

Copper River Access Study

Project ID: AK Gulkana 2019(1)



Introduction

There are over 200 public easements crossing Ahtna, Inc., private lands in accordance with Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Section 17(b) to connect to federal lands. These easements are managed by federal land management agencies.

In the area near Glennallen and Gulkana, Alaska, it is not clear what the best route should be to allow public access to the Copper River between its connections with the Tazlina and Gulkana Rivers. Additionally, once users reach the Copper River, it's not clear where to launch their boats, connect with federal lands trails on the other side, or return to the proper 17(b) easement. This project therefore evaluates where to establish a permanent public easement across Ahtna land to the Copper River, what infrastructure is needed to support access, and what long term maintenance costs and responsibilities would be.

Goals

1. Analyze three alternative unpaved routes, one of which will be chosen for public access across Ahtna, Inc. lands to access the Copper River
2. Evaluate feasibility of constructing and maintaining a one-acre parking area and Copper River boat launch
3. Identify a preferred public access route, including estimated construction and maintenance costs, easement needs, and land ownership patterns, cultural and natural resource constraints, recreational and subsistence opportunities

Tasks

The study will evaluate trail route easement alternatives across Ahtna, Inc. lands, one of which will be chosen, along with conceptual design and cost estimates for a one-acre parking area and



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boat launch on the Copper River. The project team has structured the study around progressive deliverables that support stakeholder engagement at key milestones (see figure at right).

The tasks for this study are organized around progressive memoranda leading to a final report. The research is guided by a project management team composed of FHWA Federal Lands Highway, Ahtna, Inc., US National Park Service, US Bureau of Land Management, and the State of Alaska.



How to Engage

The study's anticipated timeline is 18 months, ending in June of 2023. The study team will engage Tribal governments, land management agencies, and the public throughout to understand future needs. Individuals interested in engaging more in this study should contact [Cole Grisham](#) and [Bruce Cain](#).

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