

Eagle River Valley Community Council  
c/o Federation of Community Councils  
1057 W Fireweed Ln  
Anchorage, AK 99503

May 14, 2024

Ricky Gease  
Director, Alaska State Parks  
[ricky.gease@alaska.gov](mailto:ricky.gease@alaska.gov)

Ben Corwin  
Superintendent, Chugach Region  
[ben.corwin@alaska.gov](mailto:ben.corwin@alaska.gov)

Dear Director Gease and Superintendent Corwin:

The Eagle River Valley Community Council (ERVCC) has been following the progress on the proposed new access to Ram Valley in Chugach State Park, which is in our council's boundaries. Haley Johnston from Alaska Trails provided an update at our [April 10](#) and May 8, 2024 meetings, and we appreciate her attendance. For many of our neighbors whose property is touched by the proposed routes, this was the first opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification on the study's status from someone associated with the plan's development.

We were surprised when Ms. Johnston indicated there is no legally mandated process for the Alaska Department of Natural Resources/Alaska State Parks to solicit public input on the plan's development other than through the [2010 Chugach State Park Access Plan](#) process, and some of the neighbors at the meeting whose property is immediately adjacent to or potentially suitable for proposed trail access points indicated they had not been contacted and only found out about it by searching online. As individuals potentially affected by decisions to be made by Alaska State Parks, they - and ERVCC - should be directly and continuously engaged in the planning process (see ERVCC [Resolution 2023-05](#), support for community engagement and public participation in local planning and development projects).

While we are not opposed to the potential for new trail access to Ram Valley, we do want to be directly involved in the planning stages of the project. We believe public participation early in the process benefits projects by identifying areas of concern and potential opportunities to be pursued. Public involvement helps build public understanding and support, and can help avoid expensive "re-work" later in project development. For instance, ERVCC members suggested an access point not previously considered in the plan's development: access from Eklutna Inc.'s property at MP 8.5 on Eagle River Road. In addition to identifying and reserving a trail easement with Eklutna, Inc., prior to housing construction, this location could support parking access,

provide access to multiple new routes to Ram Valley, avoid avalanche zones, and limit impacts to already developed private property.

As key stakeholders in the plan's development, I invite you to join Ms. Johnston at our September 11, 2024, meeting to provide an in-person update on the study's progress, funding status, and next steps, as well as provide responses to the questions posed at our April meeting. While we understand Alaska Trails, who is charged with developing the Ram Valley Access Plan, intends to gather public comments at the Eagle River Nature Center this summer, we also strongly encourage Alaska State Parks to host a public open house at a convenient location within our council area prior to the draft plan's completion and to notify all property owners in Eagle River Valley.

Thank you, and we very much look forward to working with you on this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Julie K. Jessen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Julie K. Jessen  
President

Cc: Joy Webb, Secretary, ERVCC

Sarah Davenport, Incoming Secretary, ERVCC

Mr. Mark Littlefield, Anchorage Assembly Representative

Senator Kelly Merrick, Alaska Senate

Representative Jamie Allard, Alaska House

Haley Johnston, Alaska Trails