



Matanuska-Susitna Borough

BOX B, PALMER, ALASKA 99645 • PHONE 745-4801

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

September 28, 1983

Mr. Jack Wiles
Division of Parks
State of Alaska
Department of Natural Resources
619 Warehouse Avenue, Suite 210
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Jack:

Re: IDITAROD TRAIL

In considering the width of the Iditarod Trail as you go through private properties between Knik Road and the Little Susitna River I think you should consider the following:

1. The travelled width of the trail which needs to be kept brushed out is probably quite narrow. Eventually, it may be necessary to erect some fencing through certain parcels, which means there would have to be room within the easement area for erection and maintenance of fences on both sides of the travelled way.

2. You need a buffer area on both sides of the trail so that the backside of mobile homes, houses, warehouse buildings, etc. is not ten feet from the centerline of the trail. This means you need a buffer area which would not be cleared where the natural vegetation would continue to grow. This buffer area would also be a building setback area. As is the case with any lot where there is a municipal setback requirement, there would be no need for the State to have title to the buffer or setback area--all it would need would be an easement to prevent clearing of the buffer area and construction within the buffer area. This means that a developer could use the buffer area as part of 40,000 square foot lots (the minimum acreage for a Borough lot is 40,000 square feet if an on-site septic system is to be used) and the developer would not lose any density because of the buffer--setback requirement. The buffer area would still be available for septic tank drain field purposes and separation between well and septic tank.

3. Knik Lake is a special situation. Jimmy Wong owns the land south and southwest of Knik Lake. This is just beyond the first 200 yards of trail across the Knikatnu parcel. If any part of the trail is to be walked to experience the original

Iditarod Trail, it would be this stretch. This particular parcel would lend itself to the most dense development as it is very close to the Knik Road and overlooks Knik Lake. At the least you would expect a residential development of at least one unit to an acre and you may very well find that the land would be applied to apartment, condominium or mobile home uses. In addition to the usual buffer area on both sides of the travelled and maintained trail, you do need an easement between the trail, which is close to the shore of the lake, and the lake, so that the treed area between the trail and the lake is preserved in its natural state and so that the public can get from the trail to the shores of the lake. From the standpoint of management it would probably be better if the state acquired that narrow strip of land between the trail and the lake. However, if this should be difficult for some reason, very much the same objective could be maintained if an easement were obtained for this area that preserves the native vegetation and gives the public access into the area. This means that there would be dual use of the area--public and private.

Sincerely,



Gary Thurlow
Borough Manager

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STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF PARKS

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

619 WAREHOUSE AVE., SUITE 210
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501
PHONE: (907) 276-2653

October 25, 1983

Re: Iditarod Trail

Gary Thurlow, Borough Manager
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Box B
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Dear Gary:

Thank you for your letter regarding the width of the Iditarod Trail as it passes through private properties between Knik Road and the Little Susitna River.

I do not have a good feel for the appropriate width of the trail but would think that a minimum of 60' would be desirable upwards to 100' or more depending upon whether we are acquiring fee simple land or a conservation easement. I hope to ski the trail this winter and get a better feel for what an appropriate width of the trail should be. If you'd like to go along on that ski trip please let me know.

Sincerely,

Neil C. Johannsen
Director



By: John Wiles
Chief of Planning

JW:clk