipping containers. This protects the targets from the elements, controls access, and eases lead containment. See the photos below. Kurvinen also makes a targeting system that collects the bullets via a shoot-through design. See link below: biathlonontargets.com I would also prefer to see a single-track MTB trail through the biathlon stadium, as mountain bike biathlon is also a variation of the sport. Regarding race loops, ideally, all 7 race loops would be incorporated, but fitting a biathlon complex into an existing trail venue can be challenging. If at least a 1.5km and 2km race loop could be identified with the biathlon range, this would meet most of the race requirements with creative planning. In the past five years, biathlon venues have grown at Bozeman, MT; Brillion, WI; and Casper, WY. Improvements have been made at Soldier Hollow, UT, and Lake Placid, NY. More range projects are under consideration. With challenging snow conditions and large Nordic ski populations, Alaska in general and the MatSu specifically is well poised to grow and succeed at the biathlon sport. Any questions, please let me know. Sincerely,	YES	Thank you for reaching out with your question. The "Asset Mgt. Plan" referenced in the existing GPRA plan is the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Hatcher Pass – Government Peak Unit Asset Management & Development Plan, adopted on November 20, 2012. This plan is for the Government Peak Unit as a whole, not only the GPRA. It's important to note that not everything outlined in the 2012 plan was implemented, and inclusion in that plan does not guarantee that a project will happen in the future. Plans like this serve as a framework, but priorities and feasibility change over time. Similar to the current update process for the GPRA plan, the Asset Management Plan will also need to be revisited and updated to reflect current needs, resources, and community input. You can access the plan here: Overview page: https://matsu.gov/plans/hatcher-pass-government-peak Direct PDF link: https://msb-cms-documents.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/mergedrthpguassetmanagementplan-final-2P5ipKLAZp7eoUGrDBtQgg.pdf The plan does include references to biathlon facilities: Chapter 3, Page 3-8 "During Phases III and IV, some of the skiing trails will have night lighting installed along with a biathlon shooting range and penalty loop. Additional trails for general use, equestrian and mountain biking should be added and possibly a beginner hill for Alpine skiing and boarding." Chapter 3, Page3-43 "Biathlon Shooting Range A biathlon range site would be located near the top of the race venue firing directly into the side of the mountain from an ideally-situated, level site. Biathlon ranges are sited to have uphill approaches to increase the difficulty of the shooting. No attempt has been made at this time to specifically tailor the trail network for biathlon competitions but it would make a serviceable race and excellent training venue. For safety it would be separated from the adjacent parking and sledding hill with berms and screening. The biathlon facility is planned for Phase III/IV. Other than the shooting range, the biathlon trail system has been designed into the Nordic trail system." Appendices, PageA-207 *Topic: Funding Priorities. Commenter's Name: The Mat-Su Ski Club. Comment/Issue: The Mat-Su Ski Club recommended the following priorities for future funding: 1. Trail lighting of the lower stadium and Matanuska Loop 2. Extension of Ullr's Trail to the competitive stadium area and construction of the competitive loops. 3. Large day lodge and community center 4. Trail lighting of competitive stadium area and ski trails, sledding hill and construction of a biathlon range." We also wanted to thank you for attending the January 5 open house at the GPRA Chalet and taking the time to leave a comment and for emailing another comment on January 8. Your comments about the growth of biathlon and its benefits, such as promoting firearm safety, discipline, fitness, and healthy lifestyles, are well noted. We recognize the passion and commitment behind your advocacy for this sport and appreciate the examples you provided of successful facilities across the country.	None
January 13, 2026	Email	Hi - I'm a big supporter of GPRA and applaud your planning effort, but I do have some questions about the data you have presented in the arc gis story website. Where does the "over 300,000 annual users" figure for GPRA come from? That is 822 users per day on average! Are you using the Borough's car counter at the gate to estimate use? Did the Borough properly use the device i.e., cut the count in half, since each car gets counted twice, once going in and once going out? Did the Borough ever audit that device to check its relationship with reality? The ski club has had trail counters at GPRA for 5 years now, and our data seems to indicate less than half of your stated user rate. Although our estimate does not include users who only use the Chalet (wedding parties, etc) or those users who drive up for the view but never leave the parking lot, those users are really a separate class from outdoor recreationists actually using GPRA. It does need to be noted that our estimate does not include users of bike trails or the Blueberry Knoll trail. We have (inconsistently) maintained a counter on the Blueberry Knoll trail that indicated use there of an average of ~50 users per summer day in 2021. VMBaH does or did once have trail counters on the bike trails. Our auditing (actual manual counts of trail users compared to trail counter results) indicates that the counter at Lightpole 29 (the green line on the first graph) is a decent proxy for the total number of Nordic trail users in any given time period. (Most users pass by several counters, many users multiple times in a single visit, so the counters can not simply be added up to determine user numbers) Some sample data graphs for the GPRA trail counters are included below. The first two graphs cast doubt on the claimed 25,000 users per month (300k annual) at GPRA and on the claimed 300% increase in GPRA use since 2017, unless all of that increase occurred before December of 2020.	YES	MSB staff spoke with this commenter and thanked them for pointing out these discrepancies. The 300,000 number was a carryover error.	None, numbers have been updated in plan.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	I was disappointed to read that the report concluded that GPRA needs more multi use and dog friendly trails. The fact that GPRA has single use trails without dogs is a significant reason why it has become such a special place. There are already a plethora of multi use and dog friendly trails in the Mat-Su Borough. There are not very many single use or dog free trails in the Mat-Su Borough.	NO	No response requested.	None. The plan does not propose eliminating any existing single-use, dog-restricted trails such as ski-only trails. The draft plan seeks to consider recreation opportunities for a broader range of users year-round. Survey feedback supporting additional multi-use and dog friendly trails largely reflected interest in expanded walking and hiking opportunities during the winter months, when trail options for non-skiing users become more limited.

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During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	As of 1/ 2025 the Board of Game passed 50 yard setbacks for all trails in GPRA.	YES	We appreciate you flagging the State Board of Game action related to setbacks along GPRA trails, and we agree that this regulatory context should be clearly reflected in the plan. We will clarify in the GPRA Management Plan how current state regulations apply within the area. Under 5 AAC 92.550, trapping is restricted within 50 yards of designated trails unless traps meet specific conditions (elevated, enclosed, underwater, or under ice). Importantly, the draft plan goes further by proposing a complete prohibition on trapping within GPRA, rather than relying solely on setback based restrictions. In addition, the plan proposes to prohibit hunting within GPRA due to public safety concerns and the area’s high use recreation context. This proposed hunting prohibition is separate from, and not addressed by, the Board of Game setback action. Thank you again for raising this point. Your comment will help ensure the plan clearly communicates how Borough policy builds on existing state regulations to strengthen public safety and reduce user conflicts.	Revise strategy D on page 16 to clarify that some forms of trapping are currently prohibited within 50 yards of trails in GPRA.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	My previous comments were not addressed in the Draft. I commented about how GPRA administration allows swarms of people over-harvesting fiddle head ferns and other vegetation along side the trail system for commercial purposes. There needs to be guidelines, personal use policies, and impact analyses of this activity in the GPRA. There needs to be governing policy, or at least public land stewardship etiquette that addresses harvesting of vegetation in this public recreation area. It is not in the best public interest to turn a blind eye to such activities, it is irresponsible as public recreation land managers to allow such activity. This is not a commercial vegetation harvest land base, it is a public recreation area. Please develop user guidelines/policies on vegetation harvesting for personal use and commercial use. GPRA is a public recreation area and commercial vegetation harvest should not be allowed. Furthermore, many of us go to GPRA to study nature and the environment; allowing swarms of people to harvest fiddlehead ferns and other plants like watermelon berry plant for commercial use is not appropriate for this recreation area. Please do address this. You could get some example policy from State or Federal land managers as a starting point. This is a user conflict that is being ignored and has potential for adverse consequences. Please address this management need in the GPRA Management Plan, develop guiding policy accordingly.	YES	Thank you for raising this concern again and for clearly outlining the public harvesting issues you are observing. We appreciate your continued engagement and your emphasis on stewardship, ecological protection, and maintaining GPRA as a public recreation area rather than a resource extraction site. You are correct that the draft GPRA Management Plan does not currently include specific policies related to vegetation harvesting for personal or commercial use. The plan was structured as a high level framework focused on recreation use, safety, and facilities, but your comment identifies vegetation harvesting as a user conflict and management gap that warrants attention. This is the type of use etiquette and guidance that could be addressed through improved wayfinding, signage, and visitor education, similar to how trail etiquette, dog rules, and seasonal use expectations are communicated. Your suggestion to establish clear guidelines or prohibitions, supported by education and consistent messaging, will be considered as the Borough evaluates next steps beyond this plan, including whether additional policies or public facing materials are needed to protect natural resources and reduce user conflicts. Thank you again for taking the time to share this feedback.	Consider public harvesting when creating future educational materials and signs.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	There is already a big interest in having a biathlon only range at GPRA, and that interest is only growing by the year. A large number of the skiers and families who recreate regularly at GPRA have told me personally (one of the coaches at GPRA) how much they would like to have a biathlon only range at GPRA so that their kids can participate in biathlon. Without a biathlon range at GPRA, these kids are not able to participate in their sport of choice because it is not feasible to drive 1.5 hrs to Anchorage to train regularly. I think it is a disservice to the community to remove a biathlon range from the GPRA plan (my understanding is that it had once been in the plan for future construction). There are many talented and highly committed athletes that train at GPRA daily who I know personally that would be contenders for Team USA spots on international teams, and who would represent the Mat-Su Borough proudly and very well on the National, and even international stage, if they only had the opportunity to train for biathlon in their home town at GPRA. Please consider this seriously on behave of the athletes of the Mat-Su Borough	YES	Thank you for taking the time to share this comment and for advocating on behalf of Mat Su athletes and families. We appreciate your perspective and insight into how access to facilities directly affects participation levels and athlete development within the community. The current GPRA Management Plan was written to align borough priorities with public priorities identified through broad public input, including maintenance, safety, and system wide improvements. A biathlon range was not identified as a current priority project in this draft. However, this plan is intended to function as a flexible, long range management framework, not a comprehensive or permanent list of all future facilities. The absence of a biathlon range as a priority in the plan does not mean it is prohibited or removed from consideration for future development. Your comments document growing interest, unmet local demand, and the potential community benefits of a biathlon facility at GPRA. This feedback will remain part of the public record and can help inform future discussions if community priorities, feasibility, safety considerations, partnerships, and funding opportunities align. Thank you again for your continued engagement and for sharing the athlete focused perspective.	None. The plan does not preclude future development of a biathlon range.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	A biathlon range being added to the GPRA plan would be most beneficial for the community. There is tremendous support for this and it would be a welcomed addition to the already wonderful facilities offered at GPRA. Please consider adding the addition of a biathlon range to the plan as the community is in support of it and it would be a well used facility by all members of the community and surrounding communities.	YES	Thank you for taking the time to share your support for a biathlon range at GPRA and for your continued engagement in the planning process. We appreciate your perspective and the enthusiasm you bring for expanding recreation opportunities in the Mat Su Borough. At this time a biathlon range is not a current priority of the Borough and is not identified as a near term project in the draft GPRA Management Plan. The plan reflects broader community input emphasizing maintenance of existing infrastructure, safety, and improvements that benefit a wide range of users throughout the year. However, it is important to note that the draft plan does not preclude the development of a biathlon range in the future. The plan is intended to provide a flexible, long term framework rather than an exhaustive list of all potential projects. Future proposals, including a biathlon range, may be considered as circumstances evolve, community priorities shift, and feasibility, safety, environmental, and funding considerations are evaluated. Thank you again for sharing your viewpoint and helping inform future discussions about GPRA.	None. The plan does not preclude future development of a biathlon range.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	The original GPRA draft plan going back to 2012 included a biathlon range at the Nordic ski trails. As I reviewed this current draft I only saw one mention of biathlon on page 59. The person commenting states they are concerned about propellant and projectiles. Propellant (gun powder) is burned up upon firing a round. Projectiles (lead bullets) on a biathlon range are caught in a trap behind the target. Every biathlon range across the country has these bullet traps. They are cleaned out on an annual or semi annual basis. I have personally cleaned them out at the Kincaid biathlon range. Strict protocols for cleanliness are enforced. There are safety standards that all biathlon ranges are built to. Biathlon only uses .22 caliber low velocity round which are very quiet. Biathlon is a growing sport across the United States. There now university biathlon race programs. This has only occurred in the last five years because of interest and demand. When the Arctic Winter games came to the Matsu Valley several years ago, all the biathlon participants had to compete in Anchorage at Kincaid Park. The Matsu Nordic ski club has a coach that has participated in biathlon at the international level first as an athlete and then as a coach. It's time that the board of the GPRA elevates the sport of biathlon to the status that it deserves. It could be a source of revenue going forward as teams would travel to Alaska for early season training.	YES	MSB had a nice chat with the commentor on May 28 regarding his biathlon comment. He anticipates the Arctic Winter Games may return to Southcentral AK and feels now would be a good time to revisit efforts toward a biathlon facility. We discussed funding limitations and the need for broader public support, and he understood those constraints and appreciated the discussion.	None. The plan does not preclude future development of a biathlon range.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	Biathlon development is underrepresented in the draft plan. Biathlon teaches an outdoor healthy lifestyle, firearm safety, and supports Alaska's hunting culture through shooting practice. Biathlon is the most-viewed winter sport in Europe. There are several new range developments in the USA. The growth of Nordic skiing in the MatSu supports the development of an active biathlon community. GPRA has the infrastructure in place to support biathlon range development. There are numerous government & private grant sources for range development. Please include this future development in the draft GPRA plan.	YES	Thank you for taking the time to share your perspective and for your continued engagement with the GPRA Management Plan. We appreciate your support for biathlon and your comments on its health, safety, and cultural value, as well as the role GPRA could play in supporting that community. The draft plan reflects many different interests and priorities identified through public input and is focused on system wide needs such as maintenance, safety, and visitor experience. While biathlon is not emphasized as a current development priority in this plan, the draft does not prohibit or exclude biathlon range development in the future. The plan is intended to be a flexible, long range framework rather than an exhaustive list of all potential facilities. Your comments further document community interest in biathlon and highlight considerations that may be relevant as priorities, funding, and feasibility evolve over time. This feedback will remain part of the public record and can inform future discussions about specialized facilities at GPRA. Thank you again for contributing to the planning process.	None. The plan does not preclude future development of a biathlon range.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	Top three facilities that people said they would welcome to make the experience more enjoyable. Double the size of the chalet and make open for public always (like at Kincaid). Giant open area for changing and fans/users/public that would be great for events. Adding covered picnic table area to where the current ones are would be a good idea next to the restrooms. A kiddie pump track like the one installed at hilltop is a good idea as well. Playground could go either way. If they added a hockey rink that would be sweet too lower parking lot area. Also when making future parking lot, rather than clear cut the whole area they should leave some stands of trees for buffers if possible. Adding lights to parking lot seems like not good use of funds as well as building new rest rooms or warming huts. What everyone wants is an actual chalet you can use and watch the event starts from. Also a community fire wood day to take down spruce bark fire hazard trees littered throughout the park. Also new additional trails should add more multi use. there is currently only one during the winter as far I know being the pioneer loop. Would be way more inclusive if there were other trails for ski joring etc.	NO	No response requested.	None. Many of these ideas align with the draft plan’s strategies, including improving availability of inside space through better use of the Chalet (Strategy E), adding covered picnic shelters and youth amenities like pump tracks (Strategy H), and expanding additional multi use trails to support activities such as skijoring and inclusive winter use (Strategy H).

Date Received	Format	Comment	Response Requested?	Response	Action
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	Enhancing visitor experience and prohibiting trapping and all types of hunting are inexpensive goals that need to be approved. Building new accessible, family-friendly trails will add users and help pay for these improvements. Adding lighting improves safety. Adding facilities such as picnic shelters (these should need reservations for groups over 9 people) and a playground will add users. Connecting to Skeetawk is most likely the best option for expanding access and use. It will also cost a lot of money. Utilizing volunteers and grants will be necessary. I live near GPRA and utilize it year-round. Thank you for working to make this area even better and used by more people.	NO	No response requested.	None. These priorities directly align with multiple strategies in the draft plan, including strengthening public safety through prohibiting trapping and hunting (Strategy D), building family friendly and accessible trails (Strategy F), adding amenities such as picnic shelters and playgrounds (Strategy H), and pursuing a future trail connection to Skeetawk while leveraging volunteers and grants to support implementation (Strategy I and Strategy G).
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	I was very upset by the sudden appearance this winter of signs on the Fireweed Trail proclaiming it closed to foot traffic. Judging by the eventual fate of those signs, I'm sure I'm not the only one. Fireweed is hands-down the best winter running and walking trail at GPRA. The alternate options that were posted do not compare. Pioneer is one mile—certainly not long enough for a trail run. Blueberry Knoll and Government Peak are entirely uphill. Please keep Fireweed open year round for runners and walkers. I would also love to see more running and walking trails and a playground. Thank you for your hard work!	YES	Thank you for taking the time to share your experience and for your thoughtful feedback on winter trail access at GPRA. We appreciate your engagement and understand how important the Fireweed Trail is for runners and walkers, particularly during the winter months. Temporary winter restrictions and signs are sometimes used to support grooming operations or reduce user conflicts during certain conditions. This winter the Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers (the volunteer group who helps maintain the Fireweed Trail) was faced with difficult weather conditions, broken grooming equipment, limited funding, and volunteer health issues. Because of this, they made the decision to restrict the trail to bike traffic in hopes to maintain their grooming efforts and trail conditions. We realize changes like this can cause user confusion. One of the plan's key actions is to standardize and improve wayfinding and trail communication to reduce confusion around seasonal use changes and ensure expectations are clearer and more consistent across the trail system. n addition, creating new multi use trails is identified in the plan as a strategy to help relieve pressure on existing trails and better accommodate different user groups. Your comments reinforce the importance of balancing winter operations with high quality running and walking opportunities. Interest in additional walking and running trails was echoed by many community members and is reflected in the plan's long term strategies. We will also share your feedback with Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers, the volunteer group that helps maintain the Fireweed Trail. Thank you again for sharing your perspective and helping inform future improvements at GPRA.	Pass concern along to Valley Mountain Bikers and Hikers.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	I would like to see more walking, hiking, and running trails that remain open year round to all users. GPRA is a fantastic facility, and multiple uses are needed, but there has been an outsized focus on bike and ski trails. These activities require equipment that isn't affordable to every family. By closing the fireweed trail to pedestrians this winter, GPRA became less accessible to households with lower incomes (the alternate routes were not comparable replacements). I also see there is an interest in a biathlon range at GPRA. I don't think GPRA is the right location for this. It is a small footprint embedded in a residential area. Shooting would create a regular noise nuisance for existing neighbors. There are plenty of other places people can shoot. Thank you for all of your work.	NO	No response requested.	None. This feedback aligns with the draft plan's focus on expanding year round walking, hiking, and running access through new multi use and inclusive trails (Strategy F and Strategy H).
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	Please consider using the existing chalet as a warming space and use the funds to build a different development project. The chalet is a beautiful building and seems to be used infrequently outside of wedding season. The warming hut is most likely used in the winter months. We could designate specific hours of day for use. If we built a simple covered picnic area that could be used during the shoulder seasons and rainy summer days, it could be the "warming space" to keep the chalet clean during its busy rental season. - [] Quick side note about weddings- the trash from artificial flowers is outrageous. This venue is a beautiful outdoor space and it gets aggressively trashed with fake flowers. There should be a stout cleaning deposit for using them to pay for cleaning up. We use GPRA at least 200 days a year because we live on edgerton and I have cleaned multiple bags of trash from the wedding ceremony site. - [] Please consider building a simple pump track, they can be built affordably in a small space. This would add a safe space for the bike community to play and practice skills. The kids of the fishhook community have limited developed play/hang out areas and pump track can meets the interest of all ages. Currently the closest pump tracks are in Palmer at the river park or in Wasilla at the skate park. We are extremely grateful for the GPRA and skeetawk areas for year around play and wee look forward to coming years of growth!	YES	Thank you for taking the time to share these thoughtful comments and for your strong stewardship of GPRA. We appreciate the care you clearly have for the area and your ideas for making facilities more functional, welcoming, and sustainable for year round use. The draft GPRA Management Plan recognizes the need to make better use of existing facilities, including the Chalet, and identifies increasing public access to indoor space as a priority once the Borough assumes management in 2027. Your suggestion to intentionally use the Chalet as a warming space during set hours, while exploring lower cost amenities such as covered picnic shelters for shoulder seasons, aligns well with this direction and will be considered as future projects and operating policies are evaluated. Similarly, your interest in a pump track reflects feedback received from other community members and is consistent with the plan's approach of exploring new facilities. Your concerns regarding wedding-related impacts, including cleanup and use of artificial décor, raise important operational and stewardship considerations. While the plan does not establish specific rental policies or fee structures, comments like yours help inform future management decisions, including potential updates to rental requirements, deposits, and expectations for protecting the surrounding natural setting. This is also educational material that could be included on new signs. We appreciate you sharing both your ideas and your firsthand experience, and thank you again for your continued engagement and care for GPRA.	None.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	We need a PUMP TRACK for our kids in the fishhook and valley area!	NO	No response requested.	None. Although not explicitly listed, a pump track is something that could fall under Strategy H, Expanding and Improving Trail System and Facilities within GPRA.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Submitted to MSB staff during comment period	The 2017 GPRA Development Plan included 2 amphitheatres at GPRA. One south of the Chalet that would either completely eliminate the sledding hill or significantly reduce it. The second one would be East of the upper parking lot and require major earth moving and trail development to make it ADA accessible. The amphitheater South of the Chalet would require major earth moving to construct an access route to the lower level of the amphitheater. A better alternative would be to locate it North of the upper parking lot in the South facing natural bowl area. Using the current North-East trail access point it would have the advantage of being easily accessible for weddings, concerts, and other events. It would be ADA accessible and have access to 110V power from the Mat-Su Ski Club shed. The natural bowl area would require minimal earth sculpting, but would require a French drain in the Western section to eliminate a seep in that area. Attached is a map with the proposed amphitheater location and drawing of the amphitheater.	YES	Thank you for taking the time to share your detailed feedback and for providing a thoughtful approach to amphitheater siting at GPRA. The current draft GPRA Management Plan does not identify amphitheater construction as a near term priority, and earlier concepts from prior plans were not advanced based on updated community input, site constraints, and a focus on maintenance and broadly beneficial trail and facility improvements. As such, an amphitheater is not included as a specific project in this plan at this time. However, the plan is not a comprehensive list of projects and is intended to serve as a flexible, long range framework, and it does not prevent future consideration of an amphitheater or similar facility if priorities, feasibility, and community interest align. Your suggested location and design considerations are valuable and will remain part of the public record to inform any future evaluation of event or gathering spaces at GPRA. Thank you again for your thoughtful input and for contributing to the ongoing planning effort.	No action required. The plan does not preclude the future development of an amphitheater.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	Connections and additions to the Denali Trail is a top priority to improve the XC skiing for the experienced and advanced skiers.	NO	No response requested.	None. Additions to trails in the future could support Strategy H.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	Disappointing that in all the breakdowns of user demographics that age was never taken into account. It would've been very interesting to know how the people with young children find the area/ what improvements they desire. It seems like the time was taken to evaluate and consider the needs of equestrian constituents- which I would imagine is a minority group is comparison to that of fishhook/ the valleys family populations. How would have our suggestions been ranked with that in mind?I saw the 'build family trails section' but if the suggestions had taken age into account- I really wonder if that is something parents with kids would have mentionedz As a parent of littles and one who actively organizes community events for littles, we have never once found our summer trail options wanting. Overall disappointed with the ambition level as well. I am surprised that a sign that says government peak would surpass things like a picnic shelter.As a person who lives close by, it was sad to see none of the things we suggested even made the list- especially after attending the open house and filling out the online forms. Lastly- the ability to rent the chalet on an HOURLY base would serve the community immensely. I cannot think of many events outside of weddings that require an all day rental. The Palmer borough gym rents hourly, and has zero staff overlooking it and it operates just fine. While the view is beautiful- let's not forget it is simply an open room with a carpet.	YES	Thank you for taking the time to share your feedback and for your continued engagement throughout the planning process. We truly appreciate the perspective you bring as a frequent GPRA user and as someone actively involved in organizing activities for families with young children. We are sorry you feel like your comment from the open house was not addressed, however we want to assure you that your feedback was heard and incorporated, specifically when it came to Strategy H which has the intent of pursuing projects that benefit a wide range of users (like children). The plan aims to balance the needs of a wide range of user groups, which can sometimes require prioritizing across many different inputs and perspectives. While age-specific data was not explicitly broken out in the survey results, feedback from families and parents, including your open house input, was an important part of shaping the plan. Many of the amenities you've highlighted, such as picnic shelters, playgrounds, and family-oriented gathering spaces, are supported under Strategy H: Expand and Improve Trail System and Facilities, which specifically calls for evaluating facilities that serve families, children, and year-round community use. In the near term, the plan prioritizes improvements like multi-use and family-friendly trails and amenities, and does not focus on constructing new long trails as an immediate priority. Thank you for the feedback about the Chalet. The plan reflects this through Strategy E: Improve Availability of Inside Space, which includes actions to provide free public access at set times and improve overall accessibility and affordability once the Borough assumes management. Your suggestions related to more flexible use, including options like hourly access, are helpful and will be taken into account to inform future operational decisions. Thank you again for your candid feedback and for helping ensure GPRA continues to evolve as a welcoming space for the entire community.	None, construction of new family-friendly amenities supports strategy H.

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During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	This is an outstanding plan. Very well done.	NO	No response requested.	None.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	Focus Groups -P.25The Fishhook Community Council is a long time user of the Chalet facility and would like to be included in any future focus groups about the Chalet &/or GPRA. Concluding recommendations:•Put outhouses at the farthest reaches of Matanuska, Susitna and Denali loops. Women would appreciate them.•Add a small playground for young children to use mainly during the warmer months.•Consider making costs for community events at the Chalet at a reduced rate.In Conclusion -In the Borough's recently released Community Growth Solutions Study the Borough has designated the Fishhook Triangle area as a Tourism Development Node. While recreation and scenic beauty in the Fishhook area is the main draw for tourists as well as locals, there isn't sufficient emphasis in the GPRA '26 Draft to address how the GPRA facilities like the Chalet can be improved to enhance the overall experience at GPRA and provide for those who might not be there just for the trails.	YES	Thank you for taking the time to share your comments and for your engagement in the GPRA planning process. Your suggestions related to additional amenities such as outhouses, a playground, and improved facilities for community use are helpful and reflect feedback received from other users as well. These types of improvements, including features like playgrounds and other family-oriented amenities, are supported under Strategy H: Expand and Improve Trail System and Facilities, which calls for evaluating facilities that enhance the overall user experience. Your comments about improving the GPRA experience for a wider range of users, including those not solely focused on trail use, are also well noted. We believe that improving facilities, trails, and increasing access to the Chalet could help attract users who haven't historically visited the area. Regarding the Chalet, the plan includes Strategy E: Improve Availability of Inside Space, which outlines the Borough's intent to assume management and expand public access, including more regular availability for community use. Mat-Su Borough staff will reach out to establish ongoing communication with the Fishhook Community Council to ensure you are included in future conversations and opportunities to provide input, they are also copied on this email. Thank you again for your thoughtful comments.	MSB staff will reach out to Fishhook Community Council to establish contact.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	The GPRA Draft seems to be thoroughly and thoughtfully created project with all user groups included in the plan. Thank you.	NO	No response requested.	None.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	Please seriously consider making plans for a pump track...they are relatively inexpensive to build (my husband and I would be more than happy to help design and shape/construct it) and they provide outdoor activity for people of all ages - from the youngest on their strider bikes to adults. The few other pump tracks around the valley have become places for playgroups to meet and social gatherings in the community. If we construct one here in fishhook it will be greatly used.	NO	No response requested.	None. Although not explicitly listed, a pump track is something that could fall under Strategy H, Expanding and Improving Trail System and Facilities within GPRA.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	Building a bike pump track would be a fun addition for people of all ages, including young children learning to ride bikes off road. It's a great way to gain greater proprioception and feel the flow of movement with gravity without the great commitment of downhill. I support the building of a pump track! Weee!.	NO	No response requested.	None. Although not explicitly listed, a pump track is something that could fall under Strategy H, Expanding and Improving Trail System and Facilities within GPRA.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	We need a pump track for the youths	NO	No response requested.	None. Although not explicitly listed, a pump track is something that could fall under Strategy H, Expanding and Improving Trail System and Facilities within GPRA.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	We're excited about the possible addition of trails between GPRA to Skeetawk. Can we prioritize a nice pump track please. They offer a lot in bike skill development for all ages and a fun safe place for kids to hang before and after rides.	YES	Thank you for sharing your feedback, and sharing your support for both the proposed connection between GPRA and Skeetawk and your interest in amenities that could serve users of all skills and ages. Your suggestion for a pump track reflects input received from other community members and highlights the importance of providing spaces where children and families can gather and recreate. While a pump track is not explicitly identified in the draft plan, it is the type of amenity that could be considered under Strategy H: Expand and Improve Trail System and Facilities, which includes evaluating facilities that support families, youth, and overall visitor experience. Thank you again for your thoughtful input and for helping inform how GPRA can continue to serve a diverse and growing community.	None.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	I would like to know whether the plans to limit natural-surface multi-use trails to only Class 1 e-bikes while prohibiting Class 2 and Class 3 e-bikes.Class 1 e-bikes are pedal-assist only and limited to 20 mph. Class 2 and 3 e-bikes include throttle capability and/or higher assisted speeds up to 28 mph. These differences matter for both public safety and trail sustainability.Research from organizations including IMBA has found that Class 1 pedal-assist e-bikes have impacts similar to traditional mountain bikes under controlled conditions, while higher-powered motorized use can increase trail erosion, wheel spin, unsafe speeds, and user conflicts on shared trails.Many trail systems across the U.S. already restrict access to Class 1 e-bikes only on natural-surface trails in order to better protect hikers, runners, children, equestrians, cyclists, and sensitive trail infrastructure.Does the plan consider• Clear signage identifying permitted e-bike classes• Restricting natural-surface trails to Class 1 pedal-assist e-bikes only• Prohibiting Class 2 and 3 e-bikes.	YES	Thanks for the feedback. While the draft plan does not currently establish specific e-bike class restrictions for natural-surface trails, the concerns raised regarding trail sustainability, safety, and shared trail use are recognized. As GPRA signage and wayfinding are updated over time, this may be an opportunity for the Borough and partner groups to further discuss and evaluate appropriate guidance, education, or management measures related to e-bike use. MSB has no formal e-bike restrictions, but the potential issues are not specific to just GPRA, but Borough wide. The MSB Parks, Recreation, & Trails advisory board has been looking into the matter, and at some point in the future could envision the MSB having an e-bike policy.	Continue discussions with partner groups and trail users to evaluate future guidance and signage related to e-bike use.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	I appreciate the goal to provide more trails that are "family friendly". I just want to emphasize that should include seniors, the fastest growing demographic. The need for easy hiking and biking trails in the valley is growing with the population. Partnering with AARP would be a good start. Also, there is one short ADA trail, the Pink Wild Rose Trail. It is not mentioned in the plan. There is great potential for expanding that trail. Paving a few trails would also be great.	YES	Thank you for taking the time to share your feedback and for highlighting the importance of inclusive trail design. We appreciate your perspective and your emphasis on meeting the needs of seniors, who are an important and growing user group at GPRA. The draft plan's focus on "accessible" and "family friendly" trails is intended to include users of all ages and abilities, including seniors and individuals with limited mobility. This is reflected in Strategy F: Identify suitable areas for developing entry level, family friendly, and inclusive trails, which specifically supports the development of trails that are accessible and welcoming, including those that meet ADA accessibility standards. One of the actions includes meeting with advocacy groups, which your suggestion of AARP could fall under. Your comments regarding the Pink Wild Rose Trail and the potential to expand similar accessible trail opportunities are well taken. This feedback helps reinforce the importance of continuing to evaluate where additional accessible trail options may be appropriate in the future. Thank you again for your thoughtful input and for helping ensure GPRA serves a broad and inclusive community.	None. Although not explicitly listed, a pump track is something that could fall under Strategy H, Expanding and Improving Trail System and Facilities within GPRA.
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Draft plan comment form	A pump track is absolutely a need!	NO	No response requested.	

Date Received	Format	Comment	Response Requested?	Response	Action
During draft comment priod, April 20-May 20	Email to staff during comment period	Mat-Su Ski Club Comment (See attached)	YES	See attached response.	Add clarifying language to the "GPRA At-A-Glance" section noting that Nordic trails are available for multi-use during summer months Add "sledding hill" under "Other Infrastructure" Adjust language describing waterways and drainage conditions Capitalize once instance of "Nordic" on page 4 Revise Strategy F final action to clarify: "Prioritize the planning and eventual construction of one new trail of this style before setting aside land for additional advanced trails." Revise Strategy H action two to clarify that other trail types are not excluded Update action language to: "Plan, design, and build more trails while maintaining a strong sense of the site's natural setting, with near-term prioritization on multi-use trails." Revise third action of Strategy H to say: "Explore suitability of constructing a permanent crossing over the ravine east of the lower parking lot to help open recreational opportunities in the eastern portion of GPRA, where areas of poorly drained soils currently constrain use and development." Add a timeframe to Step 5 (Inter-Departmental Review) Clarify Step 6 to state: Projects may proceed under an existing agreement while modifications are in progress. New agreements must be finalized before project implementation.



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Karin McGillivray, Consultant Project Manager
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Re: Public Review Draft April 2026 GPRA Management Plan

Dear Ms. McGillivray:

The Mat-Su Ski Club (MSSC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft Government Peak Recreation Area Management Plan (the Plan). Government Peak Recreation Area (GPRA) is such a valuable asset to the Community and it is particularly important to skiers as it is the **only dedicated Nordic ski trail system** between Chugiak and Talkeetna. Our review comments in this letter relate specifically to “big picture” items that potentially affect the MSSC and its role in helping with planning, developing and maintaining ski trails at GPRA. This letter is to express our concern that the draft plan does not recognize the uniqueness and importance of the GPRA dedicated Nordic ski trail system.

We have summarized our concerns by topics as identified in the Table of Contents of the Draft GPRA Management Plan.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Plan lacks context. Under EXISTING CONDITIONS it should be noted that GPRA is currently, and for the foreseeable future, the only dedicated Nordic ski system in the Matanuska Valley. This is a non-trivial aspect of GPRA.

The “GPRA at a glance” section entirely fails to recognize the current existence of over ten

miles of family and dog friendly, wide, safe, well-mowed Summer Multi-use trails with picnic tables and overlooks – i.e. the Nordic trails in summer. Failing to recognize the complete character of those trails is a deficiency of the Plan.

The Plan states that GPRA “has a few small streams”. That is wildly inaccurate. GPRA is riven with waterways, from deeply incised ravines to shallow brooks to unorganized surface sheetflow to underground flow. This is the most challenging aspect of trail building at GPRA.

The lighted sledding hill is not noted, although it is a popular feature.

Nordic is always capitalized.

GPRA DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The stated Goals are all very common sense items and the MSSC generally supports them all, with some concerns about how they will be interpreted and implemented.

In section B, the Plan wisely connects trail building plans to maintenance commitments. The Plan refers to a “backlog” of maintenance that must be cleared before future trail construction. There is NO backlog on the Winter Nordic/Summer multi-use trails at GPRA. Will this unidentified backlog cause all development at GPRA to be halted, even for trail types and volunteer organizations that are 100% on top of trail maintenance?

In section F, the Plan advocates prioritizing building a new family friendly and accessible trail, to the extent of suggesting halting all other development until such a trail is completed. The MSSC fully supports such a trail and will help with this as we can; but we have concerns that Borough inaction on this front could retard all development at GPRA. It is not an easy or inexpensive task to build “easy” trails on a mountainside with a plethora of streams and ravines cutting across it.

Section F specifically calls for an “Action” to develop more multi-use trails, without mention of “Actions” for any other trail type. We strongly object to a Plan for GPRA that calls only for more multi-use trails, presumably leaving bicyclists, skiers, and equestrians to be satisfied forever with only those dedicated trails that exist today.

Section F mistakenly states that there is a “boggy area” east of the main parking lot that hinders trail development eastward. The issue is a deep ravine, not a bog, and it is east of the lower lot, not the upper main lot.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT POLICY

The analysis of the survey data is non-transparent, and we are left to take the Plan's conclusions and interpretations of the survey on faith. Please provide the raw (anonymized) survey data, and a copy of the original questionnaire, so we can properly appreciate and interpret the survey.

PROCESS FOR SELECTING FUTURE PROJECTS

MSSC commends the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) for identifying a clear process for submitting projects for MSB review and approval. It is extremely helpful to have an identified time limit for the Phase I go/no go decisions so that volunteer organizations can plan accordingly. Likewise, it is recommended that the Phase 2 review process have an identified timeline for the Inter-Departmental Review. As several different departments might be involved in the review a project might become inadvertently stalled. We also recommend that final approval allows the organization to proceed with the project while the use agreement documents are modified. Conditions of construction could be issued as a separate document to be incorporated into the eventual modification of the use agreement. In practice, finalized modification of these agreements can take considerable time to execute potentially resulting in significant negative impact to planned construction schedules.

Project Application Process Step 1

The first question in the process is "does this proposed project support the goals and strategies listed in this plan?" The Plan lists NO "goals" or "strategies" to specific to development of additional dedicated Nordic ski trails. Can a proposal for new Nordic trails be approved in this circumstance?

APPENDIX – A MSSC is glad to provide our recently adopted internal club GPRA Nordic Trail Master Plan. Note that this effort is just our vision of what could be, not a manifesto.

APPENDIX C – It is recognized that the Draft Document is a Management Plan concerned with overall strategies and goals, not a detailed action plan. Yet, the body of the Plan calls for a playground, but not a biathlon range; even though it appears that more people at the public meeting expressed support for a biathlon range than a playground. The development of a biathlon range is a long range objective but we want to identify and reserve an appropriate area for development when the time is right.m

IN CONCLUSION

The Plan references MSB appreciation of volunteer organizations and recognizes their contributions to the development of GPRA. It also encourages MSB to support user group projects. MSSC recently updated **our club's** GRPA Nordic Trails Master Plan providing a road map and timeline of our recommended development of the ski trail system. We look forward to presenting this plan to MSB Land and Resource Management for their review and approval.

We understand that sessions may be held with focus groups to provide in person comments. MSSC would be glad to participate. We can also provide any further information or answer any questions you might require.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Christy". The script is cursive and fluid.

Kathy Christy, Chair MSSC GPRA Committee

Cc: Jillian Morrissey, MSB Community Development Director

Joseph Metzger, Land & Resource Manager

Christian Munar, Land Management Specialist

MSSC Board

Dear Mat-Su Ski Club,

Thank you for taking the time to review the draft GPRA Management Plan and for providing detailed comments. To make sure all your points are addressed, the response below follows a structured format. Key excerpts from your comment are included in italics, followed by a response and any associated actions.

Existing Conditions

“GPRA is currently, and for the foreseeable future, the only dedicated Nordic ski system in the Matanuska Valley. The “GPRA at a glance” section entirely fails to recognize the current existence of over ten miles of family and dog friendly, wide, safe, well-mowed Summer Multi-use trails with picnic tables and overlooks – i.e., the Nordic trails in summer. The Plan states that GPRA “has a few small streams.” That is wildly inaccurate. GPRA is riven with waterways, from deeply incised ravines to shallow brooks to unorganized surface sheetflow to underground flow. The lighted sledding hill is not noted, although it is a popular feature. Nordic is always capitalized.”

Response:

GPRA is not a dedicated ski area and must accommodate a wide range of users year-round. The draft plan reflects this broader purpose and considers the needs of multiple user groups, including those who have expressed a desire for more walking and hiking opportunities during winter when trails are groomed. The plan does not propose eliminating any existing ski-only trails or preventing the development of additional ski-focused trails in the future.

Actions:

- Add clarifying language to the “GPRA At-A-Glance” section noting that Nordic trails are available for multi-use during summer months
- Add “sledding hill” under “Other Infrastructure”
- Adjust language describing waterways and drainage conditions
- Capitalize once instance of “Nordic” on page 4

Strategy B – Maintenance Backlog

“There is NO backlog on the Winter Nordic/Summer multi-use trails at GPRA. Will this unidentified backlog cause all development at GPRA to be halted...”

Response:

The referenced backlog does not single out one user type or volunteer group. It refers to broader, site-wide needs such as drainage issues, removing standing dead trees, infrastructure repairs, and safety improvements. The intent of Strategy B is to prevent future maintenance challenges and prioritize responsible development. This strategy will be informed by on-site condition surveys and input from user groups. Development will not be halted as a result of this strategy if there is truly not a relevant maintenance backlog or need.

Action:

- No action required

Strategy F – Family-Friendly and Accessible Trails

“The Plan advocates prioritizing building a new family friendly and accessible trail... we have concerns that Borough inaction... could retard all development...”

Response:

The intent of Strategy F is to prioritize planning and eventual construction of one accessible, entry-level trail, not to prevent or delay all other development. We recognize the challenges associated with trail construction at GPRA and do not intend for this strategy to limit progress on other projects.

Actions:

- Revise Strategy F final action to clarify:
“Prioritize the planning and eventual construction of one new trail of this style before setting aside land for additional advanced trails.”

Multi-Use Trail Emphasis (Strategy H)

“Specifically calls for... more multi-use trails... leaving bicyclists, skiers, and equestrians to be satisfied forever with only those dedicated trails that exist today.”

Response:

The plan does not limit future development to multi-use trails. While near-term emphasis is placed on multi-use facilities due to broad community demand, other trail types remain eligible for future development. This includes Nordic trails, which may be proposed and evaluated through the project application process.

Actions:

- Revise Strategy H action two to clarify that other trail types are not excluded
- Update action language to:
“Plan, design, and build more trails while maintaining a strong sense of the site’s natural setting, with near-term prioritization on multi-use trails.”

“Boggy area” Language in Strategy H

“The issue is a deep ravine, not a bog.”

Response:

Comments received from other users referenced a “boggy area” as a challenge. We recognize that both conditions can exist.

Action

- Revise third action of Strategy H to say:
“Explore suitability of constructing a permanent crossing over the ravine east of the lower parking lot to help open recreational opportunities in the eastern portion of GPRA, where areas of poorly drained soils currently constrain use and development.”

Survey Transparency

“The analysis of the survey data is non-transparent... Please provide the raw (anonymized) survey data...”

Response:

Appendix B includes a range of summarized survey results. Long answer survey responses were not included in Appendix B due to the volume of comments. They were, however, summarized on page 12. An excel export of the raw survey data is attached to this response. To protect privacy, we will include an in-depth summary of the long answer responses since some of the responses mention specific groups or people by name. If you would like more detail, please contact the Mat-Su Borough to begin the official public records request process.

Action:

- Anonymized raw survey data is attached to this email.

Project Approval Process

“...recommend that the Phase 2 review process have an identified timeline... recommend that final approval allows the organization to proceed...”

Response:

We appreciate this constructive feedback. Clarifying timelines and processes will support better coordination with partner organizations.

Actions:

- Add a timeframe to Step 5 (Inter-Departmental Review)
- Clarify Step 6 to state:
Projects may proceed under an existing agreement while modifications are in progress.
New agreements must be finalized before project implementation.

Future Nordic trails Application

“The Plan lists NO “goals” or “strategies” to specific development of additional dedicated Nordic ski trails. Can a proposal for new Nordic trails be approved in this circumstance?”

Response:

Nordic trail proposals may align with the following strategies depending on the skill level and location of the proposed trail:

- Strategy F: Identify Suitable Areas for Developing Entry-Level, Family-Friendly, and Inclusive Trails.
- Strategy H: Expand and Improve Trail System and Facilities Within GPRA
- Strategy I: Connect GPRA to Nearby Areas

Action

- None required.

Appendix C Re: Facility Priorities

“...the Plan calls for a playground, but not a biathlon range; even though it appears that more people in the public meeting expressed support for a biathlon range...”

Response:

Appendix C lists written comments received during the open house and plan development period and does not capture the full range of survey responses, including long-form survey input (which is summarized on page 12). Other feedback received outside of the public meeting reflects interest in a variety of facilities, such as a playground. While a biathlon range is not identified as a current priority, the plan does not preclude its future development. The plan is structured to allow consideration of such projects as priorities, feasibility, and funding evolve.

Actions:

- None needed

Conclusion and Partnership

“MSSC recently updated our club’s GPRA Nordic Trails Master Plan... we look forward to presenting this plan...MSSC would be glad to participate [in future focus groups]”

Response:

Thank you for sharing your Nordic Trails Master Plan. As our Management Plan is focused on area-wide strategy rather than discipline-specific planning, we decided not to include the Nordic Trails Plan as an appendix to this document. However, we look forward to reviewing and discussing your plan with you in more detail as part of ongoing coordination and future project development. We look forward to implementing Strategy G: “Strengthen Volunteer Relationships” moving forward and intend to invite the Ski Club to future working groups.

Action:

- No action required