

December ___, 2023 **DRAFT for approval at 12/14/23 RCCC Meeting**

Senator Click Bishop and Senator Cathy Giessel
Co-Chairs, Senate Resources Committee
Senate Resources Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Via Email: Senator.Click.Bishop@akleg.gov Senator.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov

Dear Senators Bishop and Giessel:

The undersigned, including:

The Glen Alps Community Council (GACC)
The Glen Alps Road Service Area (GARSA) Board of Supervisors,
Alaska Trails
Single Track Advocates
Rabbit Creek Community Council
Chugach State Park Citizens Advisory Board
Nordic Ski Association of Alaska

are writing to request much needed funds to maintain the section of Canyon Road inside Chugach State Park leading to the Sunnyside Flattop Mountain and Rabbit Lake trailheads. We are requesting a legislative appropriation of \$75,000 to maintain approximately 2000 linear feet of Upper Canyon Road inside the park boundary.

These are major trailheads with significant use. A survey-count of trail usage in July 2023 revealed as many as 1,071 Park visitors used the Canyon Road trailheads on July 21st. Nearly 700 visitors enjoyed these trails on July 31st. However, the survey did not include the popular July 4th holiday when thousands of people climb Flattop Mountain in a time-honored tradition. While the July survey did not count vehicles these visitors used to access the Park, it does give us a reasonable indication of the volume of traffic on the Canyon Road corridor.

In winter, the Park does not have the budget to plow the road, vastly reducing the value of one of very few access points to the Park. In summer, this segment of Canyon Road has severe ruts, potholes, drainage issues, exposed boulders in the roadbed, and is very narrow. During the summer, and well into the fall, there are often more than 100 to 150 vehicles parked along both sides of Upper Canyon Road as far as one-half mile or more from the trailheads, stacked up well into the neighborhood below. As the State of Alaska tries to increase tourist visitation, this road does not present an inviting or pleasant experience. In winter, dozens of vehicles line both sides

of the road below the Park. On a recent late-October weekend, as many as 250 vehicles were parked along Upper Canyon Road. Most of the people that weekend were climbing Flattop / Sunnyside and ice skating on Rabbit Lake.

The crush of traffic utilizing this corridor has created a public safety issue with regard to emergency response, not only inside the park, but in the nearby neighborhoods. In addition, the sharp increase in traffic has created severe road maintenance challenges both inside and outside the Park.

GARSA's jurisdiction and responsibility for maintenance stops at the Park boundary. And the Municipality of Anchorage is prohibited from bonding or appropriating funds for assets inside a State park. As a result, the funding for the section of Canyon Road inside the Park will need to come from the State of Alaska. Without seasonal maintenance, Canyon Road inside the Park will further deteriorate to the point of potentially closing access to one of Chugach State Park's busiest trailheads.

The GACC and GARSA request to the Alaska Legislature would be directed at summer and winter maintenance on the segment of Canyon Road inside the Park for the summer of 2024 and snow plowing the following winter. Without snow removal, park visitors would be forced to park in the neighborhood, which as mentioned earlier is becoming a serious issue with park usage up sharply year-round.

Attached are several pictures depicting road conditions inside the park and vehicle parking issues as well. The winter photo shows several vehicles that were stuck literally for months on a hill on Upper Canyon just inside the Park boundary. They were not removed until spring.

We thank you for your serious consideration of this request and look forward to working with your offices to shepherd this request through the 2024 session of the Alaska Legislature.

Sincerely,

Rob Brown, President, Glen Alps Community Council
Joe Connolly, Chairman, Glen Alps Road Service Area Board of Supervisors
Roger Marks, Member, Glen Alps Road Service Area Board of Supervisors
Carl Portman, Resident, Glen Alps Road Service Area
_____, Alaska Trails
_____, Single Track Advocates
_____, Rabbit Creek Community Council
_____, Chugach State Park Citizens Advisory Board
_____, Nordic Ski Association of Alaska

