

## JIM CREEK MASTER PLAN

### DRAFT COMMENTS

This plan provided a great opportunity for the Mat Su Borough and the Butte Community to get together and create a balance of recreation uses. A plan that would first benefit the Butte local community and be available to all residents to enjoy. Regrettably, this draft has not created a balance of recreation opportunities but instead has led to a forgone conclusion that all residents of Butte and the MSB are motorized users.

#### Problems with the process of drafting of this plan:

- Community outreach to Butte area residents was unorganized and minimal with no area wide mail out invitation to all residents/landowners, therefore Butte community participation was minimal and most residents have no idea this plan is being drafted. They were not invited to be members of the focus groups that the contractor relied upon.
- The contractor invited a motorized expert to present ideas and information to the focus groups but there were not non motorized trail builders or experts invited.
- Butte Area Asset Mgmt. Plan that directed this Master Plan be developed for the Borough owned 471 acre parcel stipulated that **“Asset Management Plans articulate community values and long-term goals and in this way ensure that land and resource development, use, and management decisions occur in a way that will benefit those they most affect – the local community and its residents.” (Page 4, Butte Asset Management Plan.)** Unfortunately, outside motorized interests have been heard first and foremost and the draft plan primarily accommodates motorized recreation and lacks a balance of recreation interests
- The draft plan contains a 150 acre motorized attraction zone – this was not listed in the MSB scope of work given to the contractor

#### Problems with this version of the draft plan:

- Butte Area Asset Mgmt. plan recommended a 40 acre community park for this parcel but only 5 acres has been allotted for this and abuts the 40 acre learning & visitor zone that contains an ATV learning loop and tot lot
- 90 acre controlled use zone has a controlled speed, multi use, directional trail with a new single-track non-motorized trail that is also supposed to serve equestrian use which is crammed in next to the drag strip race track-who will enforce the controlled use zone and why would anyone ride a horse, take a quiet walk or ride a bike sandwiched between the race track and the motorized attraction area- these zones are incompatible
- The non-motorized trail/long term parking expansion zone of 7 acres is a pipe dream as it pushes non-motorized trail users off the parcel and is forcing development of a non-motorized trail onto DNR land which requires a permit, easement acquisition and building it, all of which will take a long time.
- Flood plain open space zone of 130 acres is being set aside for the wild west and uncontrolled “rustic” camping-what about human waste, garbage etc and who will be looking after this area. This is irresponsible and unacceptable.
- Now let’s look at the balance of acreage between non-motorized and motorized recreation uses. Non-motorized activities will occur on approx. 102 acres. This includes the 5-acre Community Park parcel zone, the 90 acre controlled use zone & the 7-acre non-motorized trail/long term parking expansion zone.

However, not all of the 90 acre controlled use zone can be considered non-motorized because the bulk goes to a multi use trail loop. The 7-acre non-motorized trail/long term parking expansion zone can't really count as a non-motorized recreation area either because it includes a plan for expanding long-term parking. The remainder of the zones of the 471-acre parcel is for parking, camping, multi use & motorized recreation. Let's be honest here multi use essentially means motorized recreation.

- The wildlife has been totally left out of the discussion & equation & no regard for their corridors or rearing areas has been given. This creates islands of isolation for them. Just because motorized activity is happening there now is no excuse to exclude wildlife. In fact, if the motorized attraction area becomes reality the wildlife will be cut off from using a large bulk of the parcel.
- The MSB did the right thing by initiating this plan, however, there was not enough financial resources set aside to produce a plan with a thorough public process and real involvement from the Butte community not to mention borough residents. It was underfunded, fast tracked because of inadequate financial support and altered from the beginning by an Assemblyperson from another district changing the title of the plan and catering to only motorized recreation interests.

#### Recommendations:

- The MSB should continue working on this plan with the entire Butte Community and borough residents that choose to participate. That means notifying everyone in Butte with a mailer so they know about the plan and that it is in process. Most people in the area do not know this is a 471 acre borough owned parcel and not part of the KRPUA and that they can develop a borough plan for the parcel that will benefit all interests of their community.
- This plan needs another round of public process to ensure more balance.
- This plan needs to create a 40 acre community park with a ball field, soccer field, picnic areas, non motorized trails and other amenities similar to the Mat River Park outside of Palmer on the Old Glenn hwy.
- Some due diligence should be given to wildlife on this parcel. There are many hunters & fishers in the community. They must understand if they want to continue hunting the wildlife needs some accommodations.
- If the excuse to develop this plan is one that will benefit the community economically then the MSB should determine what economic benefits there would be from this parcel that benefits everyone. Right now it is being treated as just another uncontrolled & unregulated motorized area that is adjacent to an already established multi use motorized 260,000 acres of the KRPUA.
- When this plan is completed it is folly to assume all will go well unless there is "enforcement," gates to control access, hours of operation, closures when trails are impassable, & user fees to pay for enforcement and maintenance.
- Do not allow "rustic camping" on the 130 acres.
- The 150 acre motorized attraction zone should not be allowed, but should be located in a gravel pit elsewhere on private property. If it remains it should move over to the property line with the race track. Keep noise with noise and quiet with quiet.
- The quiet non-motorized recreation should move to the west side and be given more acreage on the borough parcel & not pushed on to DNR land.
- Because this parcel connects to DNR land the borough and DNR need to create a cooperative management agreement. It's time for local and state government

to stop shirking their responsibilities for real and enforced management of their lands.

Bottom Line:

Do not rush this plan. Take the time and notify the Butte residents and encourage their involvement. Don't buy into the argument that the public will be able to give their input at the planning commission and assembly. They need to weigh in early and also later at those levels.