



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Chugach
National Forest

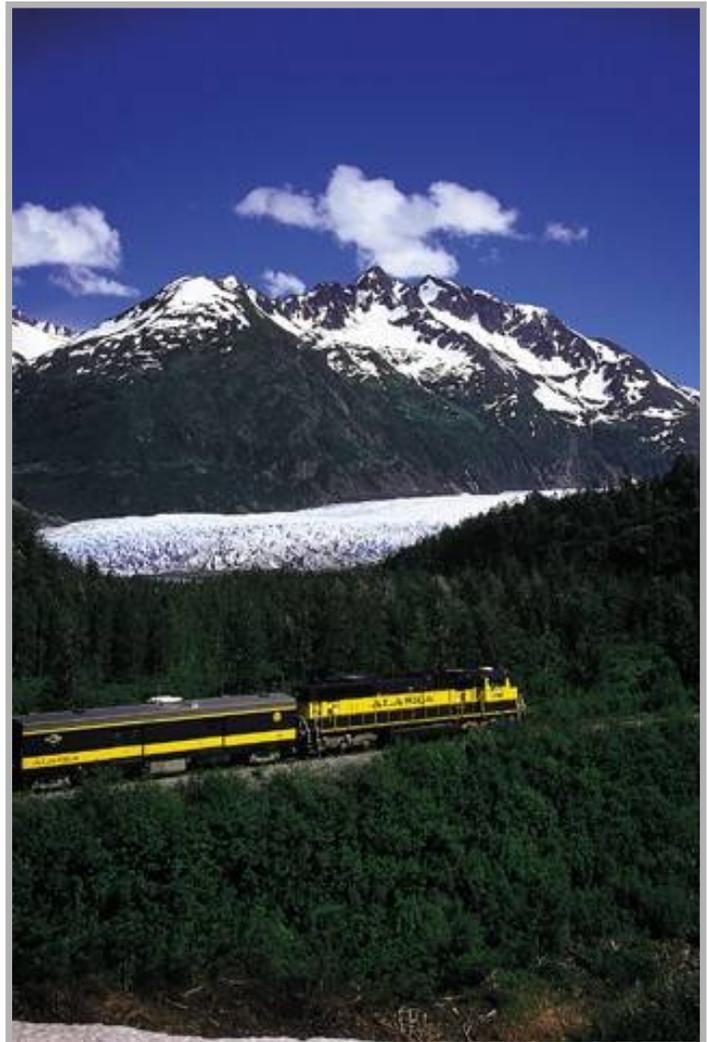
R10-MB-593

May 2006



Whistle Stop Project

Record of Decision



WHISTLE STOP PROJECT

RECORD OF DECISION

USDA Forest Service, Region 10 Glacier and Seward Ranger Districts Chugach National Forest

This Record of Decision (ROD) documents my decision concerning whether or not to implement the Whistle Stop Project, by constructing a variety of recreation support facilities on the Glacier and Seward Ranger Districts. This decision is based on the analysis and evaluation of the Whistle Stop Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Maps displaying the recreation facilities in the Selected Alternative are located in Appendix A.

Background

The idea of a Whistle Stop train service on the northern Kenai Peninsula between Portage and Moose Pass is not a new concept. For decades, representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, Chugach National Forest (CNF) and Alaska Railroad (ARRC) have raised this concept, with the goal of increasing accessibility to a large portion of the Kenai Peninsula backcountry.

Presently, there is limited recreation activity in the project area due in large part to the absence of public access; recreation facility infrastructure; and the closure of Alaska Railroad track to public access for safety reasons. Minimal independent use occurs with adventurous backcountry trips, mainly on existing waterways, but also through cross-country and air travel. The area provides habitat to a wide variety of wildlife species, including but not limited to brown bear, black bear, moose, mountain goat and gray wolf. The general project area also includes many communities on the eastern Kenai Peninsula including Girdwood, Moose Pass and Seward.

Decision

The decision I am making is to select the Preferred Alternative 2 as described in the FEIS, with modifications that address issues brought forth in Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) comments. My decision allows the Forest Service to develop a series of five Whistle Stop stations, four of which would be connected through a trail system, along with dispersed campsites and public-use cabins that will facilitate a mix of day and overnight recreation opportunities for Forest visitors.

The recreation developments that I am approving for the Whistle Stop project meet the Forest Service guidelines for recreation settings and recreation facilities through adherence to Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) class designations; through a principle of developing the minimum design necessary to meet defined recreation and resource protection goals; and through agency developed capacity limits. Implementation of the Whistle Stop project will allow us to develop facilities commensurate with demand and occupancy through a phase-in approach to project development (described in detail in the *Rationale for the Decision* section).

The Selected Alternative provides the best balance between the Purpose and Need for the project and the three important issues brought forth in comments on the DEIS. These significant issues include concerns with wildlife, particularly brown bears; interaction between mining operations and recreation, particularly in the Spencer area; and finally the concern with overdeveloping Forest Service lands in the project area, thereby increasing encounters and not meeting backcountry objectives. The *Rationale for the Decision* section will provide additional detail on how the Selected Alternative, as well as the alternatives that were not selected, address each of the significant issues listed above.

The following highlights the key elements of my decision:

Whistle Stop Stations

My decision allows for development of five Whistle Stop stations at the following locations:

- Spencer
- Grandview
- Bartlett Glacier
- Luebner Lake
- Trail Creek

In order to provide diverse recreation opportunities for a variety of forest users, it is important that we offer Whistle Stops that will facilitate a range of opportunities, both for day trip and overnight visitors. We project that the Whistle Stops will be phased-in in the manner outlined above, with Spencer constituting the initial

phase of Whistle Stop development. By choosing to develop the five Whistle Stops listed above, my decision reduces the overall number of Whistle Stops put forth in the initial proposed action; reduces development in the Brown Bear Core Management Area (BBCMA) through elimination of the Hunter Whistle Stop; and minimizes the number of potential encounters in the BBCMA through elimination of infrastructure at Hunter that would facilitate rafting operations on Trail Creek.

Viewing Platforms

My decision allows for development of one native-rock viewing platform at Spencer Lake, which will be subordinate to, and blend in with the surrounding landscape. In a modification from the preferred alternative, I have decided to locate this viewing platform off the existing mining claims in Spencer responding to public comment received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Modifications from the Preferred Alternative:

- *Eliminated viewing platform at Luebner Lake.*
- *Eliminated viewing platform at Grandview. Grandview Interpretive Trail design will include wide spots to facilitate viewing opportunities.*
- *Moved location of native-rock viewing platform off the existing mining claims at Spencer.*

By choosing to develop one viewing platform and eliminating the platforms at Luebner Lake and Grandview, my decision responds to public concerns regarding scale of development, numbers of potential encounters, impact to the viewshed and project costs. Elimination of the two viewing platforms will encourage movement along the adjacent trail system, thereby reducing the potential of encountering unusually large groups. Both to reduce the number of facilities and to reduce overall future maintenance costs, at Grandview I will include wide spots designed along the Grandview Interpretive Trail, meeting the goal of a viewing platform while developing the minimum design necessary to meet project goals and protect area resources.

Information Center

My decision allows for the development of a seasonal information and education structure at Spencer Lake.

Modifications from the Preferred Alternative:

- *Moved location of the information center off the existing mining claims at Spencer.*

The information center, totaling approximately 200 sq. feet, (increased from the initial projected size of 100 sq. feet), will be designed to be easily constructed and taken down at the beginning and end of each season. The center, with a

main goal of distributing visitor information, will be subordinate to the landscape fitting within the project-wide design theme.

Dispersed campsites

My decision allows for the development of dispersed campsites in the following numbers and at the following locations:

- Spencer Lake (3 sites)
- Glacier Discovery Trail (10 sites)
- Whistle Stop stations (10 sites – 2 sites per station)

Modifications from the preferred alternative:

- *Reduction of dispersed campsites in the Spencer area from 6 to 3 and potential capacity from 36 to 18 (assuming a maximum number of 6 people at one time (PAOTS) per site)*

By choosing to develop a reduced number of dispersed campsites, my decision responds to public concerns regarding scale of development and number of potential encounters. Developing fewer dispersed campsites in early stages of the project will help the Forest Service match supply to demand, one year at a time.

Cabins

My decision allows for the development of public-use cabins in the following locations:

- Spencer Bench
- Spencer Lake (3 cabins)
- Bartlett Glacier
- Trail Glacier

Cabins will be constructed as occupancy dictates. By waiting for a clear indication of demand before constructing new cabins, I am responding to the public concerns of overdevelopment of Forest lands.

Group campsite

My decision allows for the development of the Spencer Lake group campsite with a capacity for 25 people.

Modifications from the preferred alternative:

- *Reduction of group campsites in the Spencer area from 3 to 1 and potential capacity of use from 75 people to 25 people total.*
- *Minimized footprint of the group campsite within the existing mining claims at Spencer.*

By choosing to develop a reduced number of group campsites and thereby reducing the potential overall capacity, my decision responds to public concerns regarding scale of development and number of potential encounters. Furthermore, by reducing the number of group campsites, I am greatly reducing both the encroachment onto mining claims in the Spencer area, and the cost of recreation facilities that will be placed on the existing mining claims. I completed an extensive review of the facilities proposed for the Spencer area, resulting in the placement of facilities that aims to meet the needs of providing a world-class recreation experience for forest visitors and minimizing the impact to the existing mining claims in the Spencer area. Specifically, the chosen location of the group campsite is superior aesthetically, meets customer service goals through easy access and minimizes long-term infrastructure costs.

Trails, Trail Class, and Managed Use

My decision allows for the development of trails in the following locations:

- Glacier Discovery Trail (Class 3)
 - ⇒ Luebner-Spencer segment (8 mi.)
 - ⇒ Spencer-Bartlett segment (6 mi.)
 - ⇒ Bartlett-Grandview segment (4 mi.)
- Spencer Glacier Trail (Class 4 – 1.5 mi.)
- Spencer connector Trail (Class 4 – 1 mi.)
- Bartlett Glacier Trail (Class 3 – 1 mi.)
- Grandview Interpretive Trail (Class 4 – 1 mi.)
- Trail Glacier Trail (Class 3 – 4 mi.)
- Center Creek Pass Trail (Class 2 – 5 mi.)

The Class 3 trails will all be managed for both pedestrian and human powered bike traffic. Motorized use will not be allowed on these trails according to the Forest Plan direction for this geographic area. The Class 4 trails will be managed for pedestrian use only, to ensure user safety and minimize encounters between bikes and hikers. Construction of the Center Creek Pass Trail (Class 2) is contingent upon approval of the Hut-to-Hut project and managed use will be determined in accordance with decisions developed in the Hut-to-Hut Project EIS.

Boundary of Spencer Lake Developed Recreation Complex

The Chugach National Forest Revised Forest Plan identifies a Developed Recreation Complex Management Area in the vicinity of Spencer Lake. Exact boundaries of this site were to be developed on a project specific basis. My decision identifies approximately 187 acres as a Developed Recreation Complex in the Spencer region. Boundaries for this management area are identified on the map which constitutes Appendix A.

Sections Eliminated from the Selected Alternative

- *Rafting put-in and take out locations.* Rafting operations occurring between Spencer Lake and the Placer River are approved through Special Use Permit. Therefore, facilities that are affiliated with current or future outfitting and guiding operations may be approved through a Special Use Permit and are not part of this decision.
- *Permitted and Administrative Motorized Access.* Historically, motorized access has occurred throughout the existing network of roads in the Spencer area for administrative use, special use permits authorized by the Forest Service and with an approved mining plan of operations. Approval of motorized access will continue to be determined on a case-by-case basis and is not part of this decision.

Rationale for the Decision

In formulating my decision, I considered multiple factors, including public comment, the effects analysis, the Whistle Stop Project Business Plan, and our joint goals with the Alaska Railroad.

I have chosen the Preferred Alternative 2 from the DEIS (with modifications) as the most effective way to meet the purpose and need of the project, meet the needs of the ultimate recreation capacity in the area, and address public comments. Through this decision I addressed concerns with the level of recreation settings (social and physical), minimized the potential impacts to wildlife and greatly reduced the area of overlap between the recreation infrastructure and mining claims in the Spencer Lake area.

My decision addresses the issues and concerns brought forth from comments on the DEIS with the ability to distribute use among five Whistle Stop stations; through a substantial decrease in the number and size of the group campsites; and through a sizeable decrease in hardened, dispersed sites throughout the project area. Each of these design parameters allows the ability to disperse use over a wide geographic area, while simultaneously reducing the capacity of overnight facilities, thereby minimizing encounters and preserving the feeling of solitude. Additionally, the issue of wildlife impacts is addressed through elimination of the Hunter Whistle Stop and rafting support facilities at both Hunter and Trail Creek. Removal of these proposed recreation facilities will minimize the potential of a prolonged, sustained human presence within the Brown Bear Core Management Area (BBCMA). Moreover, my decision goes to great lengths to reduce the amount of infrastructure developed on top of the mining claims in the Spencer area, thereby both meeting the purpose and need for the project and addressing concerns brought forth during comments received on the DEIS.

As part of my decision, I will institute a designed phase-in approach to project development. This phase-in approach will ensure that two important project

implementation goals are met: First, that we do not develop recreation facilities until a defined, accepted level of demand and occupancy occurs at both day area and overnight recreation facilities, ensuring that facilities are developed commensurate with use and in balance with the associated need for dispersing recreation use. Second, in order to be responsive to our economic environment, Whistle Stops and their associated recreation facilities will not be developed until the Whistle Stop service is able to contribute towards cost recovery for operation. The anticipated sequence of construction is Spencer, Grandview, Bartlett, Luebner Lake and Trail Creek. Trails, cabins and dispersed campsites along trails will not be constructed until the associated station is developed.

I received public comments requesting placement of a Whistle Stop at Moose Pass, facilitating service to the southern end of the project area. Project plans (such as the Business Plan) have identified multiple phases of project development, with an initial focus on backcountry Whistle Stops and future development focusing on stops accessing additional communities. I support a Whistle Stop at Moose Pass and would welcome progress between the community of Moose Pass and the Alaska Railroad to facilitate this development.

How the Decision meets the Whistle Stop Project Purpose and Need

My decision meets the Whistle Stop Project Purpose and Need while also meeting direction outlined in National, Regional and Local planning documents as follows:

1. Provide additional backcountry access and increase recreation opportunities available to Chugach National Forest visitors.

National Direction

Goal 3 of the USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan for FY 2004-2008 supports the need for developments such as the Whistle Stop Project. The desired outcome of this goal is to “Provide high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities on forests and grasslands, while sustaining natural resources, to help meet the Nation’s recreation demands.” The creation of a new network of hiking trails, overnight camping opportunities and interpretive sites, will meet the recreation demand within this portion of the Chugach National Forest and help to disperse users from the heavily used and crowded Seward Highway corridor.

Regional Direction

The Whistle Stop Project directly contributes to the Alaska Region’s Strategic Business Plan (v. 2.1). Objective 3(1) states “Improve public access to National Forest System land and water and provide opportunities for outdoor health-enhancing activities.” Using the existing rail line will greatly improve access to the Chugach NF, the most unroaded national forest in the country.

Local Direction

Forest Plan direction for the Kenai Peninsula Geographic Area, where the Whistle Stop project is located, states that “during the summer season nonmotorized use will predominate across the area and recreation opportunities will include hiking, camping, mountain biking, fishing, hunting and mountaineering with opportunities for canoeing, rafting and other forms of boating on lakes and rivers... Campgrounds or similar developments (i.e., “Whistle Stop”) along the Alaska Railroad between Moose Pass and Portage may also be available...(Forest Plan, 3-15).” Furthermore, the Forest Plan details the need to expand recreational capacity by developing new recreational facilities and trails in response to user demands and where appropriate to management area objectives (Forest Plan, 3-8, 3-9).

My decision follows direction outlined in the Forest Plan and ensures that facilities are developed and encounters are kept within the area management prescription guidelines and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) guidelines. The majority of the project area is within the Backcountry Management Area (MA), which outlines a maximum party size of 24 and a defined level of encounters (Forest Plan, 3-38 and 3-39). A smaller portion of the project area is within the Brown Bear Core MA, detailing similar party size and encounter guidelines. The exception to this is the Spencer area, which is within a Developed Recreation Complex MA. This site identifies a much higher level of encounters, with no maximum party size established (Forest Plan, 3-38 and 3-39). My decision will clearly follow the direction put forth in these Management Areas, ensuring that facilities that are developed will meet the intent in the Forest Plan for these management areas.

2. Provide opportunities for visitor information and education.

National, Regional and Local Direction

The USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan for FY 2004-2008 identifies that the fastest-growing projected outdoor recreation activities include sightseeing and visiting historic places. With that in mind, the Chugach NF Forest Plan identifies the need to manage the Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm Heritage Area to emphasize the rich cultural heritage of the area through interpretation and education activities. Proper protection and preservation of heritage resources in this historic transportation corridor will provide a window for visitors of today to visit the past history of the area.

Forestwide direction in the Forest Plan also states the need to provide recreation opportunities for interpretation and education as related to all Forest resources (Forest Plan, 3-8). The Backcountry and Developed Recreation Complex MAs identify a desired condition that will include “interpretive signs” and that “Historic and prehistoric sites and trails may be stabilized and interpreted as examples of human use of a particular resource or area (Forest Plan, 4-34 and 4-81).”

My decision follows direction outlined in the Forest Plan and ensures that heritage resources will not only be adequately protected, but when appropriate, will be used to highlight the important nature of this historic transportation corridor. I will accomplish this through the seasonal agency information center at Spencer Lake, through interpreters on board the Alaska Railroad, and with interpreter led hikes at both Spencer and Grandview describing the natural, scenic, cultural and historic qualities of the area.

3. Provide a unique transportation and recreation experience found nowhere else in the United States, while encouraging alternative transportation and public safety.

National, Regional and Local Direction

The USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan for FY 2004-2008 states that by mid-century, the U.S. population is projected to increase by nearly 50%; therefore, pressure will increase to provide additional recreation opportunities. The Whistle Stop Project meets goal 3 of the Strategic Plan, "Provide outdoor recreation opportunities" by providing the means for a wide range of the general public to access a large, previously difficult to reach portion of the Chugach National Forest. With a limited road system on the Chugach, it is important to develop opportunities that utilize alternative transportation to reach National Forest recreation opportunities. By establishing a partnership with the Alaska Railroad, we will simultaneously encourage alternative transportation and increase recreation opportunities for National Forest visitors.

The Chugach National Forest is characterized by a limited road system making access to forest land difficult. My decision allowing for development of the Whistle Stop Project addresses this important issue of access and provides a range of forest users with the ability to utilize a large geographic area that is currently only accessed by a small number of outdoor enthusiasts.

How the Decision addresses Significant Issues

1. Recreation settings (physical and social)

I received comments from the public that related to both the physical recreation setting (i.e., scope and scale of recreation facilities) and the social recreation setting (i.e., numbers of encounters). Therefore, as I made my decision, I took a close look at these issues and utilized a minimum design necessary to ensure that I did not approve recreation facilities that were not appropriate for both the intended use levels and management direction for particular management areas. Additionally, my decision requires a phase-in approach to recreation facility development that is commensurate with demand, ensuring an appropriate level of encounters following Forest Plan direction and Management Area guidelines.

My decision greatly reduces the number of facilities that are approved for development throughout the Whistle Stop Project area by eliminating from the overall design the following facilities: Viewing platforms at Luebner Lake and Grandview; reduction in individual dispersed campsites; and reduction of group campsites from 3 to 1 (reducing capacity from 75 to 25). The reduction in number of facilities will also ensure that encounters throughout the project area are reduced, enhancing opportunities for solitude. Therefore, my decision addresses concerns of scope and scale of development along with numbers of encounters more effectively than both Alternative 1 and the Proposed Action by reducing the recreation facilities project-wide. While Alternatives 3 and 4 further eliminate recreation facilities and further reduce the potential for encounters, these two alternatives do not fully achieve the purpose and need for the project, mainly the goal of increasing recreation opportunities available to Chugach National Forest visitors and providing a wide range of opportunities for visitor information and education.

I realize that my decision includes development of recreation facilities within the Whistle Stop Project area, yet I am comfortable with my decision for the following reasons:

- a. The recreation facilities to be developed throughout the Whistle Stop Project area are clearly within guidelines outlined in the Chugach National Forest Revised Forest Plan. The scope and scale of recreation facilities in my decision meets Forest Plan direction according to the affected management area prescriptions. Therefore, my decision best meets the goal of addressing concerns with scope and scale of development but still has the essential infrastructure necessary to meet the wide range of expected visitors.
- b. Due to the nature of designated Whistle Stops, there will be small, essential nodes of development and high levels of encounters at these locations as visitors utilize these facilities to safely exit the train and disperse use accordingly. Outside of these nodes, visitors will encounter minimal facility development throughout the vast majority of the project area. These facilities will be designed so that they are subordinate to the landscape and promote a minimum level of encounters. It is only at Spencer Lake, which is classified as a Developed Recreation Complex, where facilities will be designed to accommodate a large number of people, and hence, encounters.

Furthermore, here is how I will implement the Whistle Stop Project to maintain backcountry values and address concerns voiced from the public:

Phased development. The Whistle Stop Project is large in both geographic area and project scope. To validate our conceptual ideas for the project, we developed a project Business Plan that was thoroughly researched and exhaustively produced. Upon completion, the Business Plan outlined a successful project through development of the facilities put forth in our FEIS

document. But, to be responsive to a number of public concerns, including identifying appropriate levels of demand prior to construction of facilities and ensuring an appropriate scope and scale of recreation facilities, I am requiring a phase in approach to project development.

Phase I of project development will include construction of the following facilities:

- Spencer Whistle Stop
- Native rock viewing platform at Spencer Lake
- Seasonal information center at Spencer Lake
- 5 dispersed campsites in the Spencer area
- 1 public-use cabin in the Spencer area
- 1 25-person group campsite in the Spencer area
- 6 miles of trails in the Spencer area including the Spencer Glacier Trail (1.5 miles); Spencer connector Trail (1 mile); and initial (3 miles) southern portion of the Luebner-Spencer segment of the Glacier Discovery Trail.

Future phases of project development will include the Whistle Stops identified in my decision and their associated recreation facilities (trails, campsites, public-use cabins). Phase II of development would include a Whistle Stop at Grandview, and if so, construction will begin on facilities such as the Grandview Interpretive Trail and the Glacier Discovery Trail, linking the Grandview and Spencer Whistle Stops.

Prior to initiating future phases of project development, we will conduct an assessment of the following:

- visitor use and demand
- validation of Business Plan projections in terms of both revenue and use
- validation on recovery of project operations and maintenance costs

Minimum design necessary. I have considered the stated project goals and my commitment to maintaining an environment throughout the project area that fosters feelings of solitude and minimizes our environmental impact. Therefore, throughout the project area, my decision includes development of recreation facilities that will allow us to meet the identified project purpose and need, while simultaneously ensuring that the facilities are subordinate to the surrounding landscape, fitting within the backcountry setting of the area. We will closely follow the USDA Forest Service Built Environment Image Guide in development of all recreation facilities throughout the project area.

Monitoring of recreation use with the potential for regulation via permits. The vast majority of recreation visitation will occur through Alaska Railroad train transportation. This will provide an opportunity to accurately monitor levels of recreation use. If we find that use levels and numbers of encounters are exceeding thresholds established through the Forest Plan and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), then to maintain a backcountry social experience,

and to protect the natural and cultural resources throughout the area, I will consider limiting use so that encounters do not exceed established thresholds.

2. Interaction between Mining and Recreation

I received comments from the public that related to the interaction between mining and recreation in the project area and the potential resulting impact to mining operations due to recreation activity, particularly in the Spencer area. Therefore, related to this issue, an important aspect of public comment I considered was to minimize the impact to the existing 400 acres of mining claims in the Spencer area. In my decision, I have included a number of measures that will greatly reduce the potential impact to mining claims in the Spencer area and simultaneously meet project objectives.

In my decision, I greatly reduced the scope and scale of recreation infrastructure that would be located within the mining claim area. The Preferred Alternative in the DEIS included a portion of the trail system, three group campsites, a vault toilet, a viewing platform and an agency information center located within the mining claim area. The footprint of this infrastructure would have directly impacted approximately 2.04 acres of land within the existing mining claims. In the Selected Alternative, I have scaled back the infrastructure located on the mining claims. I have removed two group campsites, the vault toilet, viewing platform and agency information center; therefore, the infrastructure remaining on existing mining claims will directly impact only 1.32 acres. Therefore, my decision addresses concerns with recreation development more effectively than all other alternatives (except Alternative 1), as these other alternatives all include substantial infrastructure on the existing mining claims. Additionally, multiple responses were received to a solicitation of interest issued by the Forest Service for potential removal of rock, sand and gravel in the Spencer area. My decision ensures that recreation activity will be located away from any potential mining operations that may occur.

I realize that my decision still approves a small number of recreation facilities on existing mining claims in the Spencer area. Furthermore, I recognize that Alternative 1 does not include development within the mining claim area at Spencer, but I am comfortable with my decision for the following reasons:

- a. The footprint of the recreation infrastructure in the Spencer area is extremely small (see map in Appendix A). Furthermore, we have decided to locate this small footprint in a localized corner of the mining claims, aiming to minimize the impact to any potential future mining activity.
- b. The recreation facilities that I have decided to develop on top of the mining claims is of a very low investment. Facilities with a high investment will be located off of the existing mining claims, including a two-hole vault toilet and

native-rock viewing platform; additional facilities that will be located off the mining claims includes the seasonal agency information yurt.

c. Based on testing that has been undertaken by Chugach National Forest minerals specialists, we have found that there is a low potential for development of locatable minerals in this area.

d. Recreation and minerals development are not incompatible. We can allow the two uses to co-exist with either movement of recreation facilities or staging of minerals development. Finally, not only are recreation and minerals development not incompatible with project implementation, but they are not incompatible legally. Mining claims validated subsequent to Act of 1955, such as those in the project area, do not carry the exclusive right to the surface. Lands containing such claims are subject to the rights of the United States to manage and dispose of the vegetative resources, to manage other resources except locatable minerals, and to the right of the United States, its permittees and licensees, to use so much of the surface area necessary for such purposes and for access to adjacent lands (30 U.S.C. 612, FSM 2813.13b).

I am comfortable with the potential effects of locating a minimal amount of recreation infrastructure on the mining claims at Spencer. I believe it is important to balance a number of significant issues with my decision and I feel it is essential to locate the group campsite in its identified location due to the superior views it provides, its responsiveness to customer service through ease of access, and the ability to reach the site by vehicle to conduct maintenance. I recognize that there is still the potential for interactions between mining and recreation in this area, but feel that the interactions have a minimal chance of occurring, and if necessary, the interactions can be properly mitigated through informational signage at the Spencer Whistle Stop location.

3. Impacts to Wildlife, particularly Brown Bears

I received comments from the public that related to impacts to wildlife populations, in particular brown bears. While some comments were related to specific species, the majority of comments related to brown bears, not only within and adjacent to the Brown Bear Core Management Area (BBCMA), but throughout the entire project area. Comments identified a concern with potential brown bear displacement due to increased recreation use and also provided recommendations on the addition or removal of certain recreation facilities. Related to this issue, the most important facet of public comment I considered was minimizing development in the Brown Bear Core MA. My decision responds directly to this concern in a number of ways. Most importantly, I decided to eliminate placement of a Whistle Stop at Hunter. By not including a developed infrastructure at this location, I eliminated facilities that would have supported the opportunity for rafting along Trail Creek. In doing this, I minimized the potential for encounters within the Brown Bear Core MA. My decision addresses concerns

with brown bears more effectively than both the Proposed Action and Alternative 1, both of which include a Hunter Whistle Stop and rafting opportunities.

I realize that my decision includes development adjacent to the Brown Bear Core MA at Grandview and includes a small section of trail that travels through the Core area. Furthermore, I recognize that Alternatives 3 and 4 do not include development in Brown Bear Core, but I am comfortable with my decision for the following reasons:

- a. The Trail Glacier Trail, which leads from the Grandview Whistle Stop station to the base of Trail Glacier, not only goes through the BBCMA for a relatively short stretch (approximately ½ mile), but the section of Trail Creek that parallels the proposed Trail Glacier Trail is classified as a Class III section of stream (fishless). Furthermore, the proposed trail is not adjacent to, but separated from Trail Creek by steep and rugged topography. Both of these facts greatly reduce the potential for human-bear interactions.
- b. My decision also scales back facility development throughout the project area, thereby reducing the potential for human-bear encounters. This decision reduces the number of dispersed campsites, minimizing the overnight capacity in the project area. Additionally, I have eliminated the proposed viewing platform at Grandview, which will also assist with minimizing the potential for human-bear encounters.
- c. I have identified that access to both the Trail Glacier Trail and public-use cabin will be subject to specific closures as needed to minimize bear-human interactions.

Because of the public concern expressed with regard to the potential displacement of bears, we looked closely at this in our analysis. As outlined in the Wildlife Environmental Consequences section of the EIS, our wildlife biologists are comfortable with the potential effects of displacement. Our biologists recognize that there is still the potential for bear displacement due to activity related to this project, but they feel that displacement will be low and that this displacement is not biologically significant.

Selected Design Features and Mitigation

The following mitigation measures will be applied to the Whistle Stop Project:

Recreation/Special Uses

1. Recreation Facilities Planning (BMP 16.1, USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region, 1996; available at <http://fsweb.r10.fs.fed.us/directives/fsh/2509.22/>) will be followed through appropriate planning, design and location of recreational facilities.
2. Trail Construction and Maintenance (BMP 16.4, USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region, 1996) will be followed to minimize soil erosion and water quality problems originating from trails and their drainage structures.
3. Outfitter/guide allocation will be monitored so that the percentage of use assigned to this user group will not exceed stated Forest Plan standards for use levels.
4. Signs and maps will be posted at the Spencer Whistle Stop station detailing area mining activity and explaining the need to respect private property and equipment. Additionally, if it is determined that there are other access points to mining activity, these locations will be properly signed to prohibit trespass onto active mining claim areas.

Hydrology

1. To protect water resources, channel morphology, and water quality, bridges will be constructed with clearance over the elevation of the 100-year flood level, and the use of regional Best Management Practices for trail construction and maintenance (USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region, 1996).

Soils

1. Mitigation measures to protect soil resources will be followed and can be found in the Revised Plan (2002, Revised Land and Resource Management Plan, Chugach National Forest, Alaska Region, R10-MB-480c) Standards and Guidelines for minimizing disturbance and loss in soil productivity described on page 3-22.

Wildlife

1. If a Bald Eagle or Goshawk nest is identified during construction a Forest Service Biologist will be notified and mitigation actions identified and implemented.
2. If active Trumpeter Swan nests are located during construction a Forest Service Biologist will be notified and activities associated with this project will maintain ½ mile buffer from the identified swan nests.

Design Features Common to All Alternatives

3. All Whistle Stop stations will comply with standard garbage policies/regulations designed to minimize attracting and/or habituating bears to human foods or waste. They will have a bear-proof food storage container(s) and bear-proof garbage container(s). Furthermore all backcountry access points will provide signage that emphasizes bear awareness including key aspects related to proper behavior during a bear encounter and proper storage and transportation of bear attractants (e.g., food and garbage). Forest wildlife biologists and recreation specialists will develop a plan on making available individual food storage containers for use at backcountry recreation sites (i.e., dispersed, hardened campsites).
4. All trail and facility construction associated with this project will be geared towards enhancing visibility and will be incorporated into the final design layout to reduce human-bear interactions.
5. Trail heads and access points associated with this project will be signed to help ensure safety between bears and the public.

Additional Design Features for Facilities within the Brown Bear Core Management Area (Forest Service Plan Standards and Guidelines pp. 4-57, 4-58)

6. All access points into the Brown Bear Core Area Management Area (BBCMA) will provide signage that emphasizes bear awareness and bear safety along with a specific explanation of the BBCMA and why it is important to maintain a healthy population of brown bears on the Kenai Peninsula.
7. In all alternatives that include the Trail Glacier Trail and cabin, access may be subject to specific timing closures as needed to minimize bear-human interactions.
8. A Forest Service wildlife biologist will be consulted on the placement of hardened, dispersed campsites within and adjacent to ½ mile of the BBCMA. In all alternatives that include the Hunter Whistle Stop, campers within this zone will be restricted to use of these sites only.

Vegetation

Mitigation measures have been adapted from the Chugach Invasive Plant Plan (2005).

1. Prior to entering National Forest land, agency personnel, permittees, and contractors will be required to clean the equipment they intend to use. Similarly, when working on trails, the cleaning of tools and equipment between work sites along the trail will help prevent transport of invasive plant seed and vegetative reproductive structures further along the trail.

Design Features Common to All Alternatives

2. For all projects involving revegetation, natural revegetation will be used where seed source and site conditions are favorable, and native plant species will be used in revegetation/restoration projects when natural revegetation conditions are not favorable (Forest Plan page 3-25). Preference will be given to plant materials from the local environment of the project area to maximize adaptation to that environment and maintain local genetic composition.

3. All hay, straw, or mulch used for the project will be free of invasive plant species. This includes materials used for mulching, erosion control, rehabilitation, or other uses, by agency personnel, permittees, or contractors. Where applicable, and if invasive plant free material is available, include this specification as a contract or permit requirement.

4. In areas where future ground disturbing activities are scheduled to occur within invasive plant infestations, appropriate invasive plant treatment applications will be conducted prior to project implementation to reduce future spread and establishment. Ground disturbing activities will be timed to minimize the potential of providing favorable seed beds when invasive plant species have developed mature seeds.

5. When building trails, the trails specialist and project botanist will meet to develop the minimum trail tread necessary to ensure the maintenance of native grasses and forbs in close proximity to the tread and to help prevent invasive plant establishment. When drainage work along trails is needed, care will be used to maintain the root structure of the native plants present. When brushing the trail edge, vegetation will be left at least 10 inches tall which will usually allow more native species to persist, prosper, and perhaps out-compete invasive species. In addition, we will maintain dead organic matter on the surface, rather than remove it, since such mulch can reduce the establishment and growth of invasive plants.

The following are mitigation measures related to sensitive species.

1. Surveys will be completed throughout the project area for all sensitive plants. If any are found, recreation facilities will be relocated.

2. Add interpretive signs to alert visitors of the presence of rare plants. Place emphasis on staying on developed trails to reduce impacts from cross-country travel.

3. Identification of the exact location of the cabin on the Spencer Overlook Trail (part of the Glacier Discovery Trail) should be coordinated with the Forest or District Ecologist.

4. Monitor population for potential impacts after implementation of the project. Monitoring should be conducted periodically to see if increased human activity is impacting the population.
5. If any previously undiscovered sensitive plants are encountered at any time prior to or during implementation of this project, protect the population and avoid any disturbance in the area containing the population (and similar habitats in that vicinity). The district or forest botanist/ecologist should be notified immediately to evaluate the population and recommend avoidance or mitigation measures.

Fisheries

1. Best Management Practices as described in the Soil and Water Conservation Handbook - FSH 2509.22 (USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region, 1996) and the Aquatic Habitat Management Handbook - FSH 2090.21 (USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region, 2001) and consultation with hydrologists and aquatic biologists will occur to minimize the impacts of trail building and stream crossing on the fisheries resources.
2. Any in-stream work will be accomplished during the window of opportunity established in the Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Alaska and the Forest Service. Currently, instream work is allowed between May 15 and July 15 of each year.
3. If a trail or viewing platform crosses a Class I stream (streams containing anadromous fish) or Class II stream (streams containing only resident, nonanadromous fish) or wetland, a bridge or elevated boardwalk will be used to better maintain natural stream processes and avoid fish passage problems that can be commonly associated with culverts.
4. Damage along riparian areas as a result of trail building, human use, and excessive trampling will be monitored and corrected in a timely and effective manner.
5. Hydrologists, biologists, and engineers will work closely to develop effective stream crossings near Luebner Lake and its tributaries that avoid impacts to the fisheries resource and aquatic habitat and will design monitoring plans that will assure continued unidirectional movement.

Heritage

1. A heritage resource specialist will monitor all project activities occurring within 100 feet of a known cultural site.
2. If any previously undiscovered heritage artifacts or sites are located during project implementation, the artifacts and sites are not to be disturbed. Work will stop and the project archeologist immediately notified. A heritage specialist will evaluate the discovery within 24 hours, consult with appropriate parties and

recommend avoidance or mitigation measures in accordance with the Region 10 and Whistle Stop Programmatic Agreements.

3. Post monitoring of project construction activities and mitigation measures will occur in accordance with the Region 10 Programmatic Agreement.

4. Site-specific mitigation will adhere to the *Programmatic Agreement Between the Chugach National Forest and the Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Implementation of the Whistle Stop Project and Associated Historic Properties*.

5. All design work for building new facilities will reflect the Whistle Stop Project Design Plan and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines. The design plans will be consulted on with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

6. A project monitoring plan, designed to report any impacts and recommend a management action plan to address protection measures will be created by the Heritage Specialist prior to phase implementation. Project monitoring of historic properties will require a minimum of 20% of the historic properties to be monitored per year. Historic properties will be monitored based on priority outlined in the project monitoring plan. Damage to historic properties will be reported to the SHPO.

7. Any work to be completed within heritage site boundaries will not occur without approval of the project archeologist. This will include brushing, slash pile placement, use of mechanized equipment and staging within the designated historic site boundaries.

Public Involvement

We have used public involvement, and integrated it at numerous project stages, to assist with identification of issues for this project. It has been helpful in developing the alternatives and helped me in making a more informed decision regarding development of the Whistle Stop project on the northern Kenai Peninsula. Focus groups, public meetings, Federal Register notices, newspaper releases, and group meetings were used to solicit input for this project.

The Proposed Action has been listed in the Chugach National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) beginning in April 2005. The SOPA is updated quarterly and distributed to approximately 300 interested parties.

Initial public scoping began with publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on May 16, 2005. A notice describing the proposal, outlining the NEPA review process, and inviting comment was distributed to media outlets, agencies, groups and individuals. A total of six public meetings were held in Anchorage,

Seward, Girdwood, Moose Pass, Cooper Landing and Soldotna. During the 30-day scoping period, 12 comment letters or emails were received. Three additional comments were received after the 30-day scoping period had expired.

A Draft EIS was released to the public on January 27, 2006. Twenty comments were received. These comments and our response appear in the FEIS, Chapter 4.

The FEIS has been filed with the Environmental Protection Agency and is available for public review.

Alternatives Selected for Detailed Evaluation

Six alternatives are evaluated in the FEIS, including a No-Action Alternative. The five action alternatives differed from each other in terms of the number, size and location of various recreation facilities, including number of Whistle Stops, trail miles, cabins, dispersed campsites, viewing platforms and rafting facilities.

- **No Action.** Under the No Action Alternative, the Forest Service would not authorize the development of recreation facilities in conjunction with the Whistle Stop Project.

I did not choose the No Action Alternative because it does not respond to the purpose and need for this project which is to provide additional backcountry access and increase recreation opportunities available to Chugach National Forest visitors; provide opportunities for visitor information and education; and provide a unique transportation and recreation experience found nowhere else in the United States, while encouraging alternative transportation methods and public safety. This alternative would not help achieve desired conditions identified in the Forest Plan and would not meet Management Area goals.

- **Proposed Action.** The Proposed Action Alternative was primarily developed to address the need for additional backcountry access and increase recreation opportunities in the Kenai Peninsula Geographic Area of the Chugach National Forest.

I did not choose the Proposed Action alternative because it is not responsive to the public comments we received for this project. It does not adequately address public concerns with recreation settings, with proposed facilities too large in scope and promoting higher than desired levels of encounters; includes a larger footprint of recreation facility development on the mining claims in the Spencer area; and does not adequately address concerns for potential human-bear encounters, particularly with inclusion of a Whistle Stop at Hunter.

- **Alternative 1.** Alternative 1 was primarily developed to address the issue of interaction between mining and recreation in the Spencer area. The design of this alternative addresses this issue by locating all proposed facilities in the Spencer area south of the Spencer Lake outlet, which would minimize the interaction between the two uses.

I did not choose Alternative 1 because I feel that development of facilities to the south of the Placer River outlet would not provide the world-class recreation experience I am striving for through this project; development in this area would afford less desirable views of Spencer Lake and Glacier; and it would not allow us to utilize vehicles to maintain the recreation facilities put forth for development in this project. As described above, I felt that there was a better way to address the issue related to mining and recreation.

- **Alternative 2.** Alternative 2 was primarily developed to address the issue of recreation settings (social). The design of this alternative addresses this issue and aims to minimize encounters through the ability to distribute use among five Whistle Stop stations; through a decrease in the size of the group campsite; and through the decrease in hardened, dispersed sites throughout the project area. Additionally, the issue of wildlife impacts is addressed through elimination of the Hunter Whistle Stop and rafting facilities at both Hunter and Trail Creek.

I did not choose Alt.2 as outlined in the DEIS as it is not responsive to public comments we received for this project. It does not adequately address public concerns with recreation settings, with proposed facilities too large in scope and promoting higher than desired levels of encounters; and includes a larger footprint of recreation facility development on the mining claims in the Spencer area.

- **Alternative 3.** Alternative 3 was primarily developed to address the issue of recreation settings (physical). The design of this alternative addresses this issue through the elimination of the majority of all recreation facilities including the group campsites, and all public-use cabins, wildlife/viewing platforms, and dispersed, hardened campsites, with essentially a trail system the sole development outside of the Whistle Stop stations.

I did not choose Alternative 3 for implementation because it does not fully respond to the purpose and need for this project, which in large part is to provide additional backcountry access and increase recreation opportunities; and provide a wide range of opportunities for visitor information and education. Alternative 3, with only a trail system connecting Whistle Stops, would limit recreation opportunities to a select few. My goal is to ensure that recreation opportunities are available for a

wide array of National Forest visitors, from those seeking short day hikes, to those looking for rugged, multi-day backpacking trips.

- **Alternative 4.** Alternative 4 was primarily developed to address the issue of wildlife impacts. The design and focus of this alternative addresses this issue through the elimination of all facilities located within or directly adjacent to the Brown Bear Core Management Area.

I did not choose Alternative 4 for implementation because it does not fully respond to the purpose and need for this project, which in large part is to provide additional backcountry access and increase recreation opportunities. Although this Alternative does provide for increased backcountry access and recreation opportunities, it would not provide for the diverse recreation opportunities desired by Chugach National Forest visitors. Mainly, Alternative 4 does not include a Whistle Stop or recreation facilities at Grandview which I see as integral to the recreation opportunities I want to provide for Chugach NF visitors, such as walking the Grandview Interpretive Trail and hiking to the base of Trail Glacier. In addition, our project Business Plan identifies Grandview as a future stop, integral to project success and allowing for increased recreation opportunities and historical interpretation.

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The No Action Alternative is the environmentally preferred alternative. The definition of environmentally preferred is the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environments, and which protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources. Of the action alternatives, Alternative 3 is the environmentally preferred alternative because it would involve the smallest amount of recreation facility development, and hence result in the least negative impacts to wildlife, other recreationists, and the scenic integrity of the landscape.

Planning Record

The Planning Record for this project includes the DEIS, FEIS, Revised Forest Plan, Regional Guide, materials incorporated by reference and material produced during the environmental analysis. The project record is available for review at the Glacier Ranger District in Girdwood, Alaska, and is available for review during regular business hours.

Findings Required by Law, Regulation, and Policy

Consistency with the Forest Plan and the National Forest Management Act. The Chugach National Forest Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (Revised Forest Plan, May 2002) establishes management direction for the Chugach National Forest. The Revised Forest Plan represents an agreement with the public on the management and use of the Chugach National Forest. It is a negotiated understanding with a variety of individuals, organizations, agencies, and Alaska Natives who represent a wide variety of opinions, values, and beliefs. The responsibility we have to implement the desired conditions and goals in the Forest Plan are key elements in our decision. In general, the goals and standards of the Revised Forest Plan require us to balance a variety of resources and interests in managing these lands.

Specific Management Area (MA) direction from the Revised Forest Plan further guides our decision. This management direction is achieved through the establishment of Forest goals and objectives, standards and guidelines, and 21 different Management Area prescriptions and accompanying standards and guidelines. MAs affected by this project are described in the FEIS on pages 3-5 and 3-6. Project implementation consistent with this direction is the process by which we move toward the desired condition described by the Revised Forest Plan. This decision is consistent with Forest Plan direction.

ANILCA Section 810, Subsistence Evaluation and Finding. The effects of this project have been evaluated to determine potential effects on subsistence opportunities and resources. There is no documented or reported subsistence use that would be restricted as a result of this decision.

Bald Eagle Protection Act. Management activities within bald eagle habitat will be in accordance to a Memorandum of Understanding (2/26/02) between the Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Clean Water Act. The project design is in accordance with Forest Plan standards and guidelines, Best Management Practices, and applicable Forest Service manual and handbook direction. The project activities are expected to meet all applicable State of Alaska water quality standards.

Clean Air Act. Emissions anticipated from the implementation of the Selected Alternative would be of short duration and would not be expected to exceed State of Alaska ambient air quality standards (18 AAC 50).

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended. The Coastal Zone Management Act requires the Forest Service, when conducting or authoring activities or undertaking development directly affecting the coastal zone, to ensure that the activities or development be consistent with the approved Alaska Coastal Management program to the maximum extent practicable. In

accordance with Section 302 of the Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Alaska and the USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region, on Coastal Zone Management Act/Alaska Coastal Management Program Consistency Reviews (FS Agreement No. 00MOU-111001-026, effective March 2, 2000), this decision requires a consistency determination with the Coastal Zone Management Act, which will be completed on May 31st, 2006.

Endangered Species Act. Biological evaluations were completed for threatened, endangered, proposed, and sensitive plant and animal species. One Region 10 sensitive plant species was found in the project area (*Carex lenticularis* var. *dolia*). It was determined that activities may impact individuals or habitat but are not likely to contribute to a trend toward federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species. No threatened or endangered animal species would be affected by this activity.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, as amended. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act (the Act) requires that all federal agencies consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) when any project “may adversely affect” essential fish habitat (EFH). The Act also requires that agencies with existing consultation processes contact NMFS to discuss how the existing processes can be used to satisfy the EFH consultation requirements (50 CFR 600.920(e) (3)). None of the activities will cause any action that may adversely affect EFH as defined by this Act.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act. There will be no impacts to migratory bird populations.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires that all federal undertakings follow the regulations found at 36 CFR 800 to identify and protect cultural resources that are within project areas and which may be affected by projects. The Chugach National Forest will follow the procedures in the Programmatic Agreement among the Chugach National Forest, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office. A partial project-specific inventory of the area has been conducted with complete inventory to be completed by September 30, 2006. The project is not expected to impact cultural resources; however, if upon completion of the inventory, cultural resources are discovered, development of recreation sites will avoid culturally important areas.

Executive Order 11988 – Wetlands. Wetlands occur in the project area. However, both location and design features of recreation facilities will minimize the impact to wetlands in accordance with E.O. 11988.

Executive Order 11990 – Floodplains. This activity will not impact the functional value of any floodplain as defined by Executive Order 11988 and will not have negative impacts on wetlands as defined by Executive Order 11990.

Executive Order 12962 – Recreational Fisheries. No major adverse effects to freshwater or marine resources would occur with implementation of this project, due to proper location and design features of recreation facilities.

Executive Order 13112 – Invasive Species. Invasive species populations have the potential to spread in the project area. Implementation of mitigation measures and design features outlined earlier in this document will minimize the spread of invasive species in accordance with E.O. 13112.

Executive Order 12898 – Environmental Justice. Implementation of this project is not anticipated to cause disproportionate adverse human health or environmental effects to minority or low-income populations.

Implementation

Implementation may occur on, but not before, five business days from the close of the appeal filing period if no appeal is received. The appeal filing period closes 45 days after publication of legal notice of this decision in the Anchorage Daily News newspaper, published in Anchorage, Alaska. In the event an appeal is received, the decision may be implemented 15 days following disposition of the appeal.

Appeal Provisions

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215. The notice of appeal must be in writing, meet the appeal content requirements at 215.14, and be filed with the Appeal Deciding Officer:

Regional Forester, Alaska Region
USDA Forest Service
P.O. Box 21628
Juneau, AK 99802-1628
Fax: 907-586-7840
E-mail: appeals-alaska-regional-office@fs.fed.us

Anyone who appeals must provide the Appeal Deciding Officer sufficient narrative evidence and argument to show why the decision by the Forest Supervisor should be remanded or reversed. At a minimum, the notice of appeal must:

1. State that it is an appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.
2. List the name and address of the appellant and, if possible, a phone number.
3. Identify the decision document by title and subject, the date of the decision, and the name and title of the Responsible Official.
4. Identify the change or changes in the decision that the appellant seeks, or the portion of the decision to which the appellant objects.
5. State how the decision fails to consider comments previously provided, either before or during the comment period specified in 36 CFR 215.6, and, if applicable, how the appellant believes the decision violates law, regulation or policy.

The Notice of Appeal, including attachments, must be filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, express delivery, or messenger service) with the Appeal Deciding Officer at the correct location within 45 calendar days of publication of the legal notice of this decision in the Anchorage Daily News, the newspaper of record for the Chugach National Forest. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Appeals submitted electronically, including attachments, must be in an electronic format compatible with Microsoft Word and be submitted to the Appeal Deciding Officer at appeals-alaska-regional-office@fs.fed.us.

Hand delivered appeals will be accepted at the Regional Office, Federal Office Building, 709 W. 9th St., Juneau, AK during normal business hours (8:00 am through 4:30 pm) Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Implementation of decisions subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215 may occur on, but not before, five business days from the close of the appeal filing period if no appeals are filed.

Contact

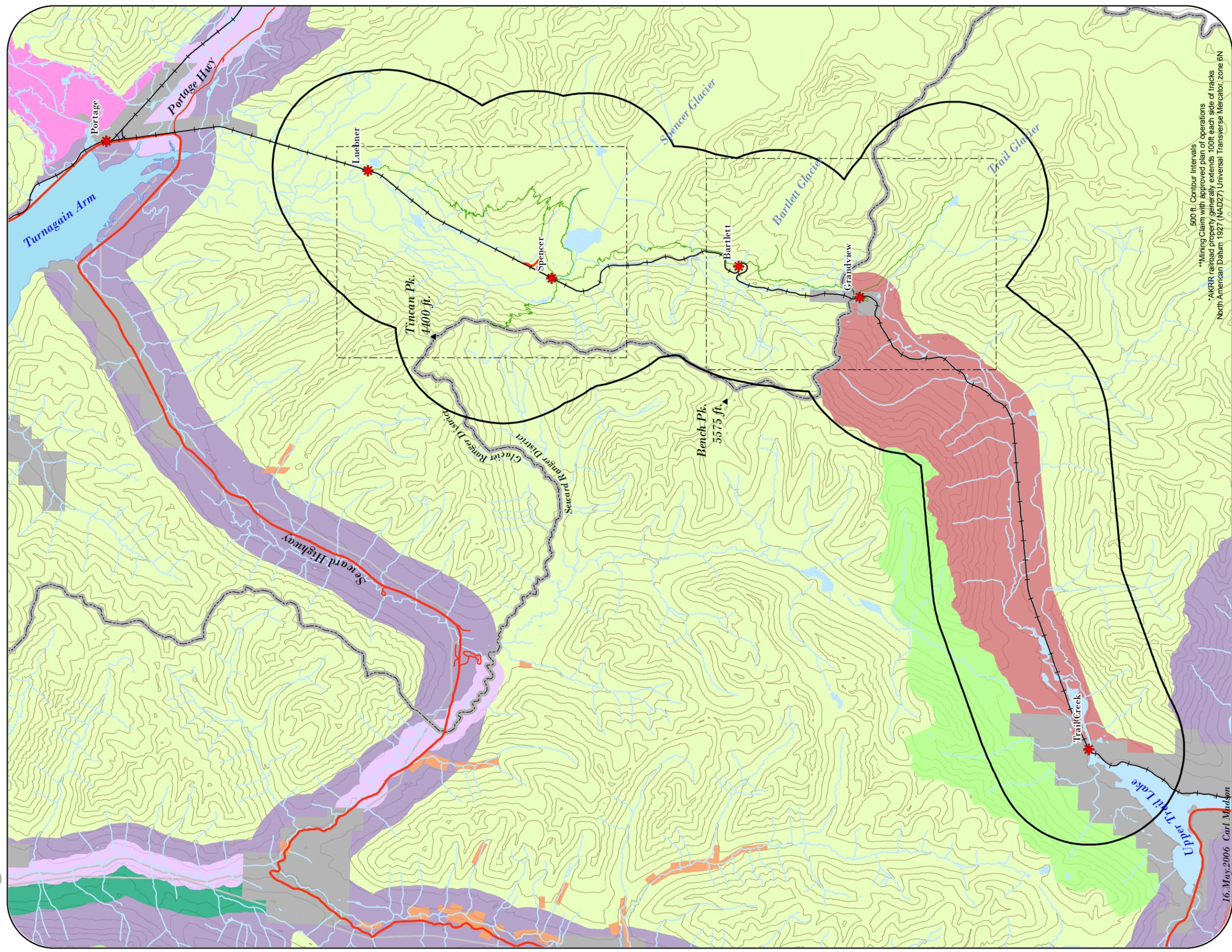
For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Adam McClory, Glacier Ranger District, P.O. Box 129, Girdwood, AK 99587, phone number (907) 754-2352.

Joe L. Meade
Forest Supervisor

Whistle Stop

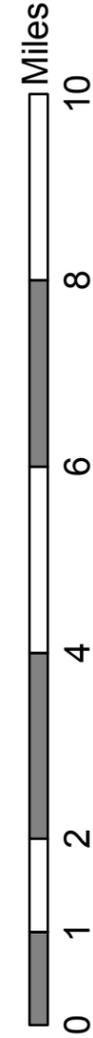
Selected Alternative

Project Overview



16 May 2006 Carl Madison

500 ft. Contour Intervals
 *Mining Claim with approved plan of operations
 *AKRR railroad property generally extends 100ft each side of tracks
 North American Datum: 1927 (NAD27) Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 6N



LEGEND	
	Whistle Stop
	Proposed Trail
	Existing Road
	Railroad*
	District Boundary
	Project Boundary
MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTION	
	Fish, Wildlife & Recreation
	Forest Restoration
	Recreation River
	Mining Claim**
	Non-National Forest
	Transportation/Utility Corridor
	Backcountry
	Scenic River
	Brown Bear Core
	Fish & Wildlife Conservation

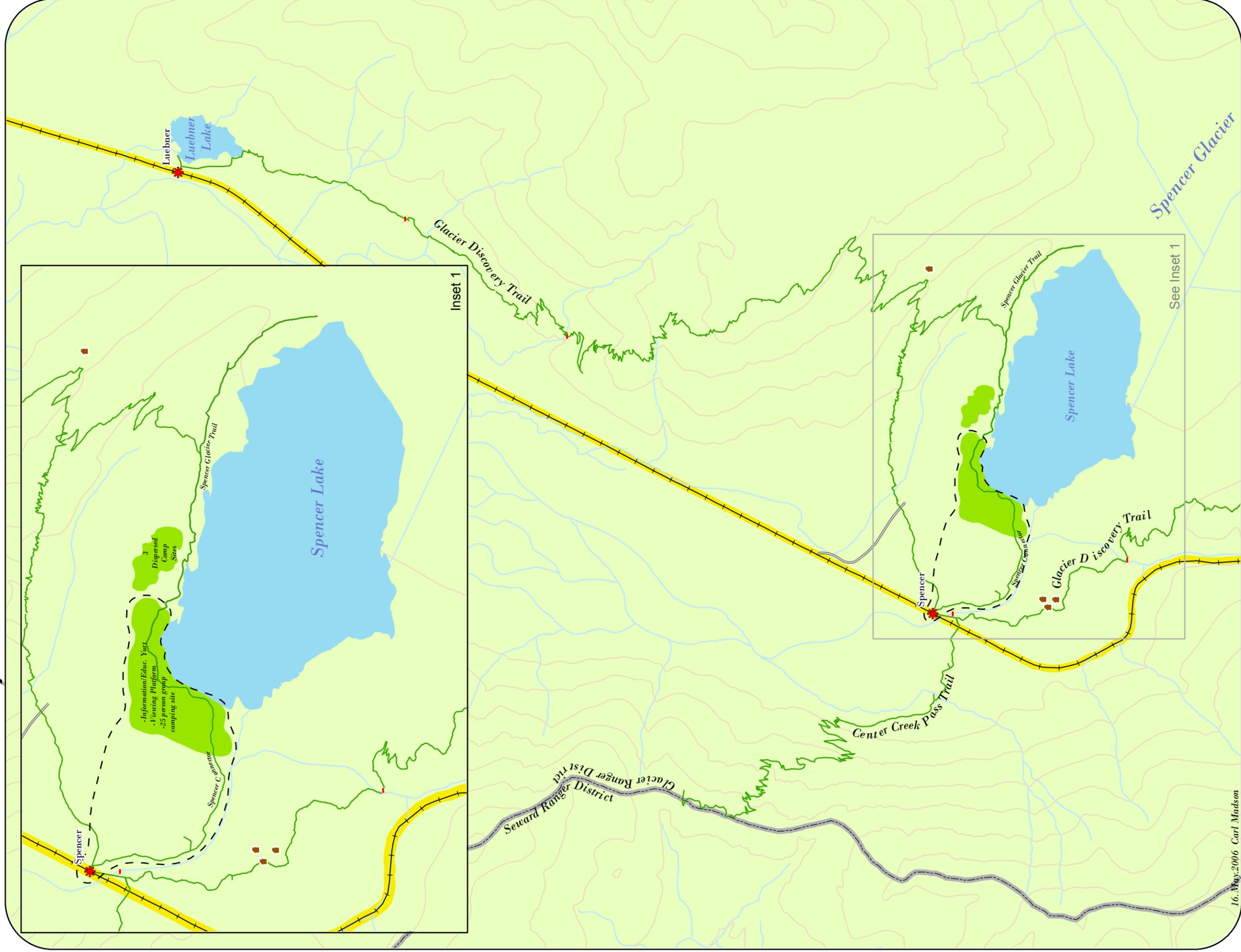


For more information see:
 USGS Quadrangle Seward, AK: C6, D6

Whistle Stop

Selected Alternative

Luebner to Spencer, North Half



16. May 2006 Carl Madison

LEGEND

	Whistle Stop		Proposed Bridge
	Proposed Trail		Railroad*
	Existing Road		Proposed Cabin Site
			District Boundary
			Developed Recreation Complex Boundary



*AKRR railroad property generally extends 100ft each side of tracks
North American Datum 1927 (NAD27) Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 6N

For more information see:
USGS Quadrangle Seward, AK: C6, D6

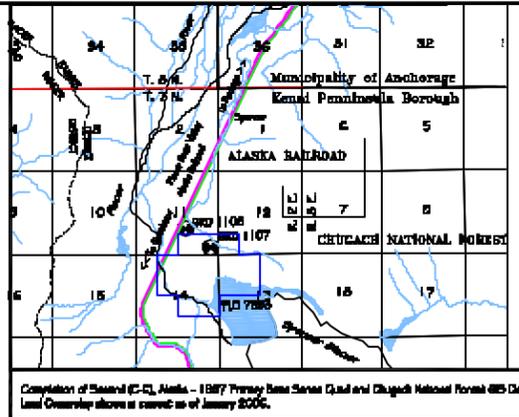
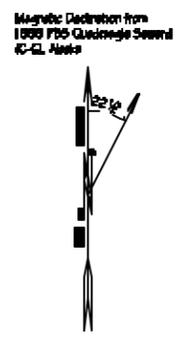
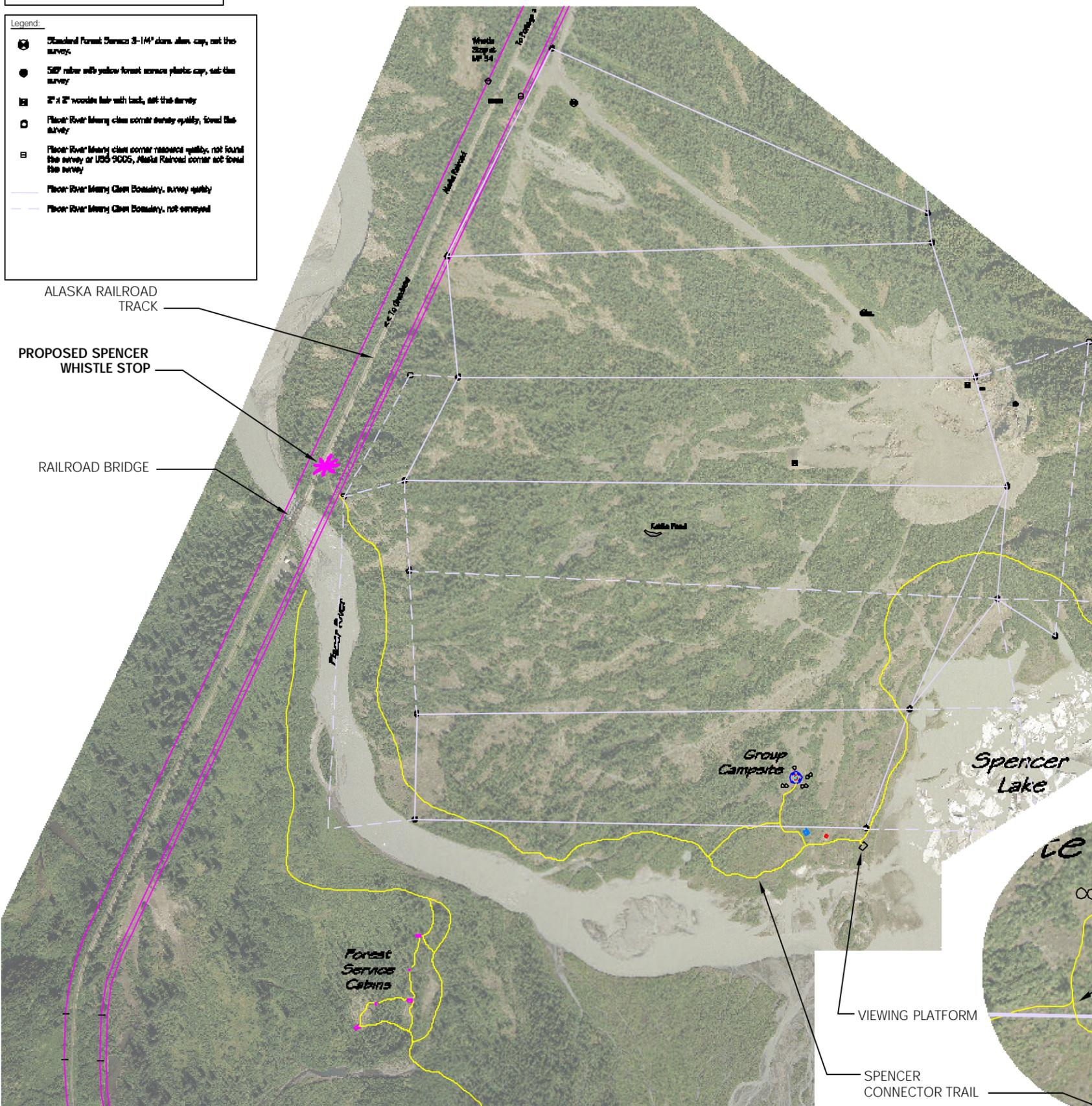
N

Note:

The background digital photo mosaic is for visual reference only. The mosaic has not been rectified. The effect of camera tilt and flying height variations may not be uniform. Therefore, the photo is subject to image displacement, relief displacement and scale variation. The mosaic is not a true planimetric representation and should not be used for scaling or measurement purposes.

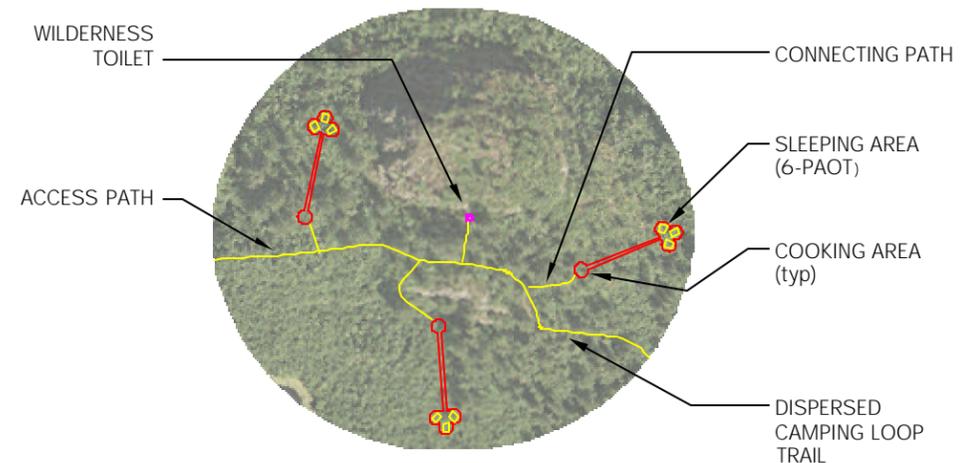
Legend:

- Standard Forest Service 3-144 class, blue cap, set the survey
- 50' ruler with yellow forest service plastic cap, set the survey
- 2" x 2" wooden stake with back, set the survey
- Floor River Merry class corner survey quality, found the survey
- Floor River Merry class corner resource quality, not found the survey or UGS 5005, Alaska Railroad corner not found the survey
- Floor River Merry Class Boundary, survey quality
- Floor River Merry Class Boundary, not surveyed



Completion of Standard 4-C-CL Alaska - 1997 Primary Base Series Quad and Chugach National Forest 4-C-CL District. Land Ownership shown as of January 2006.

VICINITY MAP
Scale: 1" = 1 Mile

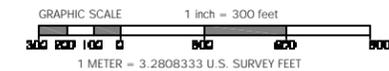
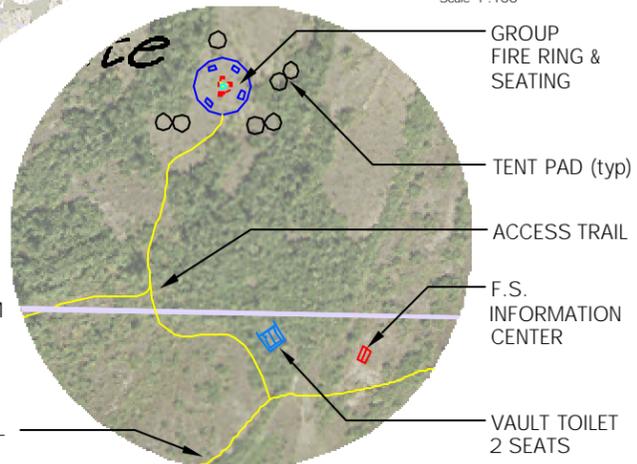


Dispersed Camping Detail

Scale 1" = 100'

Group Campsite Detail

Scale 1" = 100'



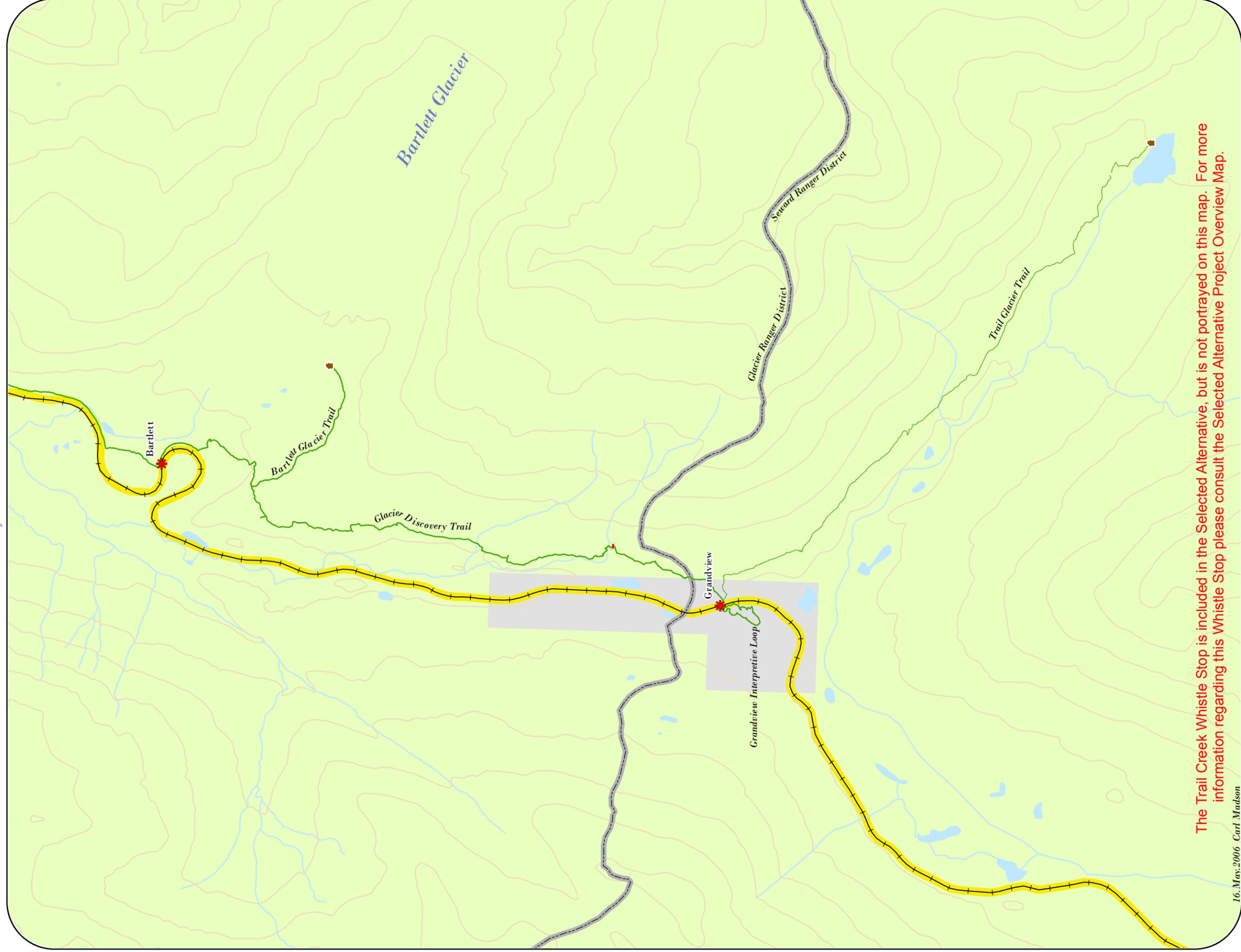
Glacier Ranger District	
Conceptual Master Plan	
Whistle Stop Spencer Area Selected Alternative	
CHUGACH NATIONAL FOREST 3301 C STREET, SUITE 300 ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503	
DRAWN BY/DATE: CJW / March 2006	CHECKED BY/DATE:
PROJECT NO.: 780-05	SHEET NO.: 1 of 1
FILE NAME: <i>spencer-glacier.dwg</i>	



Whistle Stop

Selected Alternative

Bartlett to Grandview, South Half

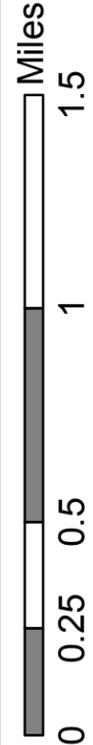


16. May. 2006 Carl Madson

The Trail Creek Whistle Stop is included in the Selected Alternative, but is not portrayed on this map. For more information regarding this Whistle Stop please consult the Selected Alternative Project Overview Map.

LEGEND

	Whistle Stop		Proposed Bridge
	Proposed Trail		Railroad*
	Non National Forest		District Boundary
			Proposed Cabin Site



*AKRR railroad property generally extends 100ft each side of tracks
North American Datum 1927 (NAD27) Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 6N

For more information see:
USGS Quadrangle Seward, AK: C6