



File Code: 1950

Date: January 23, 2004

Dear Interested Party:

The Forest Service has completed a Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Seward to Girdwood Iditarod National Historic Trail on the Glacier and Seward Ranger Districts. This decision is based on an environmental analysis documented in a 2003 Environmental Assessment (EA), and my review of public comments on the EA and through ANILCA hearings.

It is my decision to implement Alternative 4, with modifications. This decision approves:

- Approximately 186 miles to be managed as part of the INHT.
- Approximately 82 miles of trail reconstruction, 77 miles of new trail construction, of which 15 are over-snow only with no tread, the construction of 32 major trail bridges (over 20 feet span), including a footbridge across Trail Lake at Moose Pass, and at least 50 minor bridges and boardwalks. This decision modifies Alternative 4 by including 6 bridges on the west side of Turnagain Pass, which have been analyzed with Alternative 3. In addition, this decision modifies Alternative 4 with a minor reroutes of the trail. This minor reroute has been field verified and is a feasible and efficient route with similar effects because it is in the same general location that was considered in the effects analyses.
- Winter motorized use on approximately 105 miles of winter trail. This decision also separates winter motorized and nonmotorized uses to the extent possible and protects the values of quiet, solitude, air quality, uninterrupted nonmotorized recreation, safety, and views of pristine landscapes by reasonably regulating 81 miles of parallel alternative routes for nonmotorized use.
- Approximately 15 miles of winter trail over frozen lakes.
- Summer motorized use on approximately 6 miles of summer trail. Summer motorized use is prohibited on approximately 131 miles of summer trail.
- Approximately 3 miles of water trail over Portage Lake to be open to non-commercial canoe, kayak, or similar nonmotorized watercraft.
- Appropriate protection, preservation and management of selected heritage resources on lands administered by the Chugach National Forest.
- Interpretive and informational signing at 36 INHT access trailheads and select heritage resource sites.
- The construction of six new trailheads and reconstruction of three existing trailheads.
- The construction of up to six new cabins.
- Moving forward with obtaining permanent easements across State of Alaska, Municipality of Anchorage, Kenai Peninsula Borough, and Alaska Railroad lands.

A copy of the Decision Notice is enclosed. Additional information regarding this action, including a copy of the Environmental Assessment, can be obtained from the Glacier Ranger District, Girdwood, Alaska (907) 783-3242; the Seward Ranger District, Seward, Alaska (907) 224-3374; and the Forest Supervisor's Office, 3301 C St. Anchorage, AK, (907) 743-9500.

Sincerely,

/s/ Joe L. Meade
JOE L. MEADE
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure



