

Cordova ATV Management Preliminary Report

○ Draft



WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Working with the U.S. Forest Service, local landowners, recreation users and other community stakeholders, Agnew::Beck Consulting will conduct a **third community discussion** to review and provide feedback on the **Cordova ATV Management Preliminary Report**.

Community Discussion # 3 Monday, December 12th, 6-8p.m.

All meetings will be held upstairs in the Forest Service Courtroom at 612 2nd Street, Cordova, AK



Area + Issues

- The project focuses on the Boswell Bay and Canoe Passage areas, located on Hinchinbrook and Hawkins Islands.
- In these locations, private landowners/cabin users drive four-wheelers over lands that become altered by ATV use.
- Mile 9 “golf course” and other areas on the Copper River Delta will be discussed as well.

Goals

- To seek common ground regarding current conditions and impacts of ATV use.
- Identify practical solutions that minimize impacts on natural areas while also meeting the community’s recreational needs.
- To educate and engage the public and adjacent landowners to help identify ways to monitor and reduce resource damage on affected lands.

Download a digital copy of the **Preliminary Report** at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/>

Pick up a print copy of the **Preliminary Report** at the Forest Service office, 612 2nd Street.

For more information, questions or comments, please contact

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Cordova ATV Management Preliminary Report

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Cordova All-Terrain Vehicle Management Preliminary Report

I. Introduction

Early in 2001-2002 the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) sponsored a series of well-attended workshops in response to concerns regarding potential resource damage caused by ATV use in specific areas. In 2002, USFS developed its Forest Plan setting rules for ATV use on Forest Service land. More recently, several residents and property owners have expressed concern about increased ATV use and resource damage in two areas on Hinchinbrook and Hawkins Islands, Boswell Bay and Canoe Passage. Additionally, Forest Service staff have documented and expressed some concern regarding ATV use and potential impact on fish and other wildlife habitat in these areas. In October of 2010, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) hired Agnew::Beck to facilitate a public process for documenting the past and current ATV use as well as existing conditions in these two areas; to provide an overview of ATV regulations affecting areas of concern; and, to conduct research and make recommendations on strategies to address community concerns regarding ATV use in other areas on the Copper River Delta.

This project marks the beginning – not the end – of the process to find the balance point between opportunities for ATV use and the protection of environmental quality of Prince William Sound and the Copper River Delta. While the process to date has been very useful, more work is needed. For example, a major recommendation of this report is to establish a more regular monitoring process of ATV use areas, include participation by local residents and ATV users. Results of this monitoring can then be used as basis for determining what if any further management actions are required.

A final important point regarding the broad issue of ATV's comes from the reality of the Prince William Sound and Delta natural environments. As most everyone familiar with the area knows, much of the land in the Sound and on the Delta cannot be used on a regular basis by ATV's without risking real damage to the landscape. The large majority



of the uplands in Prince William Sound have thin, poorly developed soils. In most places a mat of soil and vegetation – soil that is often saturated by regular rain and snowfall – lays like a carpet over the bedrock located just a few feet down. Regular passage of ATV's or even boots inevitably scars this land. Likewise the landscapes of the Copper River Delta are made up of a maze of streams, ponds, wetlands, many which support salmon spawning and rearing. Riding in the area's open river floodplains is inviting, but can damage the fish and wildlife habitat that support the area's sport, commercial and subsistence fishing and hunting. The extreme weather is in this area, particularly the winds near the Copper River, add an additional challenge due to the risks of increased erosion where vegetation is removed.

It is clear that riding an ATV is important in the Cordova Ranger District, for hunting, fishing and subsistence activities; as a means of transportation; or just for fun. The USFS supports the continued use of ATV's in the area. At the same time, the Forest Service is responsible for protecting the area's natural landscapes and the health of fish and wildlife populations. Public expectations about the future of ATV's need to reflect both these realities: that fact that the USFS will support continued use of ATV's in the

right locations, and the fact that ATV users will need to be active partners with the USFS in guiding the location and the nature of this use to protect the area's often fragile lands.

This report represents a nine month communitywide effort to better understand current use and to share potential strategies that will help address current concerns and provide a guide for managing future use. The intended audience for this report includes Cordova resident and non-resident ATV users as well as federal, state and private landowners for the report areas. Landowners include USFS, Department of Natural Resources Alaska State Parks and the Eyak Corporation. The content is organized to help all readers easily access information about the following topics:

- Research Process – Describes the process for developing preliminary report.
- Uses, Issues, Recommended Strategies – Provides geographic-specific profiles of the areas of concern and recommended strategies for addressing core issues in each area.
- Priority Strategies + Next Steps – Provides a detailed implementation plan for priority strategies including a cost estimate, partners and implementation steps for each strategy.

DRAFT

2. Overview of the Research Process

The process for developing this report included a combination of research methods. Following is a brief overview of each method.

- Literature Review – A first step in the research process was to gain a basic understanding of past and current issues regarding ATV use in Cordova and in Boswell Bay and Canoe Passage. Key to this method was reviewing and synthesizing past and current planning documents for the region. The project team worked with Forest Service staff to review the following core documents:
 - *2002 Chugach Forest Plan*
 - *2006 Off-Highway Vehicle Use and Its Effect on Portions of the Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands*, USDA Forest Service Cordova Ranger District
 - *2008 Off-Highway Vehicle Monitoring Report*, USDA Forest Service Cordova Ranger District
 - *2009 Off-Highway Vehicle Monitoring Report*, USDA Forest Service Cordova Ranger District

Documents from other areas in the state, including relevant Forest Service documents regarding “Access and Travel Management Planning” were reviewed to better understand the broader context for the Cordova ATV Preliminary Management Report.

- One-on-One Phone Interviews – To gain resident and property owner perspectives on ATV use and issues, the project team conducted a series of one-on-one telephone interviews with Canoe Passage and Boswell Bay landowners as well as representatives from the Forest Service, State Parks and Eyak Corporation. Also interviewed were representatives from the community of Yakutat. In recent years, Yakutat has dealt with a similar set of ATV uses facing Cordova. The community of Yakutat worked in partnership with the Forest Service and other landowners to develop and implement a set of strategies to address resource damage and other issues. Information from these interviews was synthesized with background data gained from the literature review to create a presentation on preliminary issues and findings.
- One-on-One In-Person Interviews and Small Group Discussions – In December of 2010 and March of 2011, and in conjunction with two community-wide discussions detailed below, the project team spent two days in Cordova conducting one-on-one interviews and small group discussions with residents and landowners to continue documenting their concerns regarding ATV use. Interviews were conducted on both a formal and informal basis. Some residents scheduled specific days and times to talk with the project team based on phone interviews with property owners. Other residents participated during open windows of discussion time set up and advertised by the project team. Approximately 15 interviews were conducted using this method. An additional 10 residents participated in informal small group discussions held during advertised discussion time. There were a minimum of four discussion windows set aside for interviews and small group discussions.
- Community Discussions – In addition to the one-on-one and small group discussions described above, two evening communitywide discussions were held in Cordova to get community feedback on preliminary findings and potential strategies regarding ATV use in key areas (see Appendix A for a complete set of community meeting notes).

3. Overview of Use, Issues + Recommended Strategies

This section of the preliminary report includes detailed profiles for each of the geographic areas of concern including Boswell Bay, Canoe Passage, 8 and 9 Mile, and 27 Mile and several other potential ATV areas along the Copper River Highway that are open to ATV use. Each profile contains the following information:

- Introduction of the area including the geographic location, physical setting and land ownership status.
- Location and types of ATV use.
- Amount, timing and impact of ATV use, including, if applicable, estimated USFS ATV surface disturbance levels. Disturbance levels are defined as follows (extracted from *2008 OHV Monitoring Report*, followed by photos representing Levels 1-4):
 - Level 0: No apparent disturbance, although the trail is assumed to pass along this route.
 - Level 1: Change in vegetation, plants broken or flattened. Track path visible.
 - Level 2: Vegetation loss exposing soil, superficial ruts.
 - Level 3: Vegetation and upper soil layer loss. Deeper ruts, erosion, puddles in wet areas, possible changes in wetland hydrology.
 - Level 4: Same as level 3 except that erosion is carrying sediments into anadromous streams.



- Recommended strategies for addressing current issues, mitigating resource damage and future ATV use

Before describing each area, it is important to note that in general, identifying current land status for the areas of concern, especially sites on Hinchinbrook and Hawkins Islands proved to be a challenge. Land status in all areas is in transition, including overlapping selections by the State and Native Corporations. In several instances it remains unclear who will ultimately own the land, and what the boundaries may be. The following sections provide the current understanding of land status for each area including site-specific land status maps.

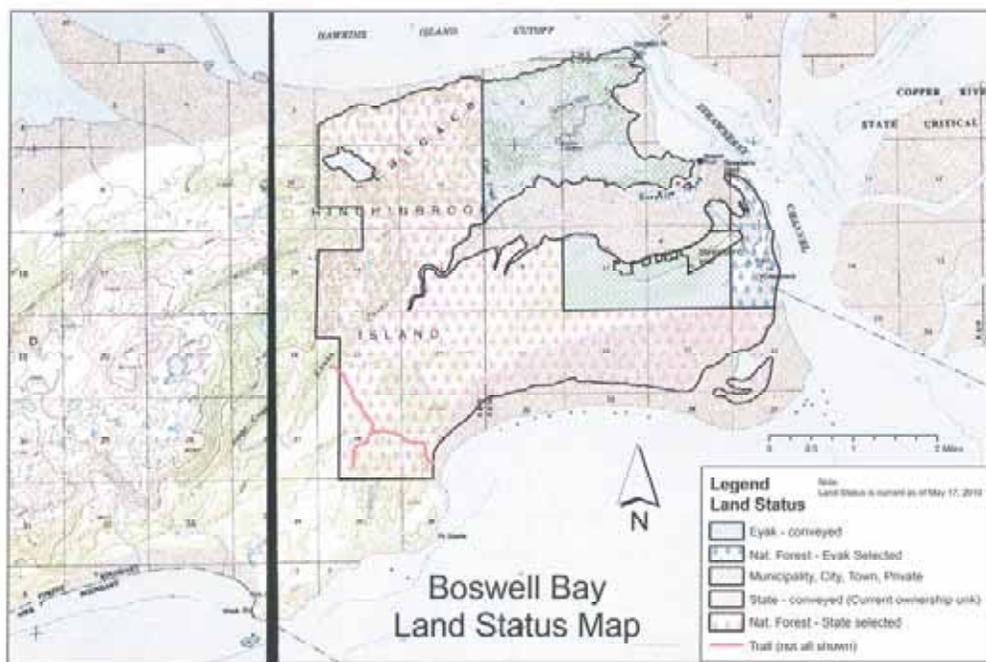
Likewise, ATV regulations dictating allowable and non-allowable ATV use by landowner can be unclear and leave considerable room for interpretation. Existing ATV policies and a broad interpretation of those policies is outlined below. As revealed during the two community discussions, most residents are not familiar with these regulations, nor are they familiar maps that show areas that are open and closed for recreational use. One part of our recommended strategies for all areas is the need to provide easy-to-read maps or brochures identifying information as well as areas where ATV use is restricted or not allowed, and any other existing regulations affecting ATV use.

In general terms, the sources and intent of current ATV policies are as follows:

- USFS Forest Management Plan (2002) including:
 - Motorized access maps for Boswell Bay and Canoe Passage
 - Many areas are open; some restricted to rural residents for subsistence purposes
- USFS Chugach Motor Vehicle Use Map – identifies open and closed areas (2011)
- State of Alaska Marine Parks – Current regulations do not allow ATV use
- Eyak Corporation – Generally, ATV use not allowed, possible exception for 17(b) easements
- EVOS covenants on USFS lands – allows ATV access for subsistence but not for recreation

Boswell Bay – Hinchinbrook Island

Map 1. Boswell Bay Land Status



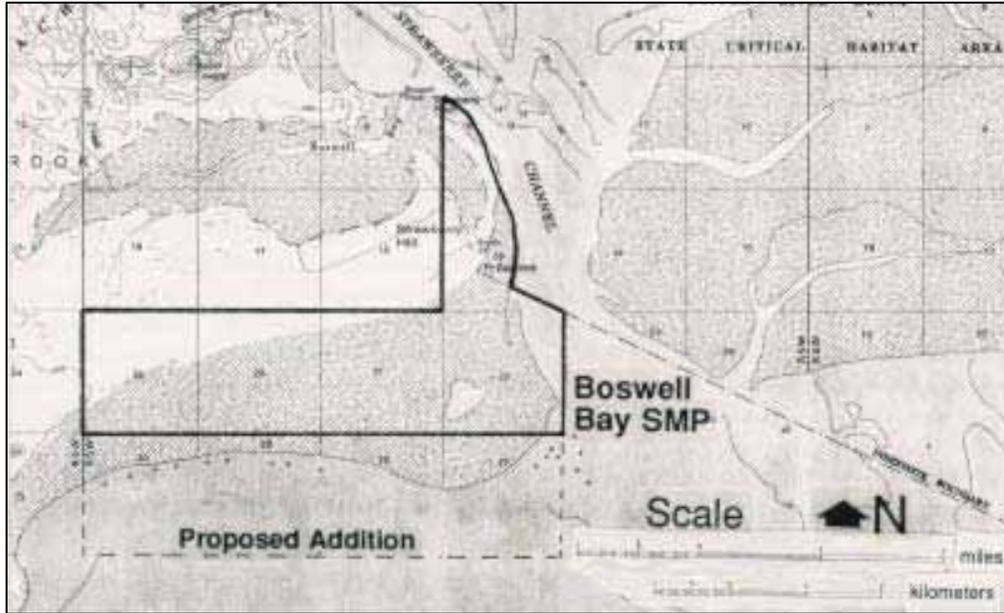
Source: USFS Cordova Ranger District

Introduction

- Location and Setting
 - Boswell Bay is located on the eastern side of Hinchinbrook Island. A number of small cabins (approximately 15) are located on the south side of the Bay, most of which are used as summer/recreation homes. Homes are accessed by water, typically by local residents coming in from Cordova.
 - Vegetation in much of the area is typical of low elevation Prince William Sound islands: a mixture of open, poorly drained meadows and stands of spruce and hemlock. Much less common is the sand dune area south of Boswell Bay.
 - Land forms in the area are impacted by weather, tides and storms. This is especially visible on the coastline just south of the entry to Boswell Bay. This area, particularly as seen from the air, is clearly a dynamic landscape, and has changed considerably over the last several decades. At the head of the bay, vegetation has filled in and beavers built ponds in an area that was used by hikers and ATV's in the past.
- Land Ownership
 - As Map 1 shows, the majority of the overall land base in the area is held by the USFS. Land on either side of Boswell Bay proper is owned by Eyak Corporation. Eyak has also selected, but not yet had approved, an additional tract just east of their existing holdings. A set of smaller individual private parcels, the sites of several cabins, are inset in the Eyak holdings. On the lands just west and south of the Eyak lands, USFS property has been selected by the State of Alaska, but not conveyed.

- The State of Alaska has established a State Marine Park on the outer/southern beach (see map below).

Map 2. Boswell Bay, State of Alaska Proposed Marine Parks Boundary



Source: State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Marine Park website

Location + Types of Use

- In general, the uplands in the area are made up of wet terrain which constrains ATV use. Areas with the least physical constraints for ATV's are where most ATV use occurs; these include:
 - The area along southern Boswell Bay in front private residences.
 - The dunes south of bay ("strawberry hill").
 - Along the outer coast of the Southside beach.
- Places to land or moor a boat in Boswell Bay are limited. Most people come ashore at the small peninsula on the southwest side of the bay. ATV's are then used to get from this landing site to individual cabins.
- ATV use and use areas:
 - The primary use of ATV's is for recreation e.g., cruising the dunes and the Southside/outside beach. This use is largely by summer residents and their guests.
 - There is some local ATV use in the area is to access homes from the boat landing spot.
 - There is some local ATV use for deer hunting, although the amount of use is quite limited. Hunters want to get into the upland areas, and this terrain tends to be wet and easily disturbed and is hard to reach off the beach. One area was identified by the USFS for upland hunting. This trail, in the past referred to as the "Cal Baker"

trail or Point Steele Route¹, extends through meadows into the low hills in the island's interior. The entry to this trail off the beach is short and very steep, and this difficult access limits use.

Amount, Timing + Impacts of Use

- ATV use at Boswell Bay is largely by people who own land/housing in the immediate Boswell Bay area. Residents frequently use ATVs to access the beach, other neighbors and the nearby landing strip. Use is concentrated between the months of April through October.
- There is some indication of growing ATV use, and concern over both current use and the prospect this could increase. Comments heard at community discussions associated with this project include:
 - “ATV use is not bad in the summer, pretty quiet most of the time.”
 - “Kids and visitor use has increased” – young riders on more powerful machines: “I worry someone might run me over when I’m out on the dunes picking strawberries.”
 - “We’re just 30 minutes from Cordova...Use could increase, especially if trails are advertised; we don’t want that.”
 - “Use of the Point Steele Route trail has led to some scarring of the land...You can see where people are using new approaches because of the torn up muskeg.”
 - “People drive their ATV’s too fast on the small trail that runs along the south side of Boswell Bay, the result is deep puddles and a difficult to use trail.”
 - “Trails get worse with each use, regardless of weather.”
- The Pointe Steele Route is showing some visible impacts of ATVs. Trench lines are visible from the air; certain limited portions of the trails show signs of significant wear and tear (Level 3 as defined by USFS disturbance levels), but most trail segments are Level 2.
- No major streams are affected in the area, so fish are not directly affected.
- Private property (individual lots) is the most damaged area – informal “road” in front of people’s houses is torn up and riddled with holes, some several feet deep.



Level I surface damage at Boswell Bay, Photo: USFS, Cordova Ranger District

¹ This trail references the name of a previous Cordova District Ranger. This is not the official name of the trail, but is used here as the term familiar to people in the area. For the remainder of this document, this trail is referred to as the “Point Steele Route”.

Potential Strategies

Summary

The current level of use and impacts of ATV's in the Boswell Bay area is modest, because most use is concentrated on the beach front, and the amount of use is limited. Limited ATV use in the Point Steele Route area is creating stretches of damaged vegetation. The 2009 report states that approximately 43 percent of the 4,661 meter trail is showing Level 3² wear. It is critical to not allow use of the Point Steele Route to extend west to the bay by Hook Point. Any but the lowest level of ATV use of Prince William Sound uplands inevitably leaves impacts, and must be avoided or limited to hardened trails. Accordingly, the following strategies are recommended to minimize ATV-related resource damage at Boswell Bay.

“Should go back to beach (ATV) use only; even for subsistence because animals can be harvested near and also on the beach.”

- *Community Member*



Specific Strategies

- Provide legal, low impact ATV access to connect Boswell Bay and the Southern/outer Beach. This would minimize potential impacts on the dunes and address safety issues.
- Monitor use and impacts at key sites including uplands and Point Steele Route area. Together, USFS and local residents will monitor use and impacts in these areas. This could happen once or twice each summer, and will help establish a clear, mutually understood baseline of knowledge about the current state of the trail system. This in turn can set the stage for self-monitoring by local users and for increased regulation and enforcement by the USFS and State if impacts increase.
- Mitigate further resource damage by establishing a single-designated route with in damaged areas including the above mentioned beach access trail and the Point Steele Route. Provide a well-defined trail ending spot and turn around. Some options from Yakutat are shown below where USFS and community partners are using different techniques to harden ATV trails and mitigate resource damage.

² There is some question about the surveying of this area since no Level 2 trail was reported. For example, rain may have filled all of the ruts with water making sections of the trail look like they had Level 3 damage. That said, overall resource damage does seem to have worsened since 2006 reports.

Examples of actions to harden trails. Photo courtesy of USFS, Yakutat Ranger District

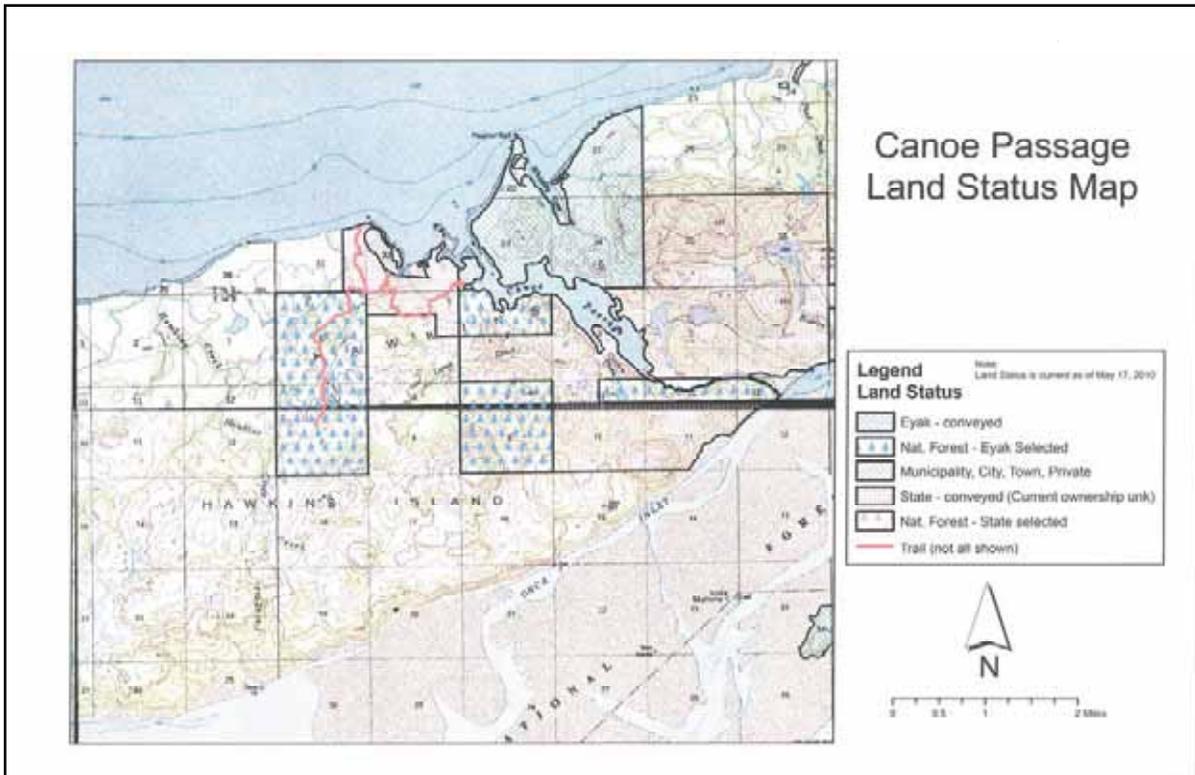


- Develop an ATV education and publicity campaign. Provide general information for all populations on responsible trail riding and ATV regulations. This should be done as part of a district wide education effort and should include creating a clear, concise motorized recreation access map. Avoid any actions that would encourage expanded use of the “Cal Baker” area, including publicity, maps and signage.

Canoe Passage – Hawkins Island (**NOTE: State Parks will provide current updates on Canoe Passage at the December 12th Community Discussion**)

Map 3. Canoe Passage, Land Status Map

Source: USFS Cordova Ranger District

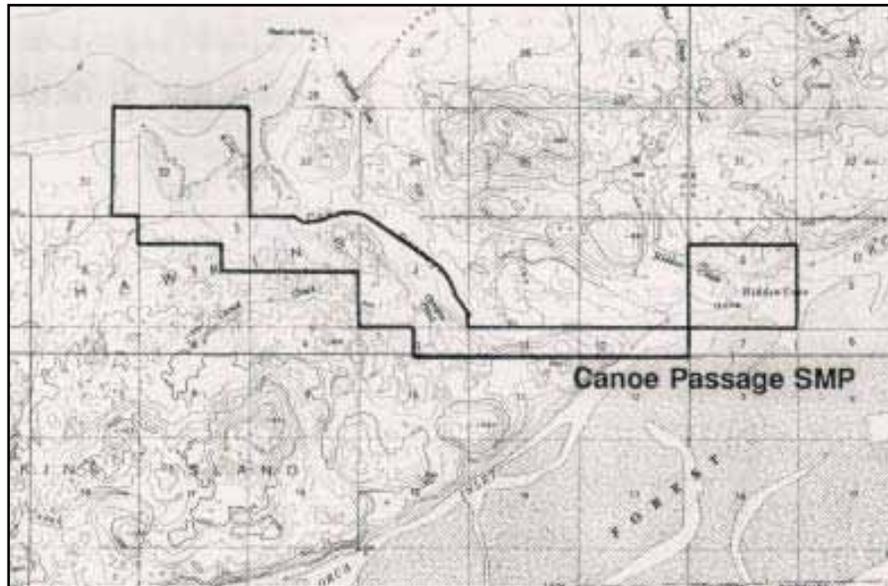


Introduction

- Location and Setting
 - The Canoe Passage area is located on the north side of Hawkins Island. The “passage” takes the form of a long, winding bay that nearly splits Hawkins into two islands. There are a small number of homes located on the south side of the entry to the passage. Most are used as summer/recreation homes, with three to five households staying year round. Homes are accessed by water, typically by local residents coming in from Cordova.
 - Vegetation in the Canoe Passage area is mostly forested uplands and considerable wetlands. Small hills rise quickly above the water in several areas to elevations of about 400 feet.
 - Hawkins Island is located west across Orca Inlet from Cordova, about ten miles as the crow flies. In the past it was possible to cross the island by boat at the right tide, by way of a partially tidal stream channel. Over the years this passage become much less useable, and is currently more of a challenging slog than a boat passage.
- Land Ownership
 - As Map 3 shows, the majority of the overall land base in the area is held by the USFS. Land on the north side of Canoe Passage is owned by Eyak Corporation. Eyak has also selected, but not yet had approved, several additional large tracts

(approximately 2000 acres south) of the bay. The State of Alaska owns a large block of land on the eastern/Cordova side of the island, north and south of the eastern “passage”.³ The State also owns a separate parcel, about 600 acres in size, at the western mouth of Canoe Passage. A set of smaller individual private parcels, the sites of the cabins, are inset in this western, state-held parcel. Portions of the land along the passage are included in Canoe Passage State Marine Park.

Map 4. Canoe Passage, State of Alaska Designated Marine Park



Source: State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Marine Parks website

Location + Types of Use

- Topography, forest vegetation and wet terrain constrain ATV use. Almost all use occurs on the few informally developed trails running from the water to homes or into upland hunting areas (see Map 3).
- Places to land or moor a boat in Canoe Passage are limited. Most people come ashore at the small inlet in the south central portion of the passage. ATV's are then used to get from this landing site to individual cabins. A second landing area is located just outside and west of the mouth of the passage.
- Types of ATV use:
 - There is very little ATV use purely for recreation, due to the steep, forested and/or wet terrain.
 - The limited amount of local ATV at Canoe Passage is primarily for deer hunting. Hunters want to get into the upland areas. Portions of this terrain are wet and easily disturbed.

Amount, Timing + Impacts of Use

- Overall, ATV use in the area is quite limited. What use does occur is largely by people who own land/housing in the immediate area. Use is concentrated April through October.
- There is little indication that ATV use is increasing. Comments at community work session associated with this project include:
 - “Overall, all there is very little use...less than 10 people.”
 - “Almost no use seen until August 1st when the deer hunting season is about to open.”
 - “Biggest danger is maps and planners that promote use.”
- Limited sections of several of the informal trails in the area show impacts.
 - Of the areas where trails are damaged; 70 percent of damage is at Level 2, remainder is at Level 3.
 - In some of these damaged areas local residents have hardened trails to reduce impacts using metal culverts, large grates, log corduroy sections and log bridges.
- Primary concern is where ATV trails cross a handful of small stream in salmon spawning areas and where salmon juveniles are present.
- Worst crossings are on Eyak Corporation and State land.

Level 1 to 2 surface damage at Canoe Passage

Photo: USFS, Cordova Ranger District



Potential Strategies

Summary

The current level of use and impacts of ATV's in the Canoe Passage area is modest, because use is limited and concentrated around existing homes and a handful of traditional local hunting areas. Most use is by a small group of local property owners and residents and the occasional visitor to the area, typically a Cordova resident. Any but the lowest level of ATV use of Prince William Sound uplands inevitably leaves impacts, and should be avoided or limited to hardened trails. Accordingly, the following strategies are recommended to minimize ATV-related resource damage at Canoe Passage.

Specific Strategies

- Develop public access route connecting area cabins and USFS land. The primary access into the cabins in the area crosses Eyak Corporation land. While not directly an ATV issue, work is needed to establish a lasting public access corridor. This is particularly relevant if more time and money is spent hardening the trails that begin from this traditional access point.
- Work with local residents, the State and the USFS to harden trails in a few specific areas, particularly at stream crossings. There are at least three known streams located on State land.
- Monitor use and impacts at key sites including uplands and stream crossings. Together, USFS and local residents will monitor use and impacts in these areas. This could happen once or twice each summer, and will help establish a clear, mutually understood, baseline of knowledge about the current state of the trail system. This in turn can set the stage for self-monitoring by local users and for increased regulation and enforcement by the USFS and State if impacts increase.
- Based on data gathered during monitoring efforts, develop mitigation strategies in areas where potential or established resource damage is occurring. Examples include metal culverts (pictured below), large grates, log corduroy sections, log bridges, hardening sites using rocks, brush collected at sites, and planting grass seed.
- Develop an ATV education and publicity campaign. Include better signage to limit use in small spawning streams. Provide general information for all populations on responsible trail riding and ATV regulations. This should be done as part of a district wide education effort and should include creating a clear, concise motorized recreation access map. Avoid spreading publicity that would trigger expanded ATV use in the area.

Local ATV users and USFS staff at Canoe Passage have implemented creative strategies to mitigate future resource damage from ATVs like the combination of a metal culvert and logs shown in this picture.

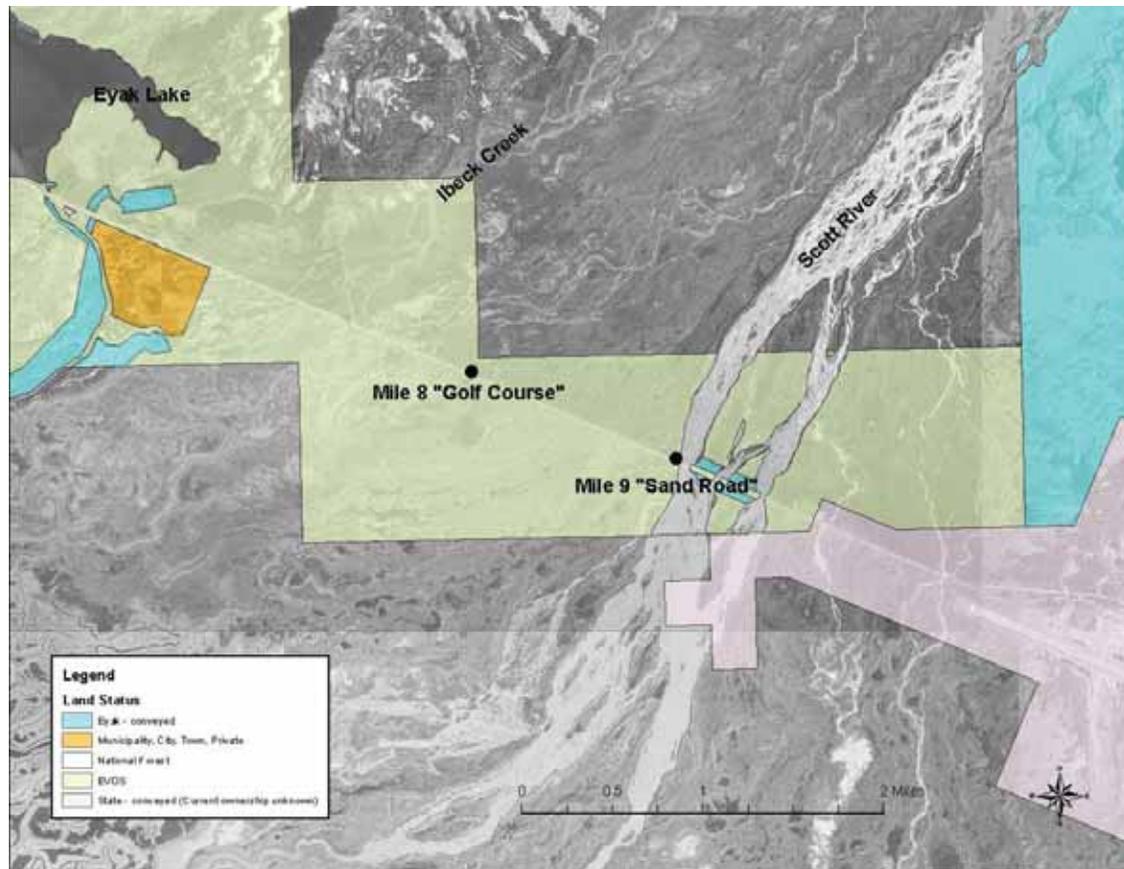
Photo: USFS Cordova Ranger District



Copper River Highway – 8 Mile (“the golf course” and 9 Mile)

(NOTE: Forest Service will provide current updates on 8/9 Mile (Ibeck) at the December 12th Community Discussion)

Map 5. 8 + 9 Mile Land Status



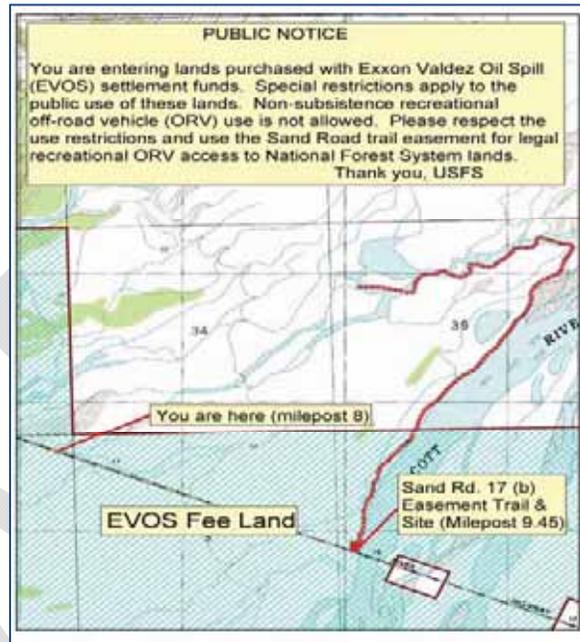
Source: USFS Cordova Ranger District

Introduction

- Location and Setting
 - These two adjoining, loosely defined areas are located on the north side of the Copper River Highway in the broad flood plain of Ibeck/Scott River valley. The 8 Mile area, sometimes referred to as the “golf course”, is mostly flat, relatively open terrain. The combination of the meandering river and the not-distant glacier have produced broad stretches of sand and gravel, interspersed with areas of emerging riparian vegetation separated by braided river channels. The channels change course and carry varying amounts of water from day to day and year to year. The 9 Mile area is located further east (at milepost 9.45).
- Land Ownership
 - Mile 9 – In 1999, the federal government (USFS) purchased the surface estate of these lands, which are protected by a conservation easement held by the State of Alaska and intended to promote recovery of Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (EVOS) resources. By the terms of the deed, motorized use is restricted; however, Eyak

Corporation did reserve the right of subsistence access for Cordova area residents. Although this easement for subsistence activities generally allows for motorized access by residents, the Forest Service may impose reasonable restrictions on the means of transportation if necessary to protect the natural state of the property. While there is legal access at this point, the area has denser vegetation, including willow and alder and spruce. Between the vegetation and the Scott River, riding an ATV is very difficult along the approved easement.

Sign posted at 8 Mile on the Copper River Highway.



Location + Types of Use

- The flat, mostly open terrain just along the Copper River Highway at 8 Mile invites and receives fairly regular recreational ATV use by Cordova residents, despite this use crossing lands which are not open to such use. There are no formally established trails, with riders following natural openings in the landscape. Most of this use extends well past (north) of the EVOS-covenant-constrained land, onto USFS property.
- The easement at 9 Mile is intended to provide access to public land intended for recreational ATV use. However, due to the lack of a parking area, and more importantly, to the relatively dense vegetation, this area receives very limited ATV use.
- Types of ATV use:
 - There is not any good information on the amounts or relative ratios of types of ATV use. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the primary use of ATV's in the area is for recreation. There is some local ATV use for fishing and hunting, including hunting in the fall for moose and in the spring for bear. Bear hunters are often headed west towards the Ibeck drainage.

Amount, Timing + Impact of Use

- 8 Mile is one of the more heavily used ATV areas in the greater Cordova area. Use is concentrated April through October.
- The amount of ATV use in the area is increasing, driven by growing interest in recreational use. New, more powerful machines are more common.
- As noted above, use at 8 Mile crosses land where EVOS deed restrictions do not permit recreational ATV use.
- Comments at public meetings associated with this parcel include:
 - “[8 Mile] looks like you can park there and have a picnic – it’s a sandy area. It might be frustrating that people are using it, but it’s a better access point.”
 - “It really takes a lot to get back there [at 9 Mile]. The little sloughs sometimes fill up with water up to 5 feet deep.”
 - “Why can’t we just buy a permit from Eyak to access at 8 Mile?”
- The USFS has not conducted an exhaustive trail evaluation comparable to what occurred at Canoe Passage and Boswell Bay. A preliminary impact assessment was conducted by USFS fisheries staff from June to October, 2011. Results of this recent survey found the following:
 - Thousands of spawning fish use Ibeck drainage and resource damage is happening in critical fish habitat. Specifically, ATV trails were found to cross essential fish habitat in numerous locations.
 - Riparian vegetation damage, stream widening, sedimentation and stream bank destabilization were found in areas where juvenile salmonids were observed.
 - Impacted areas are adjacent to stream reaches with large numbers of spawning Coho salmon.
 - Because of the alders and other vegetation in the floodplain, riders are often inclined to follow shallow river channels.

ATV tracks through a small stream in the 8 mile area. The stream serves as rearing habitat for Coho Salmon fry.

Photo: USFS Cordova Ranger District



Potential Strategies

Summary

The “golf course” area at 8 Mile is a popular local ATV use area. Regardless of the amount of ATV use at 8 Mile, this use crosses land restricted by EVOS covenants where ATV’s are not permitted for recreational use, and cannot legally continue. ATV use is allowed only for subsistence purposes unless that use is restricted through public hearings, ANILCA Section 810: Analysis of Subsistence Impacts, and government-to-government negotiations with the tribe.

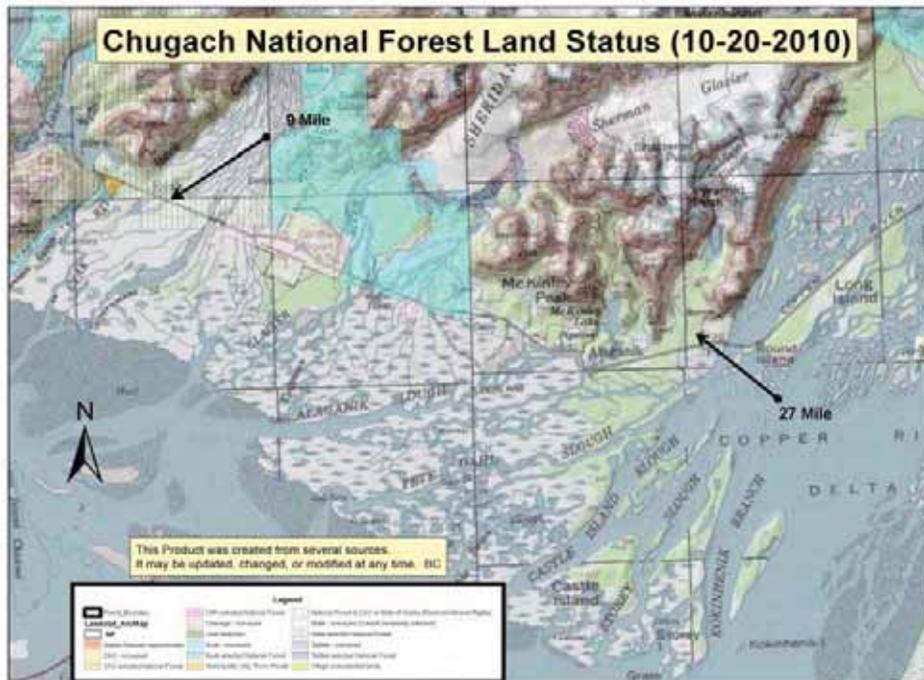
Use is currently limited at 9 Mile, as noted above, due to poor access and parking.

Specific Strategies

- Conduct more baseline field research to better quantify the value of streams in this area for salmon and other natural resources in the area.
- Work within the USFS and with stakeholders, to better understand ATV impacts in the Ibeck/Scott River area. At the same time, evaluate the character and extent of ATV use, and more precisely measure the degree to which this use is impacting salmon. Working with stakeholders reach conclusions about future options for ATV use in this area. Examples of options include:
 - Conclude that impacts are limited and/or resources affected are not significant, and allow continued use on USFS land
 - Conclude that while impacts could be significant and/or resources affected are significant, that ATV use can continue under certain conditions (e.g. on specified routes that completely avoid spawning areas, and minimize crossings of rearing areas)
 - Conclude that impacts are significant and/or resources affected are significant, and consequently ATV use should not be permitted in this area
- Employ a short-term strategy to deal with the most significant resource damage while developing a longer-term solution to trail and ATV management. Any long-term solution should ensure the protection of fish and wildlife habitat.
- If a decision is made that continued ATV use is appropriate on USFS property north of the EVOS restricted property, more work is needed to solve access issues. As noted above, continuation of access across EVOS-restricted land that is now owned by USFS is not acceptable. Options therefore include:
 1. Work out an arrangement with the EVOS (and the Eyak Corporation) to cross this property (e.g. through granting of an easement, or purchase or trade for land).
NOTE: Any route that might be established will need to be located to avoid areas of seasonal high water and brush.
 2. Improve access at 9 Mile – this area is USFS land, and provides legal access, but lacks parking, and would require trail clearing to get riders through vegetated areas into more open terrain.
 3. Redirect current use to new locations. Take active, aggressive actions, including signage, education and perhaps fencing, to prevent continued ATV use at 8 Mile.
 4. Work with user groups to educate them on how to prevent resource damage

27 Mile + Other Areas Where ATV Use is Allowed/Promoted

Map 6. Chugach National Forest Land Status



Source: USFS Cordova Ranger District

Check location of 27 mile arrow on map above (should go straight north?)

Introduction

- Location and Setting
 - 27 Mile is popular area where ATV recreational use is allowed. It is located on the Copper River Highway. Other areas for ATV use is allowed and/or promoted along Copper River Highway include 13 Mile “Sheridan”, 17 Mile “Boulder Alley”, 35 Mile “Utopia” and an area at the end of the road.
- Land Ownership
 - As Map 6 shows, the 27 Mile is located on Forest Service land. Other areas listed above are owned by the USFS and other land owners including the Eyak Corporation.

Location + Types of Use

- In general, the topography at 27 Mile and other areas listed above is comprised of wetlands and is not suitable for ATV use. However, there are some areas, approximately 30 percent, where the terrain is sandy and conducive to ATV recreational use (e.g. first section of Long Island).

- These areas are used for recreational purposes and for moose and bear hunting only during the summer months between June and September.
- There are currently no facilities at 27 Mile.

Amount, Timing + Impacts of Use

- These areas, especially 27 Mile, see considerable activity in the summer months. As one resident said, “[27 mile] is beach and the land is not affected. We want this to be a place where ATVs can be used. It is the most used of any ATV areas”. However, activity can be limited by snow or rising water levels. As one community member said, “It [27 Mile recreation area] could disappear if the river moves. We need more places to ride.” Another pointed out, “It’s a great place, but it’s a long way out of town, and not very convenient
- In the past, ATV use impacts in this area was considered minimal, as the sandy terrain in each area is suitable for this type of activity. However, there is more concern about recent activity, including people starting to cut trails through the brush and the longstanding concern about the impact of trash left behind by users. One resident mentioned, “There is a lot of trash and waste here because of the use.” Lastly, the issue of no restroom facilities at 27 Mile was addressed during the summer of 2011 with the installation of a portable toilet unit. Unfortunately, the unit was destroyed by vandals shortly after it was installed.

Potential Strategies

Summary

At the community discussions, most community members were in agreement on the issues, challenges and opportunities for recreational ATV use in Cordova. In general, most were in support of developing additional recreational areas as well as providing facilities at current and future sites to minimize littering and damage to surrounding areas. Accordingly, the strategies outlined below reflect this sentiment.

Specific Strategies

- Establish a committee of stakeholders (i.e., a group that represents the voice of people living in the area) that will work together to address ATV issues at 17 mile considering use options in Cordova and other areas of concern on Hinchinbrook and Hawkins Islands. The community has done this before several years ago with the snowmachine committee. The committee was able to acquire an easement that way.
- Build better day use facilities at 27 Mile.
- Enforce machine size / vehicle width restrictions in specific areas.
- The USFS and other major property owners in the area should consider options for developing and providing additional areas for ATV recreational use (e.g. out past 50 Mile there is a huge sand area).
- Prohibit brush cutting for new trails where this could result in serious wind erosion.
- Research trail hardening/trail improvement funding opportunities (e.g. State of Alaska Recreation Trails Grant Program).

4. Preliminary Implementation Plan

The implementation plan outlined below provides a first step toward identifying priority ATV management strategies and the associated partners, immediate next steps and approximate costs in terms of USFS staff time and dollars for each strategy. The plan does not include all of the potential strategies described in previous sections. Rather, the plan provides details for those strategies that received the most support from USFS staff, local residents and property owners. The next step in fleshing out the implementation is to identify lead persons that will be responsible for launching the first step of each strategy.

Table 1. Preliminary Implementation Plan

Priority Strategies 2011 – 2014	Partners	Immediate Next Steps	Cost Estimate ⁴
Community Leadership + Capacity Building			
I Establish small, representative group of stakeholders to oversee ATV strategy implementation	USFS, Eyak Corporation, State Parks, individual property owners, trails committee representative, youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explore different models and options for the structure and make-up of the stakeholder group – include the pros and cons of each model (e.g. this group could be a part of the existing Cordova Trails Committee, a standalone group or even a non-profit). Potential model is the PHV Trail Ambassador Programs that are successful in Minnesota, Arizona and Idaho. b. Share the models and options back in an electronic format with the email contact list and, c. Decide on the preferred group model, roles and responsibilities, communication and decision making tools and processes. d. Research funding opportunities for strategy implementation. 	Dedicated USFS staff – 4-8 hours/month (more at start-up and in the busy ATV months)

⁴Includes potential USFS staff time needed to implement strategy and where applicable, potential dollar amount to higher contractor to develop specific products. Cost estimates with designated dollar amounts are based estimated fees for planning and graphic design services and estimated printing costs. Totals may vary depending on the intent and purpose of each product.

Priority Strategies 2011 – 2014	Partners	Immediate Next Steps	Cost Estimate ⁴
Education + Outreach			
2 Develop an educational campaign to promote responsible ATV riding	USFS, Eyak Corporation, State Parks, property owners, Cordova Trails Committee, high school teachers and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Convene stakeholder group and be sure to include youth through existing school programs or clubs including the Cordova High School Science Club. b. Define audience and content for the campaign (see Appendix B for preliminary brochure). Work with youth representatives to define youth content and look. c. Define campaign products (maps, websites, brochures, signs, etc.) and prioritize production. Example products include brochures and website materials available through the national non-profit, <i>Tread Lightly</i>, http://www.treadlightly.org. d. Determine funding mechanism for tool development and distribution. Involve youth through peer education in the classroom setting. For example, youth can present hard copy and electronic education materials to their peers in the classroom setting (e.g. through I-TREC, Trails to Every Classroom) on topics like how to be a responsible ATV user. e. If necessary, work with a contractor to develop one or more information tools. f. Recruit community members to help share and distribute information. g. Identify areas that should not be promoted or identified on educational maps, in order to maintain limited use <p>(see appendix for more complete description of education strategies)</p>	As an example, to design and print a folding 11 x 14 brochure that includes basic information on responsible ATV riding, existing regulations and appropriate riding areas – estimated cost is \$7,000 (to develop and print approximately 100 brochures)

Priority Strategies 2011 – 2014	Partners	Immediate Next Steps	Cost Estimate ⁴
3 Develop a user friendly motorized access map	USFS, State Parks, working with Eyak and other major landowners	<p>Note: This might be a stand-alone product, or be prepared as part of the educational campaign in the previous implementation action.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prepare contents (map, text, photos); include land ownership information and any associated use restrictions, include helpful trails and trail head data, to increase the odds the map will be widely used. b. Review with ATV committee c. Print and distribute 	If prepared by USFS staff, this is likely a 40-80 hour task, plus printing costs. Actual time required will depend on the on-hand availability of maps, and magnitude of review required

Priority Strategies 2011 – 2014	Partners	Immediate Next Steps	Cost Estimate ⁴
Monitoring + Documentation			
4 Develop monitoring program that can be applied to all areas of concern	Property owners, ATV users (adult and youth), high school teachers, working with and State Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish small, representative monitoring groups for each priority geographic use area (could include representatives of stakeholder group listed above). b. Determine monitoring and documentation approach including timing (time of year, number of visits), tools for documentation and method for recording and sharing back results. c. Conduct initial pilot monitoring program in each priority area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set a baseline - document current conditions (e.g. through photography and USFS methodology) - Work to reach agreement between USFS, local residents, and users on significance of current conditions, that is, is there cause for concern? - Think about current use and how it may change – will it increase? - Define clearly the threshold of acceptable impact or change for locals in each area, referencing agency standards. - Repeat monitoring at a later date, at minimum, 1 year later. - Determine if/how conditions are changing, and if necessary, what actions are needed to address unacceptable impacts d. Periodically, convene monitoring groups to share and compare results and discuss necessary modifications to each program 	USFS staff 8-16 hours/monitoring location per visit + time for arranging monitoring event and for travel costs
Mitigation + Restoration			
5 Review issues related to Forest Service land between 8 and 9 Mile on the Copper River Highway; if continued use is acceptable, take actions to improve access	USFS, in consultation with affected landowners and users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Carry out additional evaluation of impacts of ATV use in the Ibeck/Scott River drainage - determine if the current level of ATV use is acceptable, in light of known existing and potential future impacts on salmon streams b. Consider and evaluate the feasibility of each option for addressing use and access issues at 8/9 Mile c. Develop cost estimate for implementing chosen option; seek funding for and carry out identified improvements 	USFS staff time for initial evaluation of options and decision on preferred action; Cost for physical improvements to be determined.

Priority Strategies 2011 – 2014	Partners	Immediate Next Steps	Cost Estimate ⁴
6 Develop recreation facilities at 27 Mile	USFS, in consultation with affected landowners and users	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop list of desired facilities and prioritize by need b. Research and identify funding opportunities and timeline for planning, design and construction 	To be determined
7 If necessary, improve, harden or restore portions of the ATV trails at Boswell Bay and/or Canoe Passage	USFS, Eyak Corporation, State Parks, individual property owners, trails committee rep	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Carry out monitoring outlined above and as a result of that process, reach decision on the possible need for trail improvements, restoration and/or other actions in the field. Potential methods include using appropriate synthetic or natural materials to divert and/or improve trails and to decrease further resource damage through the application of effective restoration techniques. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harden sites with metal culverts - Build log bridges over damaged trails - Harden sites with imported material (metal mats, geo-block, etc.) or with rocks and brush collected at sites - Plant grass seeds - Develop designated routes 	To be determined
8 Develop new ATV recreational areas	USFS, Eyak Corporation, State Parks, individual property owners, trails committee rep, youth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop comprehensive list of potential new recreation area (s) (e.g. specific part of Long Island) b. Develop evaluation criteria for determining feasibility of each site c. Identify priority sites and potential funding for development of that site 	To be determined
9 Enforce existing regulations	USFS, State Parks, Eyak Corporation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If the strategies listed above are not effective, more rigorous enforcement of existing ATV use and hunting regulations must occur. 	To be determined

Appendix A: Community Discussion Meeting Notes

Cordova ATV Use Issues + Action Plan
December 13th, 2010
Community Discussion Notes
Facilitated by Shelly Wade and Chris Beck, Agnew::Beck Consulting

Meeting Topics

1. Overview of the meeting purpose
2. Introductions
3. History of the project
4. Land Status + Regulations
5. Existing trails – location, use, condition
6. Options for strategies
7. Next Steps

Outlined below is a summary of the community discussion on each of the topics above.

Meeting Purpose

- Listen – understand use, understand land
- Build a shared base of knowledge about the issues
- Build a framework for cooperative action plan
- What we're hearing in conversations with the community thus far:
 - "ATV's are how we get around – got to have them."
 - "What's subsistence? Hard to think about what isn't subsistence – fish, hunt, pick berries, deliver groceries..."
 - "Yes, some ground is getting torn up, but current impact is pretty small. Think a few old codgers and a few wild kids, not thousands of people from Anchorage."
 - "A few people rob banks, does that mean we've got to close all the banks?"
 - "Should be a law – only people over 60 can ride ATV's; make the young people get out and walk."
 - "People driving trucks on the Golf Course – that's got to stop."

Introductions

- A complete list of meeting attendees appears at the end of this document. The group was comprised mostly of Boswell Bay landowners, some Canoe Passage landowners and other community members that are interested in ATV use in Cordova.

Project History

In respond to concerns regarding resource damage, the USFS sponsored several well attended workshops in 2001-2002; between 70-80 people attended

- In 2002, the USFS Forest Plan set rules re: ATV use
- Recently, several residents and property owners have expressed concern re: increasing ATV use and resource damage
- USFS also sees potential impacts on fish and other habitat
- Resident/owner concerns couple with USFS concerns triggered this process

Appendix A: Community Discussion Meeting Notes

Land Status + Regulations

- Questions to consider:
 - Who owns the affected land?
 - What regulations currently exist affecting ATV use?
 - USFS Forest Management Plan – only rural users, engaged in subsistence activities (as defined by ANILCA) may use ATVs
 - State of Alaska (Marine Parks) – no ATV use without explicit adopted regulations allowing ATV use
 - Private landowners (e.g. Eyak Corporation) – generally ATV use not allowed, possible exception for 17(b) easements
 - EVOS covenants on USFS lands – allows access for subsistence but not for recreation
 - It's clear that land ownership boundaries are not final or visible in the field; some of these rules are open to interpretation; more work is needed to clarify precise regulations
- Community comments/questions/concerns:
 - Some land is still undefined who owns the land (referring to land by the airport)
 - **Question:** Feds say it's ok to use ATVs, but State says not on marine parks?
Response: I drove around with State Park employees and they said there is no damage seen by existing trails.
Response: The concern is not over all the land, the whole area doesn't have a lot of problems because of little use and in the areas where it isn't steep, but in some areas it is a concern and we want ideas on what we can do.
 - **Comment:** Another place of concern is Mile 27
Response: Mile 27 is beach and the land is not affected, we want this to be a place where ATVs can be used.
Response: There is a lot of trash and waste here because of the use.
 - **Comment:** The State is going to relinquish the land (at Boswell Bay)?
Response: It is a possibility, land ownership doesn't alter the issue, the issue is land, whether it is state or Forest Service owned we are still going to have an issue with ATV use damaging natural resources

Existing Trails + Existing Use

Boswell Bay

- Quiet – 20 years ago it was really quiet
- Some decline in visits by residents
- Summer is less busy than the weekends, fall hunting
- Not bad in the summer, pretty quiet most of the time
- April-October there is not much use at all, 9 years ago no one really used it at all and it was really nice, last year there was almost no one
- Big property subdivided – added 15 parcels
- Most use by locals; little use overall
- Shift when trail gets muddy; this could be a problem
- Really irks me when I find kids doing “brodies” in the strawberries

Appendix A: Community Discussion Meeting Notes

- The residents are pretty responsible
- Use has increased. Boats with ATV's all the time, tearing the hell out of everything. Kids and visitors – focused on Strawberry Hill.
- Most traffic on outside beach
- The trail (Cal Baker) is deer hunting trail only, no one uses the land to recreate
- Most use by local hunters is for deer hunting, people don't use it for recreation
- The beach is the only place that people are recreating, only deer hunting on the other lands
- Use has increased, the problem is younger kids coming to recreate and have fun tearing up everything, and they are having a good time, but tearing up the land while doing it; they mostly do it near the beach
- If they stay on the beach it is ok, wind blows the sand and covers up the tracks, up in the muskegs and strawberry patches is where it is a problem
- Use on beach doesn't impact much of anything
- Swamp limits use, not many options on the beach
- Erosion talking more land than what ATV's are doing
- Safety issues – ATV's are going fast through dunes, “76 year old picking berries” can't contend with a kid on an ATV
- Older people like berry picking, when younger people are jumping off jumps around them it is dangerous. It is not IF an accident is going to happen, it is WHEN
 - It isn't like it happens all the time, it just happens and it is an issue when it does
- Can't deny people from playing on the sand dunes because of a short berry picking season, look at California and Oregon's ATV use
- Concern that the Bay is only 30 minutes from Cordova – “Easy to get here”
- Land changed by beavers, created swamps (area west of houses) – makes it harder to ride through those areas; natural barriers
- Maybe we need a designated riding area, a designated Forest Service “rip up the land” area
- My biggest complaint is the road and mud puddles, the roads we used for a long time and kept up now have deep holes
 - Holes up to 3 feet
 - The road goes from the boat landing to the last house
 - Sometimes when it is cold and you are in a hurry you speed through the puddles
 - I just got the paper work to put in an application for materials to fix the road
- Road near residence is getting washed out (by ATV's?)
- Just got approval to fix the road (need fill, equipment)
- Do hunting trails cross anadromous stream? Most likely not?
- There are no fish effected by ATVs at Boswell Bay
- No major streams effected, but 2006 report shows that fish are affected in the smaller streams

Canoe Pass

- Biggest danger – maps and planners that promote use
- Forest Service putting out maps is going to increase the use and so would hardening the trails
- Question about why rocks were put there by USFS

Appendix A: Community Discussion Meeting Notes

- We put the rock there so silt doesn't get into the river and effect the Salmon
- Very little use
 - Locals – hunting only (minimal recreation)
 - Valdez/Whittier – see boats several times a year? Fast ferry brought over a group
- Subsistence is supposed to be for rural residents only
- Enforcement is an issue
- Anchorage hunters – don't know that if there's a boat in a bay you don't stop there
- Four people from Anchorage came to hunt and went hunting right next to someone's cabin, they don't know the hunting etiquette here and they don't care
- Hunters coming but not by ATV
- Use is going to grow, use is coming (have this meeting in Anchorage, you'll get mobbed)
- Somebody at Eyak called up that landing craft dropping off ATVs and it turns out they were a company dropping people off with ATVs. They advertise that they have boats with ATVs.
- There was no such thing as a sport boat 30 years ago and the fast ferry is also opening up new doors. It is only going to get worse. People from Anchorage are finding out more about the sound and use is going to go up.
- Don't have right to say no (business operates in PWS with landing craft, bring groups of ATV users)
- Users/USFS have improved some stretches of trail
- What is the damage if it is only a couple of tracks with puddles?
 - At levels one and two the vegetation will grow back within a year, but at levels three and four it effects the soil and it takes years to grow back
- These trails are private and shouldn't be published, they are for local rural use only
- 25 years ago the use was mostly local and people had respect. People coming now are coming to recreate and have fun
- Impacts of ATV use at Canoe Passage
 - Fish (and other habitat)
 - Visual
 - Experience
 - Safety
 - Vegetation will often grow back, if use is light
 - It's just going to get worse
 - Much of the "damage" is limited to very limited stretch of trail

Mile 9 – Copper River Highway

- Clarification: can't use ATV for subsistence if you're an "urban" resident
- Area north of Copper River Highway is open to motor use
- The legal access point (through (17)(b) easements at Mile 9 is inconvenient and "sucks" – terrain and parking both bad
- EVOS covenants have easier access point
- Need to close spawning beds at Mile 9 legal access point – most productive grounds on the west side

Appendix A: Community Discussion Meeting Notes

- In general, we need more places to rip
 - Often can't get to 27 etc. because weather closes access
 - It snows until June and then the water rises
 - Most used of any ATV areas
 - Impacts? "donuts on Highway"
 - Could disappear if river moves
 - Mile 17 or "Boulder Alley" is on Eyak land
 - **Action – we need to investigate options, do recon, weigh costs and benefits**

Options for Strategies/Solutions

What's happened already?

- Residents/Property Owners
 - Metal culverts
 - Large grates
 - Log corduroy sections
 - Log bridges
- Forest Service
 - Hardening sites using rocks, brush collected at sites
 - Planting grass seed around areas with damaged

Other ideas?

- Set goals and criteria
 - Match location and amount of use with character of landscape
- Designated routes and hardened trails
- Education
- Monitoring/Limits of Acceptable Change
- Enforcement
 - State; USFS; land owners
- Partnerships: USFS has limited resources; solutions will require partnerships with land owners, users, community partners
 - Control information – limit use through not promoting more use
 - Collect objective data on resource damage
 - Develop rip 'em up zones; need more examples of how/where this is working in other places
 - Conduct an annual "monitoring" field trip, done jointly by users and the USFS/State. The goal would be getting everybody to same point re: the reality of damage, and thereby setting a baseline that wouldn't have to be argued over.

Next Steps

- Draft summary of what we hear tonight
- Continue to talk through interviews
- Schedule a second community discussion

Cordova ATV Issues + Action Plan - Community Discussion; 12/13/2010

Meeting Attendees

First Name	Last Name
<i>Community Members</i>	
Alberta	McCracken
Charlie	McCracken
Dale	Muma
Dan	Scott
Harry	Curran
Jim	Merrit
John	Renner
Kenny	Renner
Luke	Borer
Rob	Maxwell, Jr.
Robert	Maxwell, Sr.
Don	Scutt
Sue	Muma
Tom	Bailer
<i>USFS Staff</i>	
Andy	Morse
Bob	Behrends
Dave	Zastrow
Ken	Hodges
Megan	Barnhart
Milo	Burcham
Paul	Clark
Teresa	Benson

Appendix A: Community Discussion Meeting Notes

Cordova ATV Use Issues + Action Plan
March 28, 2011
Community Discussion Notes
Facilitated by Shelly Wade, Agnew::Beck Consulting

Meeting Topics

1. Purpose of the meeting
2. Introductions
3. Main Messages from December meeting
 - Land Status + ATV Use Regulations
 - Existing trails – location, use, condition
 - Past and current strategies
4. Community-recommended strategies
5. Other potential Strategies
6. Next Steps

Outlined below is a summary of the community discussion on each of the topics above.

Purpose of the Meeting

- Clarify what we heard in December
- Overview of potential strategies
- Mostly, focus on what strategies the community thinks will work for different use areas

Introductions

- A complete list of meeting attendees appears at the end of this document. The group was comprised of a wide range of community members interested, Boswell Bay landowners and some Canoe Passage landowners.

Main Topics from December Meeting

Land Status + ATV Use Regulations

- Who owns the land?
 - Forest Service
 - State Parks
 - Eyak Corporation
 - City of Cordova
 - State Department of Transportation
- What are the landowners current and future plans?
 - For this part of the discussion, the group reviewed land status maps for all areas of concern including Boswell Bay, Canoe Passage, Mile 9 and Mile 27. Key questions and discussion points were as follows:
 - Boswell Bay and Canoe Passage maps indicate potential conflicts with current ATV use, land status and ATV regulations. Will State Parks prohibit current residents from using trails that have been in use for decades to access the beach? The answer from State Parks is they are here to listen and better understand current land use. There may be a solution that works for all parties, like established or hardened trails that mitigate resource damage. However, we need to gather a lot more information and have a very clear understanding of current use before that can happen.

Appendix A: Community Discussion Meeting Notes

- Mile 8 + 9 – Several community members had questions for the Forest Service and Eyak Corporation on the continuing issues at Mile 8 and 9. This is a huge issue for the community that they would like to see resolved soon. There were some pointed questions about the Forest Service and Eyak Corporation working together to create an access point at Mile 8, the place where people are currently illegally accessing Forest Service land. Both parties answered that there have been discussions in the past to that regard and they will continue to talk about a solution that works for both. Eyak is concerned about moving forward with a negotiation that could set a precedent for future requests for Corporation land.
- What regulations currently exist affecting ATV use? The group briefly discussed each of the following plans and maps that describe allowable and non-allowable ATV use. It was clear that most people at the community discussion were unfamiliar with these regulations and maps, especially maps that show areas that are open for recreational use.
 - USFS Forest Management Plan (2002) including:
 - Motorized access maps for Boswell Bay and Canoe Passage
 - Many areas are open; some restricted to rural residents for subsistence purposes
 - USFS Chugach Motor Vehicle Use Map (2011)
 - State of Alaska Marine Parks – Current regulations do not all allow ATV use
 - Eyak Corporation – Generally, ATV use not allowed, possible exception for 17(b) easements
 - EVOS covenants on USFS lands – allows access for subsistence but not for recreation

Existing Use + Conditions

Boswell Bay

Location + types of use:

- General – topography and wet terrain constrain use; beach front is sandy
- Primary use to access homes
- Along bay in front of homes, over dunes south of bay, along southside beach – least constraints for ATV's
- “Cal Baker” Trail – local use for deer hunting; very little use overall; difficult access off the beach limits use
- Area above Boswell Bay – swampy conditions limit use
- Land has been changed by beavers; older trails no longer useable

Amount + timing of use:

- Overall, not much use, concentrated April-October
- “Not bad in the summer, pretty quiet most of the time”
- Kids and visitor use has increased – young riders on more powerful machines
- “We’re just 30 minutes from Cordova” – use could increase, especially if trails are advertised;
- that is not desired

Existing Conditions + Evidence of Use:

- “Cal Baker” trail area
- There are some visible (from the air) trench lines; limited use is key to limited impacts
- Small portions of the trails in this area show signs of significant wear and tear (Level 3); but most trails are Level 2 as defined by USFS

Appendix A: Community Discussion Meeting Notes

- No major streams affected, so fish not affected
- Critical to not allow use to extend west to bay by Hook Point
- Boswell Bay, Strawberry Hill, Southside Beach
- Private property (individual lots) are most damaged area – informal “road” in front of people’s houses is torn up and riddled with holes
- “Some young people are riding too fast; create safety issues in places like Strawberry Hill

Canoe Pass

Location + types of use:

- Use limited by environment – fairly steep, vegetated terrain
- Minimal recreational riding; users are there to get to cabins, or locals to hunt

Amount + timing of use:

- Only 3-5 households of folks stay year round; overall all there is very little use (“less than 10 people”)
- No use seen until August 1st
- “Biggest danger is maps and planners that promote use”

Existing Conditions + evidence of use:

- Some damage to trails, but in very limited locations
- Of the areas where trails are damaged; 70 percent of damage is at Level 2, remainder is at Level 3
- In some of these damaged areas local residents have hardened trails to reduce impacts
- Primary concern are a handful of small stream crossings – in salmon spawning areas and where salmon juveniles present
- Worst crossings are on Eyak and State land

9 Mile

Location, Types + Amount of Use:

- Two vehicles launching ATVs a weekend in the winter; increased use in the summer (dictated by weather conditions)
- On EVOS buy back land, no motorized recreational use is allowed
- Subsistence use only if you are a “rural” resident, which Cordova residents are
- Legitimate easement/access point is not ideal with terrain and parking challenges, so people crossing EVOS covenants where access is better
- People have been using the trail for over 20 years

Existing Conditions

- North of the road there is critical salmon habitat – spawning beds may be at risk and we need to better understand this with on-the-ground investigations

27 Mile + Other Designated Recreation Areas

- Designated for recreational use
- Most used of any ATV areas
- OK, but limited access with snow until June and then rising water levels; simply can’t get to it then
- It could disappear if the river moves
- No facilities
- Others: 13 Mile “Sheridan”, 17 Mile “Boulder Alley”, 35 Mile “Utopia”, End of Road

Appendix A: Community Discussion Meeting Notes

Community-Recommended Strategies

General

- Develop an education and outreach campaign that includes the following:
 - Regulations
 - Where to ride
 - Safety
 - Low impact riding
- Distribute education materials at the Forest Service and other key locations such as local businesses where ATV users are likely to frequent including shops that sell ATVs and sporting goods equipment

Boswell Bay

- Provide legal access to the outer beach; access needed to beach so upland is not damaged
- Recruit volunteers to help with monitoring efforts
- Do nothing
- Keep and maintain some of the existing trails
- Do some self-monitoring and policing, but still work with Forest Service and State when they are doing their monitoring
- Create new motorized access maps that show where you can ride; less is better for maps and signs
- Educate the youth on proper trail riding (maybe good for all areas?)

Canoe Pass

- Work with State Parks to create a legal access point to access Forest Service lands
- Self-monitor and police; residents should educate and inform their guests
- Provide education to the community in general so that anyone that makes their way over to Canoe Passage understands the issues and regulations
- Develop strategies that are similar to Boswell
- Develop better signage and small bridges (local materials) over spawning streams

9 Mile

- Improve existing trail
- Expedite negotiations between the Forest Service and Eyak Corporation to allow access at golf course (Mile 8)
- Get an easement from DOT from 8-mile to 9-mile
- Develop better markers at the legal access point
- Maintain trail with help from volunteers
- Develop signs to show where salmon spawning is
- Access funding through scenic byways for trail improvements and facilities
- Create parking across the road from 9 mile, Eyak Corporation land
- Institute trail committee that can address threshold level and different types of users/ORVs

27 Mile + Other Recreation Areas

- Establish something like the snowmobile committee that worked in the past
 - The group work together to get an easement – Curtis B. knows more
 - A group that represents the voice of people living in the area
- Think about current use and how it may change – will it increase?

Appendix A: Community Discussion Meeting Notes

- Define clearly the threshold of impact or change for locals in each area
- Education, address level three areas
- Build facilities at 27 mile
- Enforce machine size restrictions in areas
 - Vehicle width
- Other ideas for rec areas
 - Out past 50 mile (with permit); huge sand area
- Research funding opportunities (e.g. State trails grant program)
 - Funding can be used for trail improvements and education
 - Creation of clubs or committee could help with grant eligibility

Other Potential Strategies

These strategies were researched and developed by Agnew::Beck and Forest Service employees as information for the community to consider and discuss. These strategies were presented to the community as examples BEFORE the group provided their feedback on what strategies would work best for each area)

Education + Outreach

- Signage, Maps + Materials
 - Better distribution and availability of motor vehicle use maps – where can you ride?
 - Signage to make ATV use access clear and where it makes sense, identify routes
- Partner with other landowners to send a clear message
- Safety messages
- Tread Lightly (NOTE: hard copy materials from this program were passed around and shared with the discussion participants)
- Cordova Riding Club?
- Cordova Trails Committee
- OHV Trail Ambassador Program
 - Successful in Minnesota, Arizona, Idaho
 - Community volunteers that do a host of education, monitoring, trail clean-up activities
- Youth Education + Outreach
 - Teach responsible ATV use (e.g. illustrate through real life experience)
- Science Club – 4 students, twice a year – spring and fall
- Peer Education – students from above can share back what they learn
- Use existing resources in the classroom (e.g. Yakutat video)
- I-TREC (Trails to Every Classroom)
- Create clear, consistent maps and messaging on existing regulations
 - Forest Plan
 - Eyak Corporation
 - State Parks
- We have examples from Forests and partners in Alaska (Yakutat) and the Lower 48

Monitoring + Documentation

- Reduce ambiguity about degree of impact, by arranging for users and USFS to visit area together
- Set up representative monitoring group:
 - Forest Service
 - State Parks
 - Eyak Corporation

Appendix A: Community Discussion Meeting Notes

- Land owners
- Youth
- Establish an agreed upon threshold for change – a “field-based”, clear baseline of what is acceptable, what’s not
- Establish monitoring and reporting schedule, an annual on-the ground observation, photo+ monitoring protocol
- Biological Monitoring –Yakutat example
 - How is the riding affecting the land and ecosystems?
 - Minnow trapping by Yakutat Salmon Board – illustrate that spawning is happening
 - Wildlife – how are moose population’s being affected? Surveys on how many moose are close to tracks.
 - Invasive species
- Monitoring for other concerns
 - Safety
 - Trespass
 - Others?

Mitigation, Restoration, Relocation

- Residents/Property Owners + Forest Service
 - Metal culverts
 - Large grates
 - Log corduroy sections
 - Log bridges
 - Hardening sites using rocks, brush collected at sites
 - Planting grass seed around areas with damage
 - Old beer pallets
- Work with land manager to choose best path
 - Tread stabilized by vegetation
 - Soil protected
 - Flow not diverted
 - Wetland not drained
- Create natural barriers to guide users away from unsustainable routes
- Plant alder
- Place logs/other diversions
- Create/move easements for better/less impacting access (e.g. 9 Mile)
- Use education information to control ATV use
- Enforce existing regulations (e.g. ATV use, hunting)
- Research options and create more designated riding and rally areas – maybe even create business opportunities?
- Develop a “local user” or “permanent resident” tag

Appendix A: Community Discussion Meeting Notes

Next Steps

- Draft summary of what we hear tonight and share back with distribution list (March/April)
- Follow-up interviews with interested community discussion participants (March/April)
- Develop outline for ATV Management plan (June)

Cordova ATV Issues + Action Plan - Community Discussion; 3/28/2011

Meeting Attendees

<i>First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>
<i>Community Members</i>	
Aaron	Anderson
Bob	Ladd
Brad	Sarp
Brent	Songer
Curtis	Buerhle
Dale	Muma
Dan	Clark
Dean	Curran
Don	Scutt
Hank	Carlson
Jason	Borer
Jesse	Carter
John	Renner
Kenny	Renner
Patti	Kallander
Ray	Renner
Rick	Ballas
Robert	Maxwell, Sr.
Ron	Neilson
Sarah	Ecolano
Shane	Songer
Skip	Songer
Steve	Sanderson
Tim	Dillon
Victor	Jones
<i>USFS Staff</i>	
Andy	Morse
Bob	Behrends

Appendix A: Community Discussion Meeting Notes

<i>First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>
Dave	Zastrow
Ken	Hodges
Megan	Barnhart
Milo	Burcham
Teresa	Benson



Cordova Ranger District Motor Vehicle Use



ATV Regulations

Where Can I Ride?

Forest Service Land

Many areas are open to motor vehicle use; some are restricted to rural residents for subsistence purposes
On EVOS covenants on USFS lands motorized vehicle use allowed for rural resident subsistence use, but not for recreation

State of Alaska (Marine Parks)

Current Regulations do not allow motorized vehicle use unless posted

Department of Transportation

Generally federal law prohibits motorized vehicles from trails and pedestrian walkways constructed with federal highway funds

Eyak Corporation

Motorized vehicle use allowed by non-shareholders with a consumptive use permit. The permit allows for motorized vehicle use on established roads and trails only.

Permits can be purchased from the Eyak Corporation Office:

901 LeFevre Street
P.O. Box 340
Cordova, Alaska 99574
Ph. (907) 424-7161

Ride Responsibly

- Travel only in areas open to use
- Travel on routes designated for motorized use
- Stay on existing routes and trails
- Respect the environment and the rights of others
Cordova ATV Management Preliminary Report

Mile 27 “Long Island” to Mile 38

Mile 9 using designated trail, “Sand Trail”, riding on outwash from Scott Glacier

17 Mile “Boulder Alley” - with permit from Eyak Corporation to pass through to Forest Service land

End of Road – Past the Million Dollar Bridge, with Eyak Corporation Permit

Respect the Land

Avoid sensitive areas such as wetlands and meadows

Wetlands are particularly vulnerable. Only 10 passes by an ATV over a wetland can destroy 60 percent of the trail’s plant species, creating a deteriorated habitat for moose, shorebirds, and salmon spawning. It can take wetlands centuries to recover from ATV damage, if they recover at all.



Dry areas, such as sand and and glacial outwash provide stronger ground for sustainable ATV use