

**Agency: Department of Natural Resources****Project Title:****Project Type:** Maintenance and Repairs

# Olnes Pond and the Greater Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area Repair and Refurbishment

**State Funding Requested: \$500,000**  
 Future Funding May Be Requested

**House District:** Fairbanks Areawide (7-11)

## Brief Project Description:

This project will repair and refurbish the popular Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area.

## Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$500,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2013 State Funding Request:	(\$500,000)
Project Deficit:	\$0

## Detailed Project Description and Justification:

The Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area (LCSRA) is a popular recreation area just north of Fairbanks. It holds two campgrounds, Olnes Pond and Whitefish, and is used by residents across the Fairbanks North Star Borough for camping, fishing, and boating. Unfortunately, in FY2002 budget cuts in the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation caused the elimination of a Fairbanks park ranger position and the LCSRA was relegated to passive management. Since then, this once popular recreation site has fallen into disrepair. Refurbishing the LCSRA is the top priority of the Northern Area State Parks Citizen Advisory Board.

This funding will be used to fund critical deferred maintenance projects throughout the Olnes Pond and Whitefish areas. It will be used to replace toilets, refurbish campsites, improve trails, and resurface roads. Without this funding, coupled with a reinstated park ranger position in the operating budget, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has indicated they will need to fully close the LCSRA due to safety concerns.

The LCSRA is an immensely popular state park that is used by residents across the area. With restoration and the reinstatement of the Fairbanks park ranger position, DNR estimates a total annual revenue from the area of approximately \$103,000. Clearly, the LCSRA serves a valuable public service in the Fairbanks area, and it is important the state restores funding to allow for its continued operation.

## Project Timeline:

The repairs will begin in the summer of 2012.

## Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Department of Natural Resources

**Grant Recipient Contact Information:**

Name:	Ben Ellis
Title:	Director, Alaska State Parks
Address:	3700 Airport Way Fairbanks, Alaska 99709
Phone Number:	269-8400
Email:	ben.ellis@alaska.gov

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority?  Yes  No

<i>For use by Co-chair Staff Only:</i>
3:18 PM 5/2/2012

JUSTIFICATION FOR RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PARK RANGER I POSITION IN FAIRBANKS  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF PARKS & OUTDOOR RECREATION

**BACKGROUND**

- Statewide funding cut in 2002 eliminated the Fairbanks Park Ranger position.
- Two campgrounds put under private contract. (Chena River & Upper Chatanika).
- Two campgrounds put under passive management. (Whitefish and Olnes Pond).
- Private contract for Upper Chatanika turned back over to the state in 2006. Passively managed 2006 through 2008. Under temporary contract for 2009.
- In October 2012 the Chena River State Recreation Site contract expires.

**Public Safety**

- On May 25<sup>th</sup> 2009 Olnes Pond had an ATV fatality. This tragedy may have been preventable had there been onsite supervision.
- Sunday June 30<sup>th</sup> 2009 a stabbing leads to attempted murder charges at Olnes Pond.
- Troopers arrest women for DUI at Olnes Pond late Saturday night July 7<sup>th</sup> 2009.
- Troopers responded to an ATV fatality at Olnes Pond, spring 2010.
- Troopers responded to a fatality in July 2010 involving a person found dead in his van.
- Troopers responded to a drowning fatality spring 2011 at Olnes Pond.
- Passively managed sites invite lawlessness, become garbage dumps, present unsanitary conditions, and suffer resource and facility degradation.
- Local residents have expressed their concerns of witnessing anything from motorcycle gangs, to people living under bridges, to prostitution rings.
- Winter 2008, Ranger was called by Office of Children's Services to contact a family living at Upper Chatanika with several young children being exposed to extreme cold conditions that threatening their health and well-being.
- Summer 2008, Ranger was contacted by the Alaska State Troopers to examine and clean area at Chena Pump Wayside where two wanted felons, who had been found by Troopers, had been living in a make-shift camp along the river. Site was littered with mattresses, couches, chairs, clothing, and cases of beer cans, drug paraphernalia, condoms, and miscellaneous trash.
- No other agencies are willing to take over management of these facilities.

**BENEFITS OF STATE MANAGEMENT**

- Provide **safe** recreational opportunities for 225,000 people within an hour's drive of Fairbanks.
- Camping revenues (\$90,000) would offset operating costs by 80%.
- Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area has great potential as an ATV Park.
- Increased general Safety for the residents and area of the Chatanika River.
- Managed areas will protect the resources and land owned by Alaskans for their enjoyment and recreational opportunity for years to come.
- Increased public safety and management at Chena Pump Campground.



# Fairbanks North Star Borough

Office of the Mayor

809 Pioneer Road

P.O. Box 71267

Fairbanks, Alaska 99707-1267

907/459-1300

Fax: 907/459-1102

Email: [mayor@co.fairbanks.ak.us](mailto:mayor@co.fairbanks.ak.us)

February 23, 2012

Representative Bob Miller  
State Capitol, Room 112  
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Letter of Support for Restoration of the Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area/Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground and reinstatement of the Fairbanks Park Ranger Position

Dear Representative Miller:

I am writing to support a capital projects request for restoration of the Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area (LCSRA) as well as funding for a Fairbanks Park ranger position in order to actively manage LCSRA.

LCSRA/Olnes Pond and Whitefish campground was a favored destination for local residents for years; unfortunately budget cuts in 2002 eliminated the full time ranger who managed the park. Since then, the park has fallen into disarray and the facilities are now unsafe and unsanitary. Over the last five years, the Northern Area Alaska State Parks Advisory Board has listed as its top priority the reinstatement of the ranger position as well as repairs to the site. Unfortunately, the AK State Parks priority has not been in a governor's budget request and now this state facility may be largely removed impacting residents and visitors. Necessary improvements to bring the facility up to Alaska State Park's standards is large. However, given the former popularity of the park with over 50,000 visitors a year back when it was managed, and the outcry of support this winter for restoration of the facilities and re-staffing of the park, it is imperative that the state make the needed investments to make this park enjoyable and safe again.

As Mayor of the Fairbanks North Star Borough, I am pleased to write this letter of support for capital funds for restoration of the Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area and for reinstatement of a full time ranger position for oversight of the park.

Sincerely,



Luke Hopkins, Mayor



# MEMORANDUM

Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

STATE OF ALASKA

Director's Office

**DATE:** February 17, 2012

**TO:** Senator John Coghill  
Senator Joe Paskvan  
Senator Joe Thomas  
Representative Eric Feige  
Representative David Guttenberg  
Representative Scott Kawasaki  
Representative Bob Miller  
Representative Steve Thompson  
Representative Tammie Wilson

**FROM:** Ben Ellis, Director of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

**TOPIC:** Olnes Pond and the Lower Chatanika River Recreation Area

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In meeting with you and/or your staff last week in Juneau, you requested information on what is needed to restore active management by the Division of Parks to the Olnes Pond/Lower Chatanika River State Recreation Area which has been in passive management for approximately 10 years. This briefing paper is designed to answer questions and address the concerns raised by your constituents and shared with me during our meetings.

## BACKGROUND

The Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area (LCSRA) is a 400-acre parcel at mile 10.5 on the Elliott Highway, north of Fairbanks. Its major features are camping, fishing and boating. The recreation area provides miles of Chatanika River frontage with two boat launches. Other popular activities include ATV riding, hiking and berry picking. Popular fall and winter activities are spear fishing, hunting, trapping, skiing and snow machining. There are two developed campgrounds at LCSRA, Olnes Pond and Whitefish.

This area was first designated as a state recreation area in 1979 when the Division of Lands issued an interagency land management agreement (ILMA) to the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation for 30 acres. In 1983, an amendment to the ILMA added an additional 370 acres to the park unit. In 1992, a boat launch and parking lot were constructed at Whitefish Campground using \$150,000 in Sportfish Restoration Act Funding.

In Fiscal Year 2002, the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) operating budget was cut by \$200,000. This cut affected a dozen state park units across Alaska when three park ranger positions were eliminated as well as associated maintenance funding for the park areas managed by those rangers. In the Mat-Su area, nine park units were either closed, placed in passive management or placed under concession contract. In the Northern Area, three park units - the Chena River State Recreation Site (SRS), Lower Chatanika SRA and Upper Chatanika SRS - were affected when the

Fairbanks park ranger position was eliminated. The Chena River SRS was placed under a concession contract, as was the less lucrative Upper Chatanika SRS. They remain under concession contract today. The division advertised for a contractor to operate the Lower Chatanika SRA numerous times but had no response to the request for proposals (RFP). For the past 10 years, the public has continued to visit the Lower Chatanika SRA but the area has received no routine patrols or maintenance by DPOR. Repeated attempts to find another public agency, a non-profit group or a for-profit organization willing and able to operate and maintain the Lower Chatanika SRA have been unsuccessful.

For the past five years, the top priority of the Northern Area State Parks Citizen Advisory Board has been to reinstate the Fairbanks park ranger position in order for DPOR to be able to actively manage Lower Chatanika SRA. If the Fairbanks park ranger position was reinstated, the division would also place the Chena River SRS and the Upper Chatanika SRS back into state management, using the revenues from those two sites to support their operations and maintenance as well as that of the Lower Chatanika SRA, where Olnes Pond is located.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS AT LOWER CHATANIKA SRA & UPPER CHATANIKA SRS**

- In May 2009, Olnes Pond had an ATV fatality.
- In June 2009, a stabbing at Olnes Pond led to attempted murder charges.
- Troopers arrested women for DUI at Olnes Pond late Saturday night in July 2009.
- Troopers responded to an ATV fatality at Olnes Pond, spring 2010.
- Troopers responded to a fatality in July 2010 involving a person found dead in his van.
- Troopers responded to a drowning fatality spring 2011 at Olnes Pond.
- Passively managed sites invite lawlessness, become garbage dumps, present unsanitary conditions, and suffer resource and facility degradation.
- Local residents have expressed their concerns of witnessing anything from motorcycle gangs, to people living under bridges, to prostitution rings.
- In winter 2008, the Office of Children's Services contacted the Northern Area Alaska State Parks office to contact a family living at Upper Chatanika with several young children being exposed to extreme cold conditions that threatened their health and well-being.

### **ACTION**

Because of public safety concerns and limited resources, the division sees no alternative but to remove the structures and close the area this summer. Access to the boat launch would remain open but the area around Olnes Pond would be closed to vehicular use. As is the case now, the Alaska State Troopers would provide public safety as their staffing and budget permits.

Cost associated with closing the Lower Chatanika SRA\*: **\$56.0**

*\*Includes removal of the six toilets and installing a double gate to block vehicular access*

To restore active management by the Division of Parks to Olnes Pond as recommended by the Northern Area State Parks Citizen Advisory Board, we would need to reinstate the Fairbanks Park Ranger position and return the Lower Chatanika SRA, the Upper Chatanika SRS and the Chena River SRS to DPOR management. We would also need to address the deferred maintenance needs at the Lower Chatanika SRA and to a less extent in the Upper Chatanika SRS.

## OPERATING FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Annual cost associated with reinstating Lower Chatanika SRA:

• Park Ranger salary & benefits (12 month position)	\$87.7
• Annual maintenance & operations*	<u>\$72.0</u>
<b>Total (FY14 and beyond):</b>	<b>\$159.7</b>
• FY13 One-Time equipment and training costs	<u>\$40.1</u>
<b>TOTAL FY13 including one-time funds</b>	<b>\$199.8</b>

*\*includes supplies, outhouse pumping, dumpster tipping, communications, ranger assistant and volunteer stipends*

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT ONE-TIME FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Following is an itemized list of the most critical deferred maintenance needs identified for the Lower Chatanika SRA:

### Olnes Pond

• Replace three toilets with two double and one single ADA accessible	\$170.0
• Upgrade 25 campsites with new tables, firepits, bumper logs and tent pads	\$55.0
• Grade, surface and recondition roads, including camp loop	\$120.0
• Recondition lake loop road and realign sections too close to lake	\$70.0
• Make well ADA accessible & meet ADEC requirements	\$22.0
• Improve, harden and sign ATV trails	\$100.0
• Replace/install directional and public information signs	\$4.0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$541.0</b>

### Whitefish Campground

• Replace three toilets with two doubles and one single ADA accessible	\$170.0
• Provide fill for and level 10 campsites and parking pads and replace tables, firepits, bumper logs	\$223.0
• Make well ADA accessible & meet ADEC requirements	\$22.0
• Replace/install directional and public information signs	\$4.0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$419.0</b>

## REVENUE POTENTIAL

Retaining a contractor to operate the Upper Chatanika SRS has been challenging due the site's slim profit margin. The Chena River SRS offers a better opportunity for a private business and has been successfully operated by a private contractor since 2005. If both sites were managed by the division again, the revenues from the two sites are estimated at \$95.0. The Lower Chatanika SRA could provide an estimated \$8.0 in additional revenue from park fees if it was cleaned, refurbished and staff was available to maintain and operate the site, for total annual revenue of approximately \$103.0.

**Summary of operations and maintenance costs and projected revenue**

	FY 2013		FY 2014		FY 2015		FY 2016	
	Cost	Revenue	Cost	Revenue	Cost	Revenue	Cost	Revenue
Park Ranger (S&B plus first year equipment and training costs)	\$127.8		\$87.7		\$87.7		\$87.7	
Chena River SRS annual maintenance & operations (M&O*)	\$40.0		\$40.0		\$40.0		\$40.0	
Chena River SRS annual revenue (estimated)		\$90.0		\$90.0		\$90.0		\$90.0
Upper Chatanika SRS annual M&O	\$16.0		\$16.0		\$16.0		\$16.0	
Upper Chatanika SRS annual revenue (estimated)		\$5.0		\$5.0		\$5.0		\$5.0
Lower Chatanika SRA annual M&O	\$16.0		\$16.0		\$16.0		\$16.0	
Lower Chatanika SRS annual revenue (estimated)		\$0.0		\$0.0		\$8.0		\$8.0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$199.8</b>	<b>\$95.0</b>	<b>\$159.7</b>	<b>\$95.0</b>	<b>\$159.7</b>	<b>\$103.0</b>	<b>\$159.7</b>	<b>\$103.0</b>
estimated shortfall between costs and revenues		(\$104.8)		(\$64.7)		(\$56.7)		(\$56.7)

\* Maintenance and Operations costs include supplies, outhouse pumping, dumpster tipping, communications, ranger assistant and volunteer stipends

## **MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

If the Fairbanks park ranger position was funded effective July 1, 2012, DPOR would immediately work to establish, recruit and hire for the position, and begin the training process. Training (including attendance at the Trooper Academy in Sitka) is critical for the new position before they can begin ranger patrols and duties. A new hire under these circumstances can be expected to be trained and on the ground late in 2013 or early 2014. If funding for the position was placed in the FY12 Supplemental Budget, we would anticipate the Ranger would be ready for the full 2013 summer season. The FY12 Supplemental request would be one month of salary and benefits of \$6.9 and basic startup costs of \$6.5 for a total of \$13.4.

DPOR would continue to operate the Chena River SRS and the Upper Chatanika SRS under concession contracts through 2012, with Parks management beginning in January 2013. Concerning Lower Chatanika SRA and Olnes Pond, the division would pump and clean the existing six toilets and remove debris during summer 2012. While Ranger coverage throughout the Northern Area is currently taxed, shifts would be manipulated to provide a law enforcement presence during part of every weekend during the summer of 2012.

A campground host would not be stationed at Olnes Pond until regular ranger patrols are in place, mostly likely in summer 2013. If the Chena River SRS and the Upper Chatanika SRS are managed by the division, volunteer hosts would also be stationed at those facilities.



## Northern Area Alaska State Parks Citizen Advisory Board

3700 Airport Way Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-4613 (907) 451-2695

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### Northern Area Alaska State Parks Citizen Advisory Board Resolution 2012-5

**Whereas** the purpose of the Northern Area Alaska State Parks Citizens Advisory Board is to ensure representation of public interest and to make recommendations concerning outdoor recreation;

**Whereas** Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area (LCSRA) is a favorite local destination providing a myriad of recreational opportunities close to Fairbanks;

**Whereas** prior to budget cuts in 2002 the site received 50,000 visitors per summer;

**Whereas** Since 2002 under passive management the area and facilities have become unsafe and unsanitary;

**Whereas** Alaska State Parks mission is to provide outdoor recreation opportunities at clean, safe, well-maintained facilities;

**Whereas** For the past five years, the top priority of the Northern Area State Parks Citizens Advisory Board has been to reinstate the Fairbanks Park ranger position in order to actively manage LCSRA;

**Whereas** LCSRA needs a capital investment to restore the facilities for public use;

**Whereas** strong public support (782 signatures and growing) for saving Olnes Pond and the LCSRA was evidenced at a local legislative meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February in Fairbanks;

**Be it therefore resolved** that the Northern Area Alaska State Parks Citizen Advisory Board unanimously supports funding a park ranger and providing capital money to restore Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area and strongly urges the Legislature to accept this proposal.

Signed, this 21 of February, 2012

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Lysen". The signature is written in a cursive style.

John Lysen, Northern Area State Park Advisory Board Chairman

Copies of this Resolution shall be delivered to members of the Alaska State Legislature, Governor Sean Parnell, Natural Resource Commissioner Dan Sullivan, and State Parks Director Ben Ellis.



P. O. Box 82843, Fairbanks, Alaska 99708-2843  
Hotline: 907-457-5456, Website: <http://www.alaskaskijoring.org>

February 22, 2012

To: Alaska State Legislature

RE: Letter of Support for Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area (LCSRA)

The Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association (ASPA) is a nonprofit organization that promotes recreational and competitive skijoring in the Alaskan Interior. We host a variety of events each season, including how-to clinics, fun races, competitive races and trail tours. We usually hold at least one event a year in the Olnes Pond area to skijor and explore the trails and would like to see the LCSRA area maintained for user safety.

The ASPA Board supports the funding of a park ranger and providing capital money to restore Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area, an area which is utilized year round by user groups of all kinds. The loss of this campground and area, as well as access to the trails and the beautiful scenery would be a major loss to every resident of Fairbanks, no matter their lifestyle or interests.

Thank you and we urge you to support this funding for the LCSRA.

Sincerely,

Jamie Marschner  
President, Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association

# STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF PARKS & OUTDOOR RECREATION

SEAN PARNELL, GOVERNOR

NORTHERN AREA  
3700 AIRPORT WAY  
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99709-4009  
PHONE: (907) 451-2695  
FAX: (907) 451-2754

June 15, 2010

The following information is in response to public concern over the lack of maintenance at Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area and attempts to provide reasons as well as possible solutions.

## Background

Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area (LCSRA) is a 400-acre parcel at mile 10.5 Elliott Highway, north of Fairbanks. Its major features are camping, fishing, and boating. The recreation area provides miles of Chatanika River frontage with two boat launches. Other popular activities include ATV riding, hiking, and berry picking. Popular fall and winter activities are spear fishing, hunting, trapping, skiing, and snow machining. There are two campgrounds at LCSRA. One is at Olnes Pond and the other at Whitefish Campground.

A brief history of the site is as follows. In 1979 an interagency land management agreement (ILMA) was completed by the Division of Lands turning over management of 30 acres to the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. In 1983 an amendment to the ILMA added an additional 370 acres to the park unit. In 1992 Sport Fish Restoration Act Funding (\$150,000) completed a boat launch and restroom at Whitefish Campground.

In Fiscal Year 2002 Alaska State Parks operating budget was cut \$200,000. A dozen State Park Units across Alaska were affected when funds for three park rangers and maintenance funding was cut. Nine campgrounds were affected in the Mat-Su area, and three in the Northern Area (Chena River State Recreation Site (CRSRS), Upper Chatanika SRS, and Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area (LCSRA). Northern Area's part in this reduction was \$65,000. To meet budget reductions and keep the remaining fourteen park units open the Fairbanks Park Ranger position was eliminated.

## Management Options Considered

**Private Management**~ This option proved successful at CRSRS in Fairbanks where revenues were high enough to make the site profitable. Requests for Proposals to operate Upper and Lower Chatanika received little to no public response.

**Transfer Management**~ The Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) was solicited to take over management of Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area. The FNSB declined the offer. The Bureau of Land Management was contacted about transferring management back to them for Upper Chatanika SRS. They also declined transferring ownership.

*"Develop, Conserve, and Enhance Natural Resources for Present and Future Alaskans."*

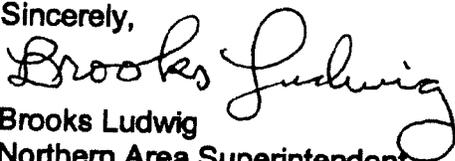
**Passive Management**~ Pull furniture, remove restrooms, and discontinue law enforcement patrols. Allow continued public use and access, but without any management by the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. (current status LCSRA)

**Restore funding, state resumes management**~ The long range goal would reinstate the Fairbanks Park Ranger I position (\$80,500 general funds). This has been the Northern Area Alaska State Parks Citizen Advisory Boards top priority for the past three years. General funds would pay for a year round Park Ranger and four volunteer campground hosts to manage four park units in the greater Fairbanks Area.

**Recommended Option:**

Without reinstatement of general fund money (80,500 FY13) for personnel with which to manage the facilities, and when no businesses are willing to take on the continued maintenance and operation of Lower Chatanika SRA, The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation has limited choices. The Northern Area will focus resources on maintaining the remaining fourteen park units under its jurisdiction, a commitment for which funds are appropriated, and staff is in place to accomplish the agency mission. It is hoped that future funding will be available to reinstate professional management of sites like Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area, along with the capital funding that is needed to restore quality facilities in these sites for the use, enjoyment, and welfare of the citizens of Alaska.

Sincerely,



Brooks Ludwig  
Northern Area Superintendent  
Alaska State Parks

February 24, 2012

Governor Sean Parnell  
Alaska State Legislators  
Natural Resource Commissioner Daniel Sullivan  
State Parks Director Ben Ellis

Re: Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground

To Whom It May Concern:

The Fairbanks Paddlers are aware that the State of Alaska and the Department of Natural Resources have plans to remove the existing park facilities at Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground in the Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area, and to transfer these important State Park properties back to the Division of Lands. Please be advised that the Fairbanks Paddlers oppose this decision. Both sites serve as valuable recreation facilities to our paddlers and their families and include important access points for the Chatanika River.

The Fairbanks Paddlers urge the State of Alaska and the Department of Natural Resources to provide the necessary funding to ensure that these important recreational sites, Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground, are kept open and maintained for the use and enjoyment of us all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Pagel".

Mary Pagel  
President  
Fairbanks Paddlers



RESOLUTION NO. 01-2012

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ALASKA STATE PARKS MANAGEMENT OF**

**OLNES POND AND WHITEFISH CAMPGROUND**

WHEREAS recreation areas in Alaska are an important resource for residents and visitors which should be responsibly maintained for current and future generations; and

WHEREAS the Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground are located within the 400-acre Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area, an important site for the Fairbanks area with the potential to provide access to bountiful recreational opportunities for residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS residents are reluctant to use the once-popular family site that has disintegrated in safety, sanitation and facilities due to budget cuts in 2002 and a "passive management" status; and

WHEREAS tourism businesses report that they are no longer comfortable referring visitors to the site due to these serious issues in safety, sanitation and facilities; and

WHEREAS the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation provides outdoor recreation opportunities and conserves and interprets natural, cultural, and historic resources for the use, enjoyment, and welfare of the people.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau unanimously supports funding for: reinstatement of a park ranger, facility restoration and improvement, and on-going maintenance of the Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau strongly urges the Legislature to accept this proposal during its current fiscal discussions.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Board of Directors of the Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau on February 24, 2012.

Buzzy Chiu, Chair, Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Buzzy Chiu".

Signature

Deb Hickok, President & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deb Hickok".

Signature



Farthest North Girl Scout Council  
431 Old Steese Highway, Suite 100  
Fairbanks, AK 99701  
T 907 456 4782 F 907 452 2320  
[www.fairbanksgirlscouts.org](http://www.fairbanksgirlscouts.org)

February 24, 2012

Governor Sean Parnell  
Alaska State Legislators  
Natural Resource Commissioner Daniel Sullivan  
State Parks Director Ben Ellis

Re: Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground

Dear Governor Parnell and State Legislators,

The Girl Scouts have been made aware that the State of Alaska and the Department of Natural Resources are going to remove all of the improvements, including the toilets, made to Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground in the Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area and transfer this important State Park back to the Division of Lands. Please be advised that the Girl Scouts are extremely concerned and saddened by this decision. Both sites serve as valuable family gathering locations to our Girl Scouts and their families and places where our scouts can implement lessons they have learned.

The Farthest North Girl Scout Council strongly urges the State of Alaska and the Department of Natural Resources to provide the necessary funding to ensure that these important recreational sites, Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground, are kept open and maintained for the use and enjoyment of us all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suellen Nelles".

Suellen Nelles  
Executive Director



*INTERIOR TRAILS PRESERVATION COALITION*

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*ITPC*

Friday, February 24, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

The Interior Trails Preservation Coalition supports efforts to increase funding to the Northern Area office of Alaska State Parks and Recreation in order to reopen the Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area. The recreation area is a popular destination for Fairbanks area residents. It provides a place for camping, swimming, fishing, hiking, and access for river trips.

One of the advantages of the Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area is that it is fairly close to town but it provides a relaxing outdoor setting that feels like it is far out of town.

We understand that Representative Bob Miller has put forth a funding request to bring the recreation area out of passive management. We support that effort and hope Rep. Miller is successful.

Sincerely,

Eric Troyer  
President

*ITPC*

*P.O. Box 74263, Fairbanks, AK 99707*

*Phone: (907) 458-7968*

February 22, 2012

To State Legislators, DNR officials, and Anyone Else Whom This May Concern:

My name is John Glenn; I am an eight-year resident of Haystack and pastor a Christian fellowship group in our community. This letter concerns the significance of the Whitefish Campground and Olnes Pond to the community on Haystack Mountain. I have heard that the State of Alaska is planning to completely close these parks, demolishing existing structures—outhouses, boat ramp, pavilion, etc. and barricading access to these areas. I can assure you the strong sentiment in this community is to keep these areas open to the public for camping, community functions, fishing, boating, etc.

These parks are very important to the people residing on Haystack and the surrounding area (Vault, Bear's Den, Himalaya, etc.). When the state stopped maintaining these areas, years ago, our community began to clean them up every spring. We continue to do this as part of our spring cleanup of Haystack. Volunteers from Haystack pick up trash along all our roads (over 10 miles of roads), part of the Elliot Highway, the area around the bridge, Whitefish campgrounds, and Ones Pond. Every year we get a good response with many families and individuals participating in the cleanup in May. Then, May through September, we have a well-attended monthly potluck at the pavilion at Whitefish Campground where we eat together, talk with our neighbors, share information of community interest, etc. Aside from recreational value to our families and the monthly potlucks, these parks have been used by people on Haystack and others from Fairbanks for Christian fellowship meetings, baptismal services, memorial potlucks for deceased neighbors, etc. In the summer they are a popular recreation area for people of Fairbanks, tourists, anglers, and in the fall, hunters.

In short Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground/Chatanika River are an integral part of life in our community and are a blessing to many others from outside Haystack. I strongly urge the Alaska DNR and any other authorities involved to make no move to restrict access to or use of these parks, but on the contrary, to do whatever necessary to maintain availability of these resources to the public.

I am available for questions regarding this issue and our community at 907-322-6455.

Respectfully,

John Glenn

Midnight Sun Fly Casters  
P.O. Box 750134  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775  
February 23, 2012

To: All State of Alaska Legislators:

We, the Board of Directors of the Midnight Sun Flycasters, are in full support of the Northern Area Alaska State Parks Citizen Advisory Board Resolution 2012-5. We strongly believe that closing the Olnes Pond and the Lower Chatinika State Recreation Area is not the right thing to do for the residents of Interior Alaska. Olnes Pond and the LCSRA are an important place for many of our families. They provide a place for families to spend time together camping, swimming, fishing, boating, hiking and sharing other outdoor activities. These activities among others build strong responsible families. We urge you as our legislators to fund a park ranger and provide capital money to restore Olnes Pond and the Lower Chantanika State Recreation Area.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Henry Garbowski 388-5961

Vice President Midnight Sun Fly Casters

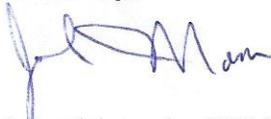
Midnight Sun Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
February 22, 2012

To: Alaska State Legislators

The Board of Directors of the Midnight Sun Chapter of Trout Unlimited supports the Northern Area Alaska State Parks Citizen Advisory Board Resolution 2012-5. The Lower Chatinika State Recreation Area and Olnes Pond are both areas that are heavily used by interior Alaska residents and we believe both of these sites should be maintained and not closed. Both sites serve as recreation areas where families go to camp, fish, swim, boat, and spend time together. Both the Chatinika River and Olnes Pond are favorite places for many interior Alaska fisherman. Furthermore, Olnes Pond is stocked with fish by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and is heavily used. We urge the legislature to fund a park ranger and provide the monies to restore both of these sites.

Thank you for supporting this worthwhile cause.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Morack".

John Morack 479-2676

Secretary, Midnight Sun Chapter of Trout Unlimited

**RESOLUTION OF CONCERN AND SUPPORT FOR  
OLNES POND and WHITEFISH CAMPGROUND  
BY  
THE TUNDRA ROLLERS**

WHEREAS, the **TUNDRA ROLLERS** is a chapter of an Alaska State RV organization and the world's largest International RV organization; and

WHEREAS, the mission of our club and the parent organization is to promote the enjoyment of RV camping and to provide support to make it easier and more enjoyable; and

WHEREAS, the TUNDRA ROLLERS' home is the Fairbanks North Star Borough; and

WHEREAS, we have enjoyed, as a group and individually, our camping experiences at Olnes Pond and Whitefish Landing over the years; and

WHEREAS, we only have a few improved areas in our Borough where families, especially those with small children, can go to camp and spend time outside; and

WHEREAS, we feel these family-friendly campgrounds are vitally important to the recreational needs of our community; and

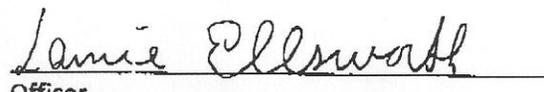
WHEREAS, we have been made aware that the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources is going to remove all of the improvements made to these parks over the years, barricade the roads so they are not accessible, and deed them back to the Division of Lands this spring or summer; and

WHEREAS, the Tundra Rollers are extremely concerned and saddened by this decision by the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED that we individually and collectively request, and expect, the State of Alaska and the Department of Natural Resources to provide the necessary funding to ensure that these important recreational sites, Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground, are kept open and maintained for the use and enjoyment of the citizens of the State of Alaska and the Fairbanks North Star Borough.**

ADOPTED at North Pole, Alaska, this 23 day of February 2012.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Officer  
Vice President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Officer  
Secretary

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

*Session:*

State Capitol Building, Room 112  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-2186  
Phone: (907) 465-6878  
Fax: (907) 465-3883  
Toll Free: (866) 465-4976



*Interim:*

1292 Sadler Way, Ste. 308  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
Phone: (907) 452-6084  
Fax: (907) 452-6096  
Toll Free: (866) 465-4976

**REPRESENTATIVE BOB MILLER  
DISTRICT 7**

## **Memorandum**

Following are several pages of signatures from a community petition to save the Olnes Pond and Whitefish campgrounds. These pages are just an example of the over 700 signatures on the petition that may be provided upon request.

# Save Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground

We Fairbanks North Star Borough residents only have a few improved areas where families, especially those with small children, can go to camp and spend time outside. Olnes Pond is north of Fairbanks beside the Elliott Highway just before you cross the Chatanika River. It's off the main road, has space for many vehicles, has a shallow sandy beach for small children, and is stocked each year with 500 catchable size rainbows and some grayling. Whitefish Landing Campground and Boat Launch is across the Chatanika from Olnes Pond. They were both improved by the State as state campgrounds, but the State shut them down a few years ago for budgetary reasons. Without State funding, they will continue to degrade and will quickly become unuseable.

We don't want this to happen – it would be a great loss to our community! Please sign this petition urging our State government to provide the funds to repair and open both camping areas for the public. For more information, contact Marv at 456-3066.

Name:

CATHERINE HUIZAGA

Patricia Russeel

Christopher Russeel

Bryan Allen

Elizabeth Allen

Jerry Rubert

MICHAEL D. RAMEN

Richard Greenman

PAUL COPELLO

Address:

2577 MULLER LN NORTHPOLE, AK

593A OLD STEESE HIGHWAY  
FAIRBANKS AK

4102 CEDAR ST FT WAINWRIGHT

1111 CUBE AV. NORTH POLE

1320 WAKE FOREST WAY FBKS

1115 VICKI LANE, NORTH POLE

962 BENNETT RD FBKS 99712

# Save Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground

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Name:

Address:

[Signature]  
Jatyn Patten  
Nikki Burroughs  
Bret Shepard  
[Signature]  
Hannah McLeod  
Caylor Behling  
Simon Grayner  
[Signature]

3676 arakaho Dr, 99705  
N/A A street  
250 A street, Fairbanks, AK 99701  
2001 McCullam Ave 99701  
3440 Our St, North Pole, AK 99705  
3835 Sonoma Ave, NP, AK 99705  
712 16<sup>th</sup> Ave Apt A Fbks, AK  
99701  
4548 Dartmouth St. Fbks, AK 99709  
214 Lathrop Hall UAF Campus Fairbanks  
AK.

# Save Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground

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Name:

Michele A. Johnson  
Pete Kelly  
Danielle MacPhail  
~~Jim~~  
Mona Sagedo  
ANTONIO DEBERRY  
ELISHEVA CORNING  
Katthe Rich  
Nicole Varner

Address:

P.O. Box 70627, Fbk. AK 99707  
511 State Drive Fbks  
104 B St. Fairbanks AK 99703  
231 Craig Street FBks AK 99701  
1833 Rozak Rd. 99705  
510 YAK RD # 8540 FBKS, AK 99709  
510 YAK RY # 8540 FBKS, AK 99709  
932 Carol Ln Fbk AK 99712  
852 Banks FBKS AK, 99701



## Alaska Garden Clubs

518 Slater Drive  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
(907) 456-3066

February 27, 2012

Governor Sean Parnell  
Natural Resource Commissioner Daniel Sullivan  
State Parks Director Ben Ellis  
Members of the Alaska State Legislature

Re: Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area  
Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground

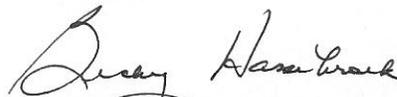
Ladies and Gentlemen ~

There are only two public camping areas north of Fairbanks – Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground in the Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area, at 10-1/2 Mile Elliott Highway, less than 25 miles from Fairbanks; and the Upper Chatanika State Recreation Area, at 39 Mile Steese Highway, about 50 miles from Fairbanks. These are located on the pristine Chatanika River – one of the loveliest rivers in the State. Both are extremely popular with highway travelers and weekend campers. Boaters launch their canoes and rafts from the Upper Chatanika for an all-day float trip ending at the Lower Chatanika.

Olnes Pond is Fairbanks' only real family-friendly campground. This delightful destination can be reached in less than half an hour. One end of the pond has a lovely beach with gentle slope and shallow water where children can safely play. Visibility is excellent around the pond. Olnes is over a mile from the main highway so there are no traffic worries. The pond is stocked by Fish and Game with catchable-size rainbow trout and grayling. There are many hiking trails. It's quiet. Birds and wildlife are abundant!

We all **know** that families need to spend more quality time together. We also **know** that our children need to spend more time outdoors and need to learn to love and understand our natural resources. Olnes Pond is the perfect outdoor classroom! We cannot, in good conscience, allow Olnes Pond and Whitefish Campground to be shut down. We would appreciate so much your assistance in providing a park ranger and the monies required to save these two lovely parks.

Sincerely yours,

  
**Becky Hassebroek, President**  
**Alaska Garden Clubs**

February 23, 2012

To Whom It May Concern;

The Delta Nordic Ski Trail Club's purpose is to actively promote the establishment and perpetuation of a trail system. These trails provide outdoor recreational activities and opportunity for participants of all ages, abilities, or income in the Delta area. Our focus encourages a lifetime appreciation of healthy lifestyles that include winter cross-country skiing, skijoring, walking and running, hiking and biking.

The lower Chatanika State Recreation Area (LCSRA) is a favorite local destination providing recreational opportunities close to Fairbanks to include skiing, skijoring walking and hiking. Our club is based in Delta Junction, however, our members, along with the Delta community, travel and play throughout the Northern Region.

We support the efforts to fund the Fairbanks Park ranger position and restore Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area with active management.

Respectively,



Mindy Eggleston

Chair

Delta Nordic Ski/Trail Club



P. O. Box 82843, Fairbanks, Alaska 99708-2843  
Hotline: 907-457-5456, Website: <http://www.alaskaskijoring.org>

February 22, 2012

To: Alaska State Legislature

RE: Letter of Support for Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area (LCSRA)

The Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association (ASPA) is a nonprofit organization that promotes recreational and competitive skijoring in the Alaskan Interior. We host a variety of events each season, including how-to clinics, fun races, competitive races and trail tours. We usually hold at least one event a year in the Olnes Pond area to skijor and explore the trails and would like to see the LCSRA area maintained for user safety.

The ASPA Board supports the funding of a park ranger and providing capital money to restore Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area, an area which is utilized year round by user groups of all kinds. The loss of this campground and area, as well as access to the trails and the beautiful scenery would be a major loss to every resident of Fairbanks, no matter their lifestyle or interests.

Thank you and we urge you to support this funding for the LCSRA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Marschner', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Jamie Marschner  
President, Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association



*Conserving and protecting habitats in Interior and Arctic Alaska  
for wildlife, culture, environmental health and future generations since 1971.*

February 28, 2012

Senator Coghill  
Senator Paskvan  
Senator Thomas  
Representative Guttenberg

Representative Kawasaki  
Representative Miller  
Representative Thompson  
Representative Wilson

The Northern Alaska Environmental Center (NAEC) supports a re-commitment to State Park management and reinstatement of a Park Ranger at Olnes Pond and the Whitefish Campground. Olnes Pond and the Whitefish Campground are important State Park assets for the Interior, providing recreation opportunities just outside of Fairbanks. The Department of Natural Resources is currently proposing to remove the outhouses and block vehicle access to the area this summer. Previously, during a time of budget shortfalls, a Park Ranger position was eliminated and since then, the facilities have suffered from the lack of maintenance and become a target for vandals.

The Northern Area State Parks Citizen's Advisory Board has made the reinstatement of a Park Ranger position for this area its top priority. We fully support retaining this area under Alaska State Park management. The additional investment of modest funds to repair outhouses and upgrade campsites will enhance the area and retain this unit that enhances opportunities for Alaskans and our visitors.

NAEC stands in support of efforts for state park management of Olnes Pond and the Whitefish Campground and the reinstatement of a Park Ranger. State Parks are an important, if often overlooked resource, of our state. If there is anything the NAEC can do to help further this effort, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Karen M. Kelly  
Executive Director