



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0243, Version: 1

ITEM TITLE:

Report: Management of Mineral Creek Trails on State of Alaska Lands

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Nylund - Senior Planner/GIS Technician

FISCAL NOTES:

Expenditure Required: N/A

Unencumbered Balance: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

In early January of 2022, the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) South Central Regional Land Office (SCRO) contacted the City of Valdez Planning Department and informed us that there had been a complaint from a member of the public stating that they had been prevented from accessing the Mineral Creek Trails on a snow machine during a ski race event. Several of these trails exist on DNR administered lands, and the DNR did not have any record of authorizing the restriction of motorized access on these lands. The Planning Department provided the DNR with a letter of non-objection from the DNR dated October 29, 2002, which concurred with the request from the City of Valdez to restrict motorized access on these trails and the land immediately surrounding them. Following the receipt of this letter from the DNR, the City of Valdez passed Ordinance NO. 02-21, which codified the separation of motorized and non-motorized on these trails.

The DNR is concerned “that the letter from 2002 may not be sufficient to authorize continued restriction over the 80 acres of state land surrounding the Mineral Creek Trails, as this action was not subject to a full public process at the time”, and that “in the long term, it is SCRO’s position that a public process is necessary to authorize any use restrictions over general state land.” In order to continue to manage these trails in a manner that is consistent with Ordinance NO. 02-21, the DNR is advising the City of Valdez to enter a Cooperative Resource Management Agreement (CRMA) with the state. A CRMA would undergo the same public process as any other agreement with DMLW and would serialize the resulting administrative action so that the public has the opportunity to review the decision/casefile and view the boundaries of any authorization granted.

In order to enter into this agreement with the DNR, the City of Valdez has been advised to fill out an application to lease the land in question, which will begin the public notice process and lead to the CRMA being established. This cooperative agreement between the City of Valdez and The AK DNR

would allow the Parks and Recreation Department to continue to manage these portions of the Mineral Creek Trail system that are located on state land in the manner that they currently are. This report is intended to give the Parks and Recreation Commission an update on what has transpired up to this point regarding this issue, and to outline the path going forward.