



**Far North Bicentennial Park**  
Since 1976 "lands in a nearly natural state  
for the benefit of future generations"

[www.bicentennialpark.info](http://www.bicentennialpark.info)

April 10, 2008

To: Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission

Friends of Bicentennial Park works to maintain Anchorage's Far North Bicentennial Park in a nearly natural state for the benefit of future generations. Board members Pixie Siebe and Walt Parker are members of the Far North Bicentennial Park Trails Advisory Committee.

In June of 2007 we gave general support of Singletrack Advocates' and Alaska Trails' proposal to construct Anchorage's first network of singletrack trails built to standards recommended by the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA). We supported their request to the extent they fit into the trails planning that is currently underway for Far North Bicentennial Park.

Singletrack trails are compatible with the goals of FNBP. They maintain the natural feel of the park and will provide a better balance of uses. Singletrack Advocates has demonstrated with the Brown Bear trail their ability to build popular and sustainable singletrack trails. We are inclined to support this.

Our concern is that before a major new trail system is approved, the Park needs a trail plan to prevent a "first come first served" approach to trail development. Any trail development without a trails plan could result in a poor overall system.

We understand that STA has funding and wants to start the project this summer in advance of the FNBP Trail Plan. Considering only the trails proposed for this coming summer's work, the trails in the south-east corner of the FNBP, we recognize the following points:

- The area has been substantially cleared of trees as part of Anchorage's Firewise program. A trail system can be built with minimal tree cutting.
- The area that has been cleared by firewise is criss-crossed with social trails now. Winter use includes running, hiking, biking, skiing, snowmobiling and four wheeling. A planned system of trails would be preferable to the chaotic trail creation going on now. The proposed trails would not be a new use, but would bring order and sustainability to the use that is there now.

- When the main ski trails were widened and smoothed a few years ago, cyclists increased their speeds causing complaints from other users. Even cyclists who prefer a technical trail ride must ride the wide trails to reach the few segments of narrow trails in FNBP. A new system of singletrack in its own area will decrease conflicts by drawing cyclists away from the wider trails.
- STA has taken steps in planning and preparing for these trails that are likely to be substantially the same as the steps that will be required after the FNBP Trail plan is in place.
- There is a benefit to minimizing the time spent building the trails. A delay could drag this into a multi year project to no one's benefit.

Based on these points, we can support the proposed trails shown in blue that are generally south and east of the Spencer loop and the part of the red trail that is south of the Upper Gasline Trail.

However, we hesitate to support more trail building in the area north of the Upper Gasline Trail at this time due to more significant impacts on previously undisturbed terrain and a concern for maintaining a wildlife corridor from Chugach State Park into the heart of FNBP.

Before the work begins, we feel it would be wise to notify and consult with the neighborhood adjacent to the project and to post signs as soon as possible in this area to notify both winter and summer users of the intended work, giving them advance notice and an opportunity to make recommendations.

We would also like to see a year round connection to the parking area at Hilltop. The proposed multi use trail shown in purple would satisfy that request.

Dan Rosenberg  
Chair  
Friends of Bicentennial Park

The map referenced is posted at:  
<http://www.muni.org/iceimages/parks/PRC%2008-27%20STA%20Map2.pdf> on 4/10/2008.