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# Matanuska-Susitna Borough

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DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

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September 1, 1983

Mr. Terry O'Sullivan  
U. S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
701 "C" Street  
Anchorage, Alaska

Dear Mr. O'Sullivan:

Re: ABANDONMENT OF IDITAROD TRAIL ALIGNMENT IN SOUTHERN PART OF  
MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Would you let me know if you would be available to meet on September 22, 1983, Thursday, at 2:00 p.m. in the conference room of the Borough building to discuss the status of the Iditarod Trail between Knik and the Little Susitna River?

We have invited the following to the meeting.

Senator Jay Kerttula  
Representative Ronald L. Larson  
Representative Barbara Lacher  
Rosemary Phillips, Manager, Iditarod Trail Committee  
Ed Frandsen, Iditarod Trail Blazers, Knik Chapter  
Joe Redington  
Terry O'Sullivan, U. S. Department of Interior, BLM  
Neil Johannsen, Director Division of Parks, DNR or  
his designee.

As you have probably heard, efforts to put together that part of the National Historic Iditarod Trail between Knik and the Little Susitna River have pretty well collapsed. The State of Alaska is not going to seek any money for acquiring any part of this trail--currently it crosses at least 16 private properties and it is not practicable to go around these properties--and the Federal government is not prepared to provide any funding for an Iditarod right of way effort.

If legislative funding cannot be found for any trail right of way acquisition then it is apparent that an alternate trail ought to be identified. Possible start points for an alternate Iditarod Trail could be the Nancy Lakes Park area and the Petersville Road at Trapper Creek.

By dropping the Iditarod Trail as it crosses the proposed Fish Creek Agricultural Project between the Little

Susitna River and the Big Susitna River, it will be possible to obtain agricultural acreage equivalent to about one farm--about 450 acres.

Knikatnu, Inc., the Knik area Native village corporation, has tentatively agreed to the reconveyance of a trail at Knik across a 17 acre parcel they have obtained under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act so it will be possible to give visitors to the Knik area an idea of what the first 200 yards or so of the National Historic Iditarod Trail looked like.

Efforts towards acquiring the remaining portion of the trail had been going along fairly well for a while. The trail across State and Borough owned parcels between Knik and the Little Susitna River has been surveyed with Joe Redington and others helping identify the old historic trail in this area. Last December Senator Stevens had obtained an appropriation for an Iditarod Trail coordinator within the Bureau of Land Management for the federal fiscal year ending in September 1983. Unfortunately this particular appropriation has been exhausted as of August 31. The State Division of Parks does not propose any funding for following up on trail acquisition, nor does anyone else in the Executive Branch of State government. So, in effect, everyone has walked away from this first part of the Iditarod Trail.

Since this is a federally recognized historic trail, you may want to consider whether there is any feasible means of salvaging any part of the trail within the southern part of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and what these means would be.

Sincerely,



Gary Thurlow  
Borough Manager

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