







**GREAT LAND TRUST**  
S O U T H C E N T R A L A L A S K A

Conserving lands and waterways essential to the quality of life and economic health of Southcentral Alaska

May 30, 2024

Birchwood Airport Master Plan Update Project Team  
Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities  
Central Region  
4111 Aviation Ave.  
Anchorage, AK 99519  
Philana Miles [philana.miles@alaska.gov](mailto:philana.miles@alaska.gov) & Shelly Wade [shelly@agnewbeck.com](mailto:shelly@agnewbeck.com)

**Re: Birchwood Airport Master Plan Update, Project No. CFAPT00354/AIP 3-02-0034-008-2018 / 3-02-0034-009-2022, Feb. 2024 Public Review Draft Comments**

Dear Project Team,

Great Land Trust (GLT) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the **Birchwood Airport Master Plan Update Feb. 2024 Public Review Draft (PRD)**. The Birchwood Airport is located to the east of and adjacent to the Eklutna Inc. land subject to the **Fire Creek Estuary Conservation Easement<sup>1</sup>** held by GLT. We ask that you please consider our comments below and include them as part of the project's record, and that in the future, if appropriate, GLT be included as a member of the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) related to this project.

*Comments*

**We request that you modify the Alternatives in your Master Plan Update to avoid the Fire Creek Estuary Conservation Easement-protected property.**

Upon review of your Master Plan Update PRD, the proposed Alternative Four, and possibly the other Alternatives, except for the Alternative 1 - No Build, will impact the adjacent Eklutna Inc. property, which is subject to the **Fire Creek Estuary Conservation Easement (CE)** held by GLT (see enclosed map).

As holder of the CE, GLT holds a real estate interest in the Eklutna Inc. Fire Creek Estuary property (Property) that runs with the land, is governed by real estate law, and defined by state statutes and IRS code. The CE is a legal agreement between the owner (Eklutna Inc.) and the holder (GLT). The CE retires all development rights for the Property in perpetuity and prohibits the conveyance of any interest in the Property to a third party that would reduce or negatively impact the Conservation Easement or conservation purposes/values of the Property. The Property's conservation purposes/values are defined by Internal Revenue Code (IRC) and apply to the entirety of the Property. Any negative impact on any portion of the Property's conservation purposes/values is considered a negative impact on the CE as a whole and is therefore in violation of the CE.

GLT acquired the CE to permanently protect the Property and its conservation values/purposes. GLT is committed to ensuring the perpetuity of the CE and cannot and will not pursue extinguishment of the CE, in whole or in part, to the Property in response to a request to transfer any interest in land to a third

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<sup>1</sup> Recorded August 31, 2012; recording number 2012-049638-0, Anchorage Recording District



Conserving lands and waterways essential to the quality of life and economic health of Southcentral Alaska

party for development purposes, without a judicial proceeding. The expansion Alternative(s) shown in the Master Plan would require an extinguishment of the CE protecting a portion of the Property, which is prohibited. Development rights to a portion, or the entirety, of the Property may only be attained through a judicial condemnation action.

Due to the inability to use amendments or mitigation to remedy the impacts your proposed Alternative(s) would have on the Property, GLT request that the Project Team modify the Alternative(s) to avoid the Fire Creek Estuary Conservation Easement-protected property entirely.

### *Background*

GLT is a private, nonpartisan, non-profit organization formed in 1995 by Alaskans for Alaskans. Our mission is to work with willing landowners and other partners to conserve and steward lands and waters essential to the quality of life and economic health of Alaskans. GLT permanently conserves special lands and waters that support valuable habitat and ecological services and signature landscapes essential to the quality of life and economic health of communities in our region of Southcentral Alaska, specifically the Municipality of Anchorage and the Mat-Su Borough.

In 2012, GLT partnered with Eklutna Inc. to conserve the Fire Creek Estuary CE-protected property. This Property was identified as a priority for conservation due to its wetland habitat and ecological services and open space values. GLT purchased the CE from Eklutna Inc., using The Port of Anchorage compensatory mitigation funds, permanently preserving and protecting the 523-acre Property. GLT, as holder of the Conservation Easement, has a long-term stewardship responsibility to ensure that the Property's baseline conditions, wetland functions, and conservation values/purposes are protected in perpetuity.

The conservation and ecological success of the Property and its conservation values/purposes are of utmost importance to GLT.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda P. Hults".

Amanda P. Hults  
Lands Manager & Stewardship Director  
Great Land Trust

Enclosure: Fire Creek Estuary Conservation Easement-Protected Property Map

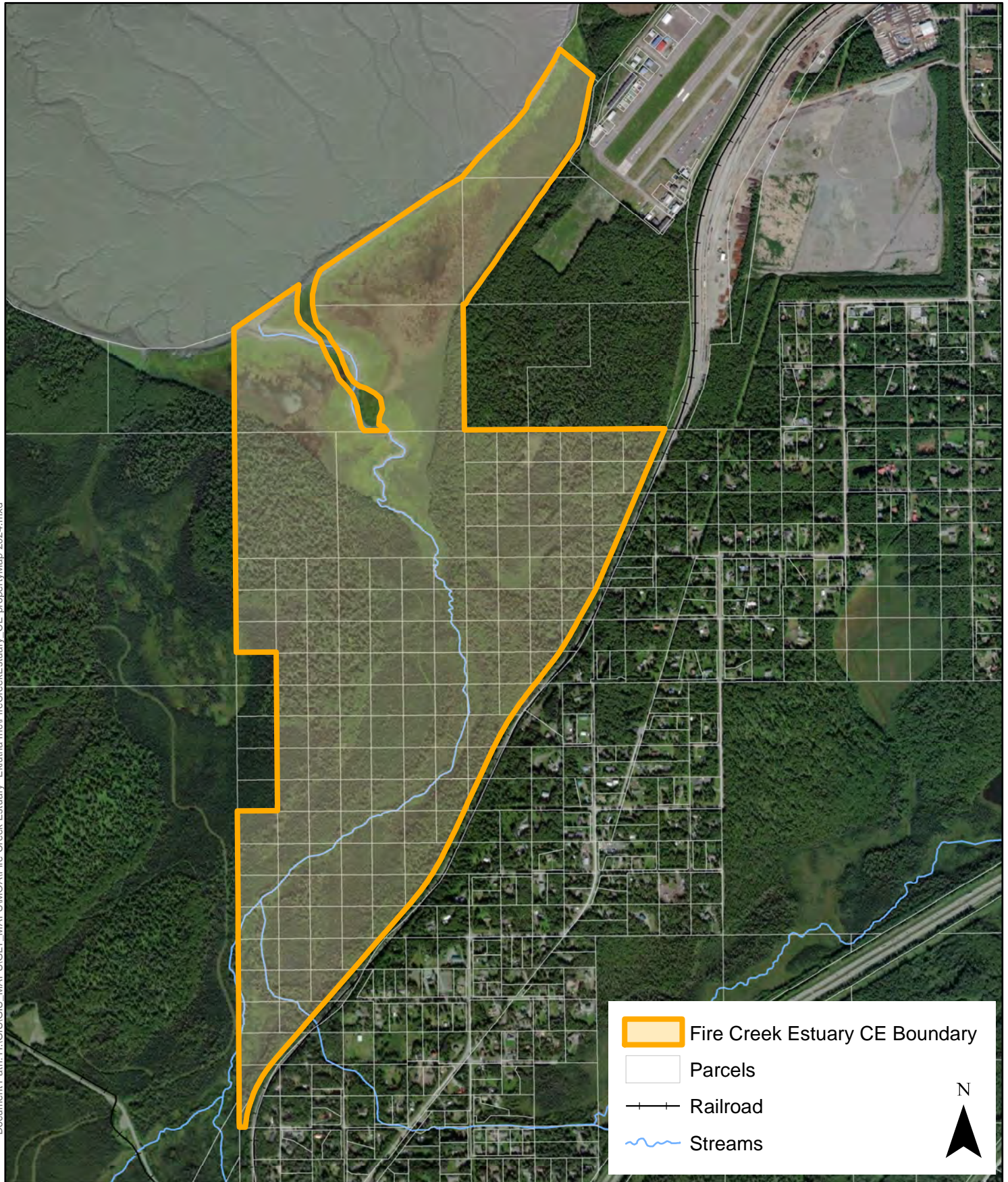
cc: Eklutna Inc.

# FIRE CREEK ESTUARY CONSERVATION EASEMENT

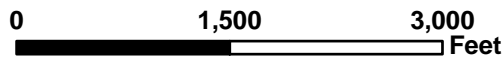
## CHUGIAK, AK



Document Path: H:\GIS\GIS\_MAPS\GILT\_MAPS\MOAI\Fire\_Creek\_Estuary-Ektutna.Incl\FireCreekEstuary\_CE-propertyMap\_2024.mxd



Data Sources:  
MOA (streams, railroad, parcels)  
Projected Coordinate System:  
NAD 1983 State Plane Alaska 4 FIPS 5004 Feet



This map was produced using the best available data, but should not be used in place of plat and survey maps

**From:** [ken.m.discoverycovealaska.com](mailto:ken.m.discoverycovealaska.com)  
**To:** [todd.smoldon](mailto:todd.smoldon); [philana.miles@alaska.gov](mailto:philana.miles@alaska.gov); [Shelly Wade](#)  
**Cc:** [Birchwood Council](#); [Chugiak Council](#); [Rob Stapleton](#); [Rep. Dan Saddler](#); [BirchwoodAirport Association](#)  
**Subject:** Birchwood Airport Master Plan - Alternative 1  
**Date:** Thursday, May 30, 2024 11:23:05 AM  
**Attachments:** [Birchwood Airport Master Plan Alternative 1 Petition.pdf](#)

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Dear participants regarding Birchwood Airport

Attached is as petition with some 100 names and signatures from stakeholders of Birchwood Airport who desire Alternative 1. The gathering of names for Alternative 1 continues; however, for the sake of the stakeholder input deadline of 5/31/24 that you are receiving the current status of the petition.

Alternative 1 is to make the fixes and improvements within the boundaries of existing Birchwood airport. There has been the appearance of misrepresentation of Alternative 1 to suggest "to do nothing." This is contrary to the many comments over the years regarding the airport. The key point of Alternative 1 is to avail the many improvements but within the current boundaries.

In addition, there are things approved in the current Master Plan that were never done (e.g. Tie down area for larger planes). Why was this not completed when FAA grant money was funded for it to be done?

Hopefully the petition of the Stakeholders and clarification of the intent of Alternative 1 will help you understand the WHO of people and their desire for Birchwood Airport.











Ken McCarty

# PETITION FOR BIRCHWOOD AIRPORT MASTER PLAN ALTERNATIVE #1

## Brief Description of Alternative #1

Alternative #1 is to leave the airport boundaries the same as currently exists with no land acquisition. Amendments to the airport include:

- 1) Maintain existing asphalt and gravel run ways,
- 2) Large plane tie down area south of the North East Apron tie down,
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- 4) New hangers availability along the east area
- 5) Safety fencing at south end,
- 6) Some improvement to taxi ways
- 7) Trimming of trees on approach areas according to FAA safety guidelines









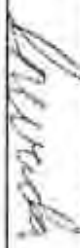
Print Name	Signature	Stakeholder Association (Airport user, Resident, Gun Range, etc)	Contact Info.
Gerardo R. Arce		ER Resident Golf Club member	907-406-4550
Joseph M. Benyo		ER Resident	907-351-5828
Ken McCarty		Chrysler Bank / Airport	907-406-2300
Chris Hackeman		ER Resident, Ranger	601-699-9134
JAMES W. STANLEY III		Gun Range Employee, ER Resident	907-398-3294
Josh Serna		ER Resident, gun club member	(907) 297-9402
Roberto Novaron		WA, Resident, Club member	770-733-0584
Bonnie Hadaway		ER Resident	20542087104
Spores Hadaway		_____	205 616 5169
Fisher Crew		Member / Former Resident	907-707-4441

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Print Name	Signature	Stakeholder Association (Airport user, Resident, Gun Range, etc)	Contact Info.
Erik Stengen		Gun Range	erikstengen@regionalteam.com
Fred Cornell, Helman DeZ	HL: 	Gun Range	907-408-9076
James Henry		Gun Range	907-947-2800
J. Stoffel		Gun Range	907-212-4957
Kelli TORR		Gun Range	907-240-6344
Bradley Johnson			907-744-2469
M.A. Popm	M.A. Popm	GR	907-622-3612
Steven Algori		Gun Range	480-534-5261
John B. Ralph		Gun Range	907-290-0117
Lucas Wendt		Gun Range	907-631-8824











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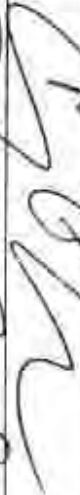

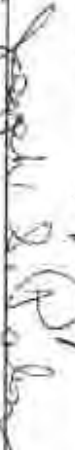
Print Name	Signature	Stakeholder Association (Airport user, Resident, Gun Range, etc)	Contact Info.
Joseph Dem Harrison	Harrison	Employee	907-982-3222
Christy Johnson		BRSP Employee	907-854-7087
Lori Conkton		Member & Resident	907-390-0727
Peter Jacks		Resident	907-764-9355
Joe Morris		Member	907-717-7272
Robby Goldwin		Resident	709-262-9777
Nathan Marquez		Resident	907-519-1820
Krista Kelly		Resident	907-836-2570
Andrea Lammor		Member	410-670-2170
Joseph William			

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Print Name	Signature	Stakeholder Association (Airport user, Resident, Gun Range, etc)	Contact Info.
Bruce Sejne		member Gun range	907 201 0339
Lisa Jayne	Lisa Jayne	member (gun range)	907-351-8325
Terry Drake		member	907-903-0500
Arsten Singh		Airport User	563-412-9097
Chas THURMAN	Chas TH	Member	903-301-6794
Aaron Taurau		Member	907 350 5858
Lee Lottback		Member	907-223-7587
DAVE QUAILINI		MEMBER: AKSCHA RESIDENT	907-929-3526
Brian Brockquist		Member	907-227-3708
JOSIEPH S THAYER		MEMBER	907-746-4533

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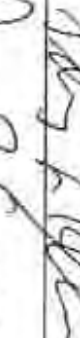
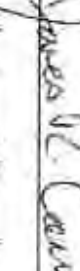

Print Name	Signature	Stakeholder Association (Airport user, Resident, Gun Range, etc)	Contact Info.
KM1-E1			907 8547200
William Kluge		Member	907-306-9373
Kodre Milner		Member	400-549-1007
Brandon		Member	907-355-6369
Kent LeBlay		member	907-801-1424
Kathy Cullison		member	9032458221
Katey Sullivan		Member	907-707-9313
George S Young		Member	907-545-2991

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Print Name	Signature	Stakeholder Association (Airport user, Resident, Gun Range, etc)	Contact Info.
Tom Erns		AWB member	
Rosal Winterm		AWB MEMBER AIRPORT RIVERSIDE	1907 1688 7872
Nathan Vincent		Club Employee	907 854-5471
Patrick Tipton		Club Member	907 240 0706
Trigg Davis		Club Member	201 240-854
Lawrence Huskey		Club MEMBER	907 240-5181
Peter Klein		Club Member	907-617-6646
JAMES CARSON		Club MEMBER	907-227-3365
WYNNE COPPEL		Club member	907 830-8836
Frank S. Schlotter		Club member	907 529-5394

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Print Name	Signature	Stakeholder Association (Airport user, Resident, Gun Range, etc)	Contact Info.
Jeff Moss		Birchwood Range	
Matt Cassels		Birchwood Range	907-715-8951
Grant Henke		BRSP	
Justin Cornell		A. BRSP employee	907-521-4514
Wayton Cook		BRSP range	907-691-4262
Mark Bork		WHLR	907-528-0992
Mark Goodman		Birchwood Range	907 444-3856
LHARUE Bauso		BRSP Member	(914) 480-2163
Faxton Z rom		BRSP	907-707-4490
Steve Miller		BRSP	907-590-0162

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Print Name	Signature	Stakeholder Association (Airport user, Resident, Gun Range, etc)	Contact Info.
Ray Collins		Gun Range HAS BOARD	907-271-5943
Wynne Krukenberg		Member	907-602-1277
Fred Aquino		Member	907-952-0253
Scott Franz		member	970-218-6490
Rob Liles		Member	907-530-1105
William Bennett		Member/ Airport user	530-354-6357
Lawrence R. Swenson		member	907-696-1419
Molly Kalamandis		Birchwood Member	907-361-3430

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Print Name	Signature	Stakeholder Association (Airport user, Resident, Gun Range, etc)	Contact Info.
JOHN DRELL		AIRPORTER'S ASSOCIATION	907-317-6901
Leon Shelbourn		Airport Hangar Owner	907-652-8975
Maryl Peterson		Pilot, Resident	907-301-0643
ROY HARRIS		Resident	907-696-7733
Ken Parkins		Pilot, Resident	907-622-6919
Floyd Kupinski		Pilot, Resident	907-696-4933
Dennis Clinton		Pilot - Resident	907-242-9823
TOM HUPFER		Resident	907-694-2326
Matthew Casenoll		Pilot - Resident	503-894-3031
Burt Burkhardt		Pilot	907-830-3469

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Print Name	Signature	Stakeholder Association (Airport user, Resident, Gun Range, etc)	Contact Info.
Cherie Merveth		President	907-360-5532
Richard Merveth		PERMANENT OWNER	907-360-2995
Joe Stadel		Program Director (2)	530-305-1417
Mariann Folsom		Hangar Owner	907-688-7115
Bruce Hansen		Owner	(907) 862-2692





16515 Centerfield Drive, Suite 201  
Eagle River, AK 99577  
P: 907.696.2828  
F: 907.696.2845  
www.eklutnainc.com

May 30, 2024

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
c/o Philana Miles  
4111 Aviation Ave  
Anchorage, AK 99502

RE: Birchwood Airport Draft Master Plan

Dear Ms. Miles,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comments on the Birchwood Airport Draft Master Plan (Draft Plan), part of the process to update the 2005 Master Plan. We appreciate all the effort your team has exerted to solicit comments and develop a plan for the future this community asset. We must restate, as an adjoining landowner to the Birchwood Airport (Airport), Eklutna, Inc. (Eklutna) has a significant interest in any expansion of the Airport's footprint and expansion of the facilities and infrastructure. We expect to be consulted throughout the remainder of the plan update process and project development.

The Master Plan update is proposing three action alternatives for the Airport and a no action alternative. Each of the action alternatives would require the use of Eklutna lands. We are supportive of expansion of the Airport to Eklutna lands in a manner reflective of the needs of the Airport's current users and new potential lessees. We are working with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Alaska Department of Transportation (AK DOT&PF), and stakeholders of the Airport to ascertain the market for additional facilities, follow the administrative process for Airport access from Eklutna lands, and access funds to build Airport infrastructure on Eklutna lands as an Airport co-sponsor.

At this time, Eklutna, Inc. has no plans to sell any of the property adjoining the Airport. Although it may have been communicated that Eklutna's position in the past was to sell this land, we would prefer evaluating development of our adjacent parcels through efforts by our development and construction divisions. While some measure of real estate transactions may need to occur during Airport expansion, we strongly feel we should have the opportunity to develop our land.

Below, we have included topic-specific comments for consideration:

### **Trails**

On Page 5 of the Draft Plan, the proposed northern extension of the Coastal Trail is identified. Eklutna supports trail development for recreation; however, trail configuration must be aligned to eliminate negative impacts on Eklutna lands. Eklutna will engage with Chugach Mountain

Bike Riders to determine the preferred alignment through or along Eklutna lands near the Airport.

### **Eklutna, Inc. Land Ownership**

It is worth noting on Page 4 that a significant portion of the 660 acres owned by Eklutna in proximity of the Airport is protected by Eklutna from future development through a conservation easement. Only 134.5 acres of the 660 acres owned by Eklutna southwest of the Airport is developable land. The Fire Creek Conservation Easement provides a perpetual, natural setting to the residents of Anchorage as well as an additional no-cost buffer for users of the Airport.

### **Avigation Easement**

The Draft Plan makes several references to the avigation easement secured by the State of Alaska for the southwest Runway Protection Zone (RPZ). This is a nine-acre easement. Eklutna would like the Draft Plan to reflect the avigation easement has been provided to the State of Alaska by Eklutna without a cost for over 45 years. It is our hope that Eklutna's benevolent gesture to the State of Alaska will be considered as plans to expand the Airport progress.

### **Hazardous Waste Review**

The proposed alternative in Chapter 5 mentions a requirement for Environmental Site Assessment investigations to determine whether hazardous waste of contaminated sites are present. The majority of land targeted for acquisition would be Eklutna lands, thus our lands would be subject to the ESA reviews. The Draft Plan provided very little information on historical use or contamination investigations on airport property. With the continuing contamination issues related to airport operations and lands where military operations were conducted, it may be helpful to further assess potential sources of contamination on Airport property prior to proposing major construction efforts. A more comprehensive assessment of historical practices and operations on Airport property should be helpful in identifying sources of potential contamination on surrounding lands. We suggest conducting a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment on Airport property as part of this planning process.

### **Encroachments**

While it is not necessarily germane to the airport expansion planning, it appears there is an encroachment upon Eklutna land at the southernmost point of the Airport's leased property. We would like to point the State's attention to this issue. We would also request an explanation in the Draft Plan relating to setbacks from private property on land leased by the State. There are several buildings appearing over the property line or very near to the property line with Eklutna lands. A formal survey should assist in determining whether the buildings are encroaching or built outside the leased areas.

### **Capital Improvement Plan**

The work performed to estimate the project costs is greatly appreciated. Eklutna agrees a high degree of cooperation between FAA, AK DOT&PF, and Eklutna is essential to reach a mutually-agreeable strategy for Airport expansion. A partnership brings the possibilities of project efficiency and cost reduction. Transportation and material costs are shown as the most expensive costs categories in Appendix B. Eklutna possesses gravel resources on site and nearby, grubbing

and woody waste disposal sites, and a hard rock quarry in the vicinity. Furthermore, Eklutna has decades of experience designing and building similar developments throughout Anchorage and the Matsu Borough. We are encouraged by the direction of the FAA and AK DOT&PF and believe we are an integral piece for this development.

### **Third-Party Development**

Eklutna requests a copy of a publication cited in Section 8.2.2.3 entitled *Public Private Partnership Summary* authored by Agnew:Beck. An online search to locate the document was unsuccessful. This publication is the basis for a determination that public-private partnership would “not make sense” for the Airport. We are curious about the characteristic and profitability assertions made in the publication. Eklutna was not included in arriving at this conclusion, thus we would like to better understand why a proposed partnership mentioned in Chapter 7 is determined to be infeasible in Chapter 8.

### **Alternative Preference**

In assessing the four alternative concepts, Eklutna is in favor of alternative two where new Airport infrastructure on Eklutna property is minimized and the aviation easement footprint is smaller due to the elimination of the instrument flight approach. Alternative four depicts a scenario where large swathes of Eklutna lands will need to be acquired with additional space for aviation easements. This alternative would potentially allow for 13 more acres for Eklutna to develop for commercial purposes; however, it is our opinion we expose too much acreage to non-developable purposes in alternative four. Finally, we do not support the no build alternative, but we remain interested in this approach if it would still allow private development with a boundary crossing in the future.

Again, thank you for including us in this planning process. The Airport and Eklutna have had a favorable relationship as neighbors for decades. We hope to continue that relationship as the Birchwood Airport Master Plan update considers expansion of the Airport to Eklutna lands.

Thank you,



Kyle Smith  
Director of Land Assets

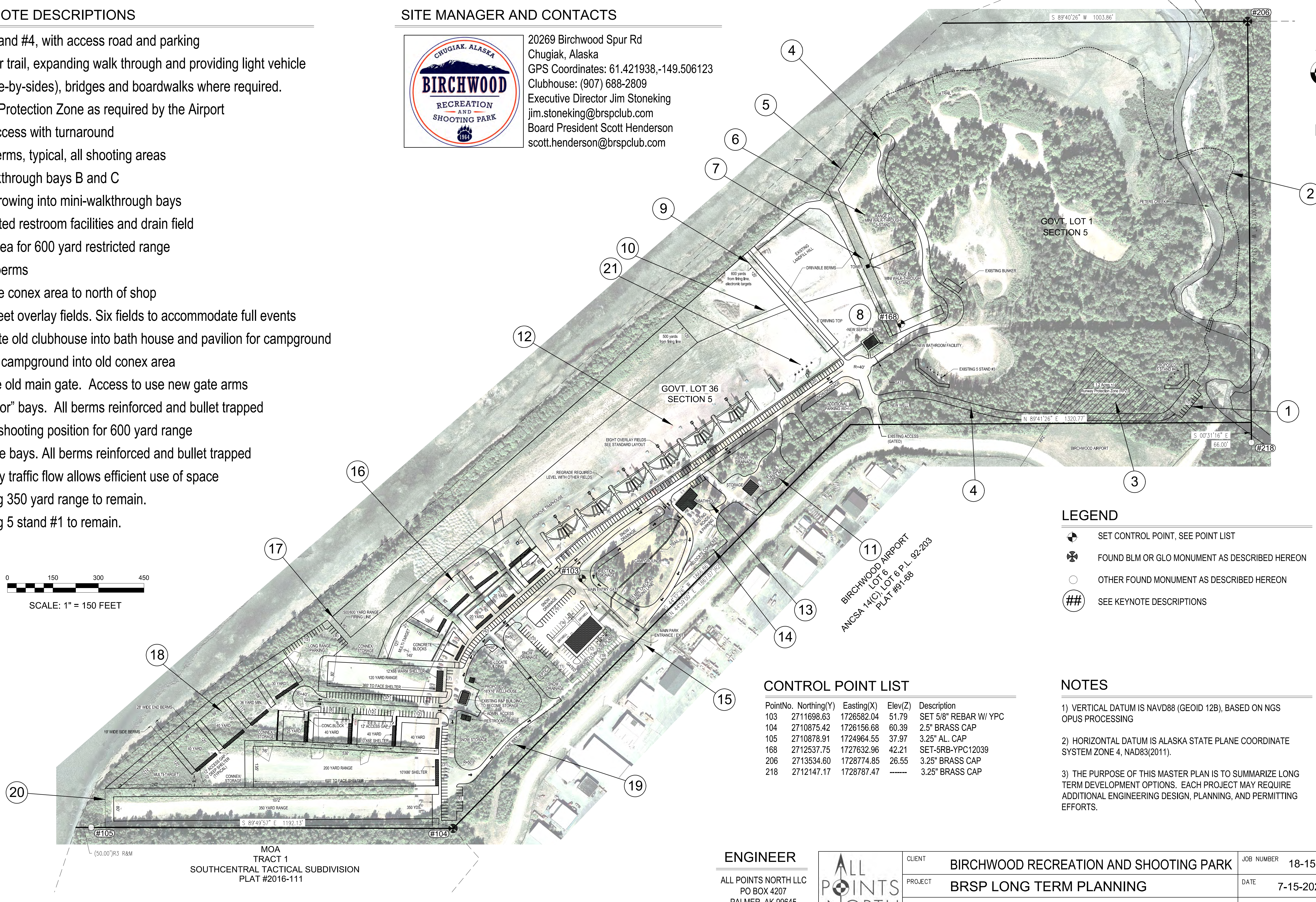
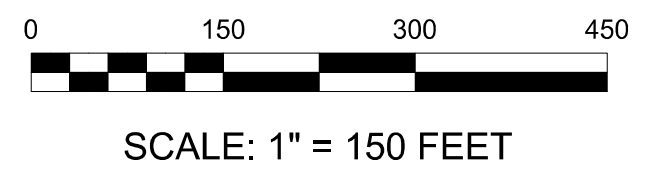
## # KEYNOTE DESCRIPTIONS

1. New 5-stand #4, with access road and parking
2. Perimeter trail, expanding walk through and providing light vehicle access (side-by-sides), bridges and boardwalks where required.
3. Runway Protection Zone as required by the Airport
4. Paved access with turnaround
5. Safety berms, typical, all shooting areas
6. Mini-walkthrough bays B and C
7. Tower throwing into mini-walkthrough bays
8. New heated restroom facilities and drain field
9. Target area for 600 yard restricted range
10. Safety berms
11. Relocate conex area to north of shop
12. Trap/skeet overlay fields. Six fields to accommodate full events
13. Renovate old clubhouse into bath house and pavilion for campground
14. Expand campground into old conex area
15. Remove old main gate. Access to use new gate arms
16. "instructor" bays. All berms reinforced and bullet trapped
17. Baffled shooting position for 600 yard range
18. Multi-use bays. All berms reinforced and bullet trapped
19. One-way traffic flow allows efficient use of space
20. Existing 350 yard range to remain.
21. Existing 5 stand #1 to remain.

## SITE MANAGER AND CONTACTS



20269 Birchwood Spur Rd  
Chugiak, Alaska  
GPS Coordinates: 61.421938,-149.506123  
Clubhouse: (907) 688-2809  
Executive Director Jim Stoneking  
jim.stoneking@brspclub.com  
Board President Scott Henderson  
scott.henderson@brspclub.com



### LEGEND

- SET CONTROL POINT, SEE POINT LIST
- FOUND BLM OR GLO MONUMENT AS DESCRIBED HEREON
- OTHER FOUND MONUMENT AS DESCRIBED HEREON
- SEE KEYNOTE DESCRIPTIONS

### CONTROL POINT LIST

PointNo.	Northing(Y)	Easting(X)	Elev(Z)	Description
103	2711698.63	1726582.04	51.79	SET 5/8" REBAR W/ YPC
104	2710875.42	1726156.68	60.39	2.5" BRASS CAP
105	2710878.91	1724964.55	37.97	3.25" AL. CAP
168	2712537.75	1727632.96	42.21	SET-5RB-YPC12039
206	2713534.60	1728774.85	26.55	3.25" BRASS CAP
218	2712147.17	1728787.47	-----	3.25" BRASS CAP

### NOTES

- 1) VERTICAL DATUM IS NAVD88 (GEOID 12B), BASED ON NGS OPUS PROCESSING
- 2) HORIZONTAL DATUM IS ALASKA STATE PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM ZONE 4, NAD83(2011).
- 3) THE PURPOSE OF THIS MASTER PLAN IS TO SUMMARIZE LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS. EACH PROJECT MAY REQUIRE ADDITIONAL ENGINEERING DESIGN, PLANNING, AND PERMITTING EFFORTS.

### ENGINEER

ALL POINTS NORTH LLC  
PO BOX 4207  
PALMER, AK 99645  
907-355-4185



CLIENT	BIRCHWOOD RECREATION AND SHOOTING PARK	JOB NUMBER	18-15
PROJECT	BRSP LONG TERM PLANNING	DATE	7-15-2023
SHEET TITLE	JULY 2023 MASTER PLAN	SHEET	1 of 1