

**Rabbit Creek Valley Land Purchase for Public Access in Chugach State Park**

**FY2007 Request: \$800,000**  
**Reference No: AMD 42053**

**AP/AL:** Appropriation

**Project Type:** Planning

**Category:** Natural Resources

**Location:** Anchorage Areawide

**Contact:** Nico Bus

**House District:** Anchorage Areawide (HD 17-32) **Contact Phone:** (907)465-2406

**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2006 - 06/30/2008

**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

This funding will allow for purchase of three properties surrounded by Chugach State Park that will secure public access into upper Rabbit Creek Valley, a convenient and very scenic part of the park. These acquisitions will go a long way to improve year-round park access, disburse public use and reduce crowding, improve parking and provide comfort facilities, and provide emergency response access into this portion of Chugach State Park.

<b>Funding:</b>	<b>FY2007</b>	<b>FY2008</b>	<b>FY2009</b>	<b>FY2010</b>	<b>FY2011</b>	<b>FY2012</b>	<b>Total</b>
Gen Fund	\$800,000						\$800,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

**Operating & Maintenance Costs:**

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Additional Information / Prior Funding History:**

This is a new project request.

**Project Description/Justification:**

Chugach State Park has been working towards legal public access in upper Rabbit Creek Valley for over 20 years. Without legal access this valley is effectively closed to public use. Regardless, trespass through upper Rabbit Creek Valley has been estimated at almost 6,700 visitors annually. The purchase of these three in-holdings, approximately 320 acres, would secure public access, alleviate these trespass issues and lead to adequate park trailhead development.

Chugach State Park is close enough to Anchorage for year-round after-work recreation, and yet large enough for week-long wilderness exploration. The purchase of these in-holdings would provide a good alternative to the increasing congestion associated with Glen Alps and trail use to Flat Top Mt. An alternate route up Flat Top Mt. is possible from upper Rabbit Valley and is currently being used. Despite its proximity to Anchorage and its size, Chugach State Park access remains a problem. As Anchorage grows, traditional access points into the park are being blocked by new subdivision development or closed off by landowners. Access points to Chugach State Parks such as Glen Alps and Prospect Heights are over designed capacity on many days. The Rabbit Lake area can provide significant relief to this crowding and a very desirable trail connection to McHugh Creek along the Seward Highway. Part of this trail connection exists now from the McHugh Creek Wayside to Rabbit Lake.

**Why is this Project Needed Now:**

Landowners are willing to sell the land now. If Parks does not purchase it the access problems will remain and property values will become more expensive over time.

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In addition, a Rasmuson Foundation grant of \$200,000 has been awarded to The Conservation Fund towards the purchase of two of these parcels, contingent upon the State of Alaska committing resources to develop and manage public access to the area.

**Specific Spending Detail:**

Line Item Expenditures:

Capital Outlay \$800.0 Three in-holding purchases in Chugach State Park

**Project Support:**

This project is endorsed by all affected local community councils, the Chugach State Park Citizens Advisory Board, The Chugach State Park Access Coalition, The Conservation Fund and the Anchorage Municipal Assembly.

**Project Opposition:**

None known