

Date: 4/9/07

Time: 7:00 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.

Location: Trapper Creek Elementary School, AK

Subject: How can the Parks Highway State Scenic Byway program benefit Trapper Creek?

Present:

Alaska State Parks Representatives:

Penny Bauder, Interpretive Planner

Annette Iverson, Natural Resources Technician

Department of Transportation Representatives:

Mary Jane Sutliff, Mat-Su area planner

Shannon McCarthy, Northern area

Attendees:

Murph O'Brien

Rick Ernst

Norwood Marsh

Dennis Heikes

Dan Valentine

Sue Deyoe

Tony Jurasek

Randy Crosby

Tom Kluberton

Miriam Valentine

Jennie Earles

Craig Jorgensen

Shelis Jorgensen

George Faerber

Howard Carbone

The meeting was called to order by Penny Bauder at approximately 7:05 P.M. Overall, this was an interactive and highly participatory informational meeting, with many questions answered and ideas generated.

This was the third in a series of four public meetings to explain the State Scenic Byway program and the Parks Highway Scenic Byway Corridor Partnership Plan. Penny explained that there would be a brief PowerPoint presentation with time for questions and a brainstorming session at the end. She asked that everyone fill out a survey to let her know the level of interest in serving on the task force committee which will help to write the plan.

After everyone introduced themselves and stated where they were from, Penny began the presentation which included the following information:

The state Scenic Byway Program was begun in 1993 and celebrates the natural landscapes of Alaska and our cultural and recreational resources. The program promotes tourism and economic development and the education of our historic and cultural

resources. 13 segments, encompassing over 4,800 miles of highway have been designated as State Scenic Byways. 3 have been nationally designated, 2 of them as All-American Roads, the highest designation. The Alaska Scenic Byways program is multi-modal, and includes the Alaska Railroad and the Alaska Marine Highway. Currently, in order for a section of highway to be designated a State Scenic Byway, there has to be public support and community involvement to apply for the designation.

With Scenic Byway designation, communities have funding opportunities for projects which are decided upon by communities. It was emphasized that the State Scenic Byway program holds no regulatory power, has the best interests of the communities of Alaska at heart and that Corridor Partnership Plan contents are determined by stakeholders.

A Corridor Partnership Plan is a document which promotes recognition, not regulation. The plan is an expression of local desires. The main purpose of the plan is to identify what is special to stakeholders along the corridor and identify ways to enhance, promote and protect these special areas. Plans are currently underway for four more state Scenic Byways, including the Parks Hwy. The three state Scenic Byways which already have a plan written have received funding for all of the projects they have applied for thus far. There is approximately \$600,000 dollars in funding available annually for all the state Scenic Byways combined. Projects along the corridor cannot be funded unless they are in the plan.

Q: On the National Scenic Byway, are there some regulations involved with that?

Penny: No. The one regulation is that there are no billboards allowed and Alaska already took care of that with a vote of over 70% opposed to allowing billboards along Alaska's highways. There are also no regulations for the state's program as well.

Q: No regulations on private land or on state or any lands at all? What about the state lands adjacent to the highway?

Murhp: The scenic byway program celebrates the road, the travel, and the surrounding area. The whole key is to get by-in by the people along the byway. It's not regulation, it's recognition. It's recognition for the quality of the drive and scenic values.

Penny: The state policy was amended in 2006 to include language specifically directed at private property owners. We have the policy here if you would like to read it. It says the program in no way abridges the right of any property owners. It also does not require any property owners to modify or permit public access to his or her property.

Penny continued and gave examples of projects completed with the grants funds made available by the plan designation such as historical preservations and marketing projects.

Q: At what point is the area eligible for grant funds for projects?

Penny: After the Corridor Partnership Plan is written, grant applications can be submitted for projects specified in the plan.

Q: Who are the partners in the plan?

Penny: The partners are all the communities along the designated byway section. Those on the task force can be community members as well as agency representatives.

The boundaries of the scenic byway designation were specified as mile 132 at the Chulitna River Bridge, 17 miles north of Trapper Creek, extending up to just shy of Healy. The section of highway within the byway will be the main focus of the plan and grants applied for will be prioritized for the areas within the byway designation. Trapper Creek is affected because it is a gateway community to the byway. Projects which may be outlined in the Corridor Partnership Plan in the Trapper Creek area potentially could receive funding. Trapper Creek could apply to have the scenic byway designation extended south or have an additional section designated scenic separate from this designation; it depends upon the community's interest.

Q: Can a designation turn the corner and go up Petersville Road?

Penny: If the public was interested in that designation or any other the State Scenic Byway Coordinator with the Alaska Department of Transportation, Aneta Synan, strongly encourages interested parties to contact her.

Q: That deal in Hope, how did that money get there, was the Hope cut-off part of the designation?

Penny: The buildings in Hope which were restored with byway grant funds used to be on the Seward Highway and were moved to Hope. Areas adjacent to the byway having projects specified in the Corridor Partnership Plan are eligible for project funding.

Murph O'Brien specified that from a borough perspective, that if the Trapper Creek community council made a request to the borough and passed a resolution saying they would like to extend the boundary of the scenic byway designation, then the borough would make the formal request to the DOT for such.

Tony Jurasek commented that the Trapper Creek Community council had no prior knowledge of the Corridor Partnership Plan in progress and thought the council could use a briefing on the particulars of the project.

Q: What advantage to Trapper Creek is there if you just focus on the area which has already been designated?

Penny: There is a possibility that Trapper Creek projects specified in the plan could get funding, however they would probably have to be along the Parks Highway. All projects which have applied for grant funding within the State Scenic Byway program have received funding, to date. In the future, there will be more competition for the grant funds since additional Corridor Partnership Plans around the state are currently being written. The Haines, the Sterling, and the Richardson Highways are in the process of writing or are almost finished writing their plans.

The grassroots task force will be the driving force behind the writing of the Corridor Partnership Plan. The grassroots task force will be made up of the stakeholders in the area including residents, business owners, community leaders and agency representatives. At this time 19 people have volunteered to serve on the task force. These people will provide input for the plan and help prioritize the byway's needs. The time commitment for the task force is about four meetings in the next year.

Q: Who writes the grants; who does the work after the plan is written?

Penny: It's the task force. Some task forces (citizens groups) have gone on to become a non-profit group and continue to meet regularly.

Q: Trapper Creek may qualify to be involved in this because they are a gateway community?

Penny: Exactly.

Q: So does that qualify Trapper Creek residents to be task force members?

Penny: Of course. To make sure that Trapper Creek was being represented in the plan you'd want to have someone from Trapper Creek who could speak for the interests of the community on the task force.

Murh O'Brien showed a video produced for the Glen Highway's application to become a National Scenic Byway. The video gave an overview of the process stakeholders went through in the making of their plan and the realization of their project goals.

A group brainstorming session was conducted to generate ideas for possible projects or resources in this area and along the byway. The ideas are grouped by subject type.

What we value most about the Parks Highway:

- ◇ Seeing the mountain
- ◇ View from Kesugi Ridge
- ◇ Fishing, recreational activities, etc . . .
- ◇ History of the area

Our favorite stories of the area:

- ◇ Susitna Bridge dropping into the River
- ◇ Mining history at the entrance to Cache Creek
- ◇ Trading Route
- ◇ Mountain climbing history
- ◇ Archeological site in Trapper Creek (trading corridor)
- ◇ Petersville Road area as one of the first roads in Alaska
- ◇ Early explorers
- ◇ Story of the '59ers
- ◇ Paddle wheel boats in area
- ◇ Native history
- ◇ Frederick Cook's story
- ◇ The building of the Parks Highway
- ◇ Mary Carey's story
- ◇ Don Sheldon

Our favorite stops:

- ◇ The one bathroom stop
- ◇ Rest area at Veteran's Memorial
- ◇ Denali View North and South
- ◇ Hurricane Bridge

Possible Projects:

- ◇ Petersville Road bike trail
- ◇ Trapper Creek sign
- ◇ Interpretive plan and signage
- ◇ Marketing plan
- ◇ Raft launch at the East Fork of the Chulitna and Troublesome Creek.
- ◇ Enhancement of recreational facilities
- ◇ All season trail throughout byway
- ◇ Historic landing project
- ◇ Covered pavilion for picnicking
- ◇ Walkway for Hurricane Bridge
- ◇ Crane preserve for Sandhill migration
- ◇ Rabideaux Cabin restoration
- ◇ Original trail of '59ers (now a cat-trail?) restored for multi-use
- ◇ Clear new growth to restore views

The upcoming task force meeting will be held at 6:00 P.M. on Thursday, April 19th, in the Tri-Valley Community Center in the upstairs room. Norwood Marsh volunteered to serve on the task force as a representative from Trapper Creek.

Penny summarized what was covered in the meeting and thanked everyone for coming and for their participation. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.