



Memorandum

7/1/2020

To: Steve Giesbrecht, Borough Manager
Mayor Jensen and Members of the Borough Assembly
From: Chris Cotta, Public Works Director
Re: Ernie Haugen Public Use Area Cooperative Resource Management Agreement Renewal

The Ernie Haugen Public Use Area (EHPU) is a recreational area designated by the Alaska Legislature in 1988. It is 935 acres in size and is situated along the southern shore of Mitkof Island, on the beach side of Mitkof Highway next to Sumner Straight. There are numerous access roads within the EHPU that lead from Mitkof Highway to the beach. Many of these sites are not catalogued, however there are 3 managed recreation sites within the EHPU that are higher traffic areas and have been actively managed for many years:

- Greens Camp (26 mile Mitkof Highway), which was originally a logging/road building camp during the construction of Mitkof Highway, and is now maintained and managed as a campground and subsistence area. Facilities at Greens Camp include 1.4 miles of gravel access road, over 20 campsites and one large picnic area. There are also 3 outhouses and 3 public use garbage cans at the site.
- Wilson Creek Access Site (approx. 28 mile Mitkof Highway) is a campground and sportfishing site. It consists of approximately 1 acre of developed uplands including 5 campsites, parking area, an outhouse and public use trash can.
- Banana Point Boat Launch (approx. 29 mile Mitkof Highway) is the primary boat launch site on South Mitkof Island. It is heavily used for recreational and commercial purposes and is one of the primary transportation links between Petersburg and Wrangell. Facilities at Banana Point include a 215' concrete boat ramp, floating pipe boom breakwater, ½ acre of parking, an outhouse and public use trash can.

Although the facilities above are owned by the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR), they have been cooperatively managed for many years via maintenance agreements between DNR and Petersburg Borough, going back to at least 1993.

From 2008-2017, the arrangement consisted of a master agreement (Cooperative Resource Management Agreement ADL 105894 – attached for reference) which authorizes the Borough to provide maintenance services at the sites, as well as annual maintenance funding agreements which provide the Borough with the monetary resources to undertake regular maintenance. Services

Public Works Department

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traditionally provided by the Borough include trash pickup, periodic pumping of the outhouses, and other minor maintenance items.

Funding for major maintenance such as road resurfacing, ditching and brushing has not been provided by DNR but has been received from other agencies like the Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game (Banana Point Boat Launch), Petersburg Indian Association (Green's Camp) and the USFS RAC program (all 3 sites). The Borough has facilitated these efforts by seeking funding from other agencies and providing personnel for project management and administration when major maintenance funding is obtained from other sources.

Although no major maintenance projects have taken place in the past few years, the Borough has continued to provide periodic minor upkeep of the sites using the maintenance funding provided by DNR on an annual basis. This funding has traditionally been provided each spring via the annual maintenance agreements, which expire every year on December 31. Although maintenance funding has been uncertain for the past few years, it was provided by DNR each year up through 2018. Thus far, however, no funding has been received for 2019 or 2020, although it is hoped that this will be rectified soon.

In order to facilitate more funds being made available, Agreement ADL 105894 – which expired at the end of 2017 - needs to be renewed. Public Works has been working with DNR for the past 18 months to try and put together a new agreement. Staff changes at DNR and new language the State wanted to incorporate into the agreement have resulted in delays, and the recent covid situation has not helped things either. However, after some negotiation, an agreement has been drafted that is satisfactory to DNR as well as Borough staff and the Borough's attorney. This proposed agreement is attached.

DNR has indicated that once the agreement is renewed, that funding will once again be made available to the Borough for minor maintenance and upkeep at the Ernie Haugen Public Use Area sites. Per Borough Code, this agreement needs to be approved by the Borough Assembly to be implemented. For the preceding reasons, Public Works recommends approval of the updated Cooperative Resource Management Agreement ADL105894 at the Assembly's next regular meeting on July 6th, 2020. I'll be available during the meeting to answer any questions you may have in regard to the proposed agreement. Thank you.

Attachments: Cooperative Resource Management Agreement ADL105894 (expired)
 Cooperative Resource Management Agreement ADL105894 (proposed)