This photo shows the Salt Chuck Lake in the center surrounded by the Amalga Meadows CBJ Natural Area Park. On the left side of the photo is the boat launch ramp just south of the Ernest Gruening State Historic Park. At the bottom Alaska Department of Fish & Game fishing access land separates Peterson Creek from Glacier Highway.
### MAP AND CONTENTS
Map numbers correspond to numbered descriptions in the text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>Tongass National Forest Lands</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>Goldbelt Inc. Native Corporation Lands</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td>Private mining claims</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td>Sentinel Island lighthouse</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5)</td>
<td>Point Bridget State Park</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6)</td>
<td>Ernest Gruening State Historic Park</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7)</td>
<td>Eagle River State Recreation Area</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8)</td>
<td>Eagle River Forest</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9)</td>
<td>Favorite Channel Islands</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10)</td>
<td>Alaska Department of Fish &amp; Game, fishing access lands</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11)</td>
<td>Mental Health Trust Lands</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12)</td>
<td>CBJ Natural Area Parks</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13)</td>
<td>CBJ Botanical Garden</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14)</td>
<td>Other CBJ lands</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15)</td>
<td>CBJ boat launch ramps</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16)</td>
<td>The Shrine of St. Therese</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17)</td>
<td>Boy Scouts of America, Camp</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18)</td>
<td>Methodist camp</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19)</td>
<td>Echo Ranch Bible Camp</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20)</td>
<td>Southeast Alaska Guidance Association, facility</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21)</td>
<td>Proposed Goldbelt Culture Camp</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22)</td>
<td>Proposed State outdoor education center</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23)</td>
<td>Private lands once suggested as an addition to the Scout Camp</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24)</td>
<td>Private facility, offers lodging and recreational activity</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bald Eagles Nest Throughout the Green Zone
JUNEAU’S GREEN ZONE

North of Tee Harbor Juneau’s main road is bordered with Sitka spruce, western hemlock, red alder, occasional beaver ponds, salmon streams, patches of muskeg, glimpses of the sea and mountains, and hardly any manmade structures. A green world, or as some describe it, a “green zone,” for more than 20 miles. Many people are unaware that the road north from Cohen Drive provides access to 5 small neighborhoods with a total of 44 private dwellings, 5 private wild area camps, 2 public boat launch ramps, 3 Alaska State Parks, 15 CBJ Natural Area Parks and assorted US Forest Service recreation facilities. These are all recognized in the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Comprehensive Plan of 1996. This “Green Zone” is a major Juneau playground with important economic as well as recreational benefits. The 1996 Comprehensive Plan also recognizes the need for an “interagency strategy for management” of this area but there has been little action on that yet.

Since 1996 CBJ has acquired an additional 523 acres in 3 parks, a large block of land has been transferred for Mental Health program support and the Forest Service and CBJ have each negotiated land trades. There have been stormy meetings over proposed commercial zoning in the Eagle River area, a lawsuit over access to public lands and confusion over a State Park’s proposal for a recreational bridge. Neither the public nor any single agency understands all that is happening. There has been no inclusive land ownership map that could help all concerned understand the true status of that area.

As an honor to Juneau resident Mary Lou King, the Alaska Conservation Foundation provided a grant to the Southeast Alaska Land Trust (SEALTrust) to get the Green Zone properly mapped, determine what was happening there and describe what trends and visions there might be for the future.
PURPOSE & METHODS

A non-profit organization such as the Southeast Alaska Land Trust (SEALTrust) can help provide a balance between cultural need, agency responsibility and raw economics regarding land uses by developing a summary land status report. This is of course no substitute for essential, professional, agency planning.

- The Need For A Comprehensive Map - Within the Green Zone are survey lines, largely invisible to the public, which separate private lands from public lands under jurisdiction of Federal, State and City (CBJ) authority. Each agency, operating under separate legal mandates, has maps that show their own boundaries but there has been no map that shows them all together. A primary objective of SEALTrust was to provide such a map that can be distributed to local owners, used by agency planners and be helpful at hearings where members of the public are asked for their opinions. CBJ has all private and Borough property mapped in their computer system (GIS). Cheryl Easterwood, CBJ, Director of Community Development, agreed that adding the state and federal boundaries to CBJ maps is important and that her department could help. James King director of Trail Mix, who understands GIS mapping helped. Trail Mix employee Colby Shibler, working with Jeanette St. George of CBJ, produced the color-coded map presented here. This map can be easily printed as 2 by 3 foot poster size or larger.

- The Need To Assess The Possibility Of Big Change - Though most resident homeowners of the Green Zone appear to be happy with the way things are, the camps and the public agencies are under pressure to enlarge their facilities to serve ever increasing public needs and desires. Also there are some opportunities for commercial activity on private land that could impact the entire region. There may be opportunities that could enhance all interests if all can work together. The second objective of SEALTrust was to encourage identifying such opportunities. Letters of inquiry were sent to the public agencies as well as to managers of the 5 private camps and to 54 individual land owners. Each was asked what their existing program or activities are, what their plans for the future are and did they have a long-term vision for the area? Some follow-up phone calls were made and meetings were held with some agency and camp managers.

- No Recommendations – This study will try to present a true picture of what exists and identify options and opportunities that may warrant community attention but will not make recommendations.

RESULTS

- The map is essentially done and can be easily upgraded as changes occur. Public lands where recreation is the primary use are colored in various shades of green. Note that a largely green zone is depicted. The camps are shown in dark blue. Other lands not designated for public recreation are shown in other colors. Areas described in this report and numbered in parentheses () are identified by circled numbers on the map.
• The public agencies were uniformly responsive. The letter was a bit of a surprise to the private owners some of whom may have regarded it as an inappropriate invasion of privacy. SEALTrust respects that concern. There have been enough responses for us to do this summary. A preliminary report was sent to all those on the mailing list so they could make any corrections or additions they wanted incorporated in this final report.

• A first positive result from this exercise occurred on March 23, 2001 when Trail Mix and CBJ hosted an all day workshop, attended by some 40 land managers and citizens, to discuss plans for the Amalga/Eagle River portion of the Green Zone. The SEALTrust map and preliminary report were used.

![North Island With Its Sandy Beach is Popular for Picnics and Camping](image)

**AGENCY RESPONSES**

The US Forest Service

(1) - The Forest Service (FS) is the biggest land steward in the Green Zone. About a quarter of the beach to the west of Glacier Highway and all the forest and mountains to the east are part of the Tongass National Forest. This protection goes back to 1909 when a Forest Reserve was established by executive order from President Theodore Roosevelt. Since termed Tongass National Forest, a host of federal laws and regulations apply but in general the area within the Green Zone is managed for recreation now under the Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP 1997). There are six hiking trails that access the front of two glaciers, various fishing waters, patches of ancient rain forest, several upland meadows used for summer hiking, winter ski touring and so on. The trails also access 3
heavily used rental cabins built largely by local Juneau volunteers but managed by the FS. There is one popular beach picnic area complete with tables, toilets and fireplaces. There are several miles of beaches separated from the road by a fringe of trees (Juneau Area Trails Guide 1999). All these features are heavily used year round. All receive maintenance, more or less, as needed. There is no present plan to expand any of these facilities though there is plenty of space for more trails and cabins. There is some firewood and Christmas tree cutting along the road. Some hunting and trapping occurs beyond the road and trails.

The Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Map (1999) shows 4 levels of protection within the Green Zone, all overlain by a “Minerals” designation. Most of the area between Davies Creek and Eagle River is identified as “Scenic Viewshed” which is to be protected as such “while permitting timber harvest.” An area within the Viewshed along Cowee Creek is “Old Growth Habitat” that is to be maintained in a “natural or near natural condition.” From just north of Eagle River the lands south behind most of the Juneau community are identified for “Semi-remote Recreation” and behind that the mountains and ice fields are for “Remote Recreation.” The hatched overlay for all FS lands close to the road in our Green Zone are designated, “Minerals – Encourage mineral exploration and development of areas with high mineral potential” (US Forest Service 1999). These Forest Service units are not surveyed and their boundaries are not definite enough to show on our map. These designations do indicate that while these lands are now managed mostly for recreation a sudden increase in timber or gold prices could cause a sudden change in Forest Service management priorities.
(2) - The Goldbelt Native Corporation owns land north of the current road terminus at Echo Cove and along with the FS is planning a 3-mile extension for their access bringing the road to within a mile of the Sawmill Creek tidal flats and estuary. A spectacular waterfall is just above the estuary. This name goes back to 1906 but there is no evidence of a sawmill there now. It is a popular stop for boaters. The Juneau State Parks Advisory Board has suggested that this place offers a superlative opportunity for a wetland park with boardwalk access for viewing as has been done at Starrigavan in Sitka. Parking for a trailhead at the end of the road may be needed.

(3) - There are some mineral claims within the area and there is commercial quality timber in the Viewshed area though there are no current plans to develop these. There have been some conflicts between hikers/skiers and various motorized vehicle/helicopter users. The Forest Service has continuing programs to review and deal with such conflicts.

There are current negotiations for adjusting an existing right of way for Cowee/Davies Creek Trail through Goldbelt lands along Glacier Highway.

The FS does not have a long-term vision for the area and is subject to local and national pressure. FS management tends to be increasingly sensitive to current concepts of good land stewardship.

Other Federal Lands

(4) - Sentinel Island Lighthouse - This 3.5 acre US Lighthouse Reserve is a rocky islet with an historic lighthouse that helped guide ships through perilous waters before the advent of electronic navigation. There are a few trees on the island, one big enough to hold an active Bald Eagle nest, a popular resource for the day use tour boats out of Auke Bay. Consternation at the destruction of our lighthouses, as shipping no longer needed them, led to a program to lease them to non-profit organizations that would protect and use them. Gastineau Channel Historical Society of Juneau has leased Sentinel Island and is developing a program stressing education, recreation and preservation with the intent to “bring the mystique back to an era significant in the development of our community, state and nation.” Sentinel Island is part of the Green Zone by virtue of being part of the view from the road and its vessel/kayak access from Green Zone launching facilities.
Alaska State Parks

(5) - Point Bridget State Park - This 2850-acre state park (SP) was created by the Alaska Legislature in 1988. It is wildland that includes most of the spectacular, sea level, plant communities of the northern rain forest. Developments include about 2 miles of planked trail that accesses 2 overnight rental cabins popular in all seasons. There are 2 less developed trails that cross the park from Cowee meadows to the Lynn Canal shore and an ancient route along the rugged shore of Lynn Canal. There is a draft management plan (1992) describing one inholding and two adjacent landowners with whom some conservation easements, land swaps or purchases might be warranted in the future. The local SP Advisory Board agrees there is room for 3 or 4 more overnight cabins and possibilities for more trails that could enhance ski tours as well as hiking without damaging the wildines. Waterscapes full of marine mammals and marine birds are a major attraction at this park. This park adjoins the CBJ Bridget Cove Natural Area Park and there may be opportunities for joint planning and management.

(6) - Ernest Gruening State Historic Park – This 13-acre park was created by the legislature, in 1989. It is a picturesque little peninsula between the marine environment and a periodically tidal flooded, fresh water lake at the mouth of Petersen Creek. Such lakes are locally known as “salt chuck” (US Geological Survey 1967). This is a popular place for sport fishing.

Ernest Gruening, an important figure in Franklin Roosevelt’s “New Deal,” longest serving appointed governor of the Territory of Alaska, advocate for statehood and
premier Alaska Senator, had his Alaska style cabin built here. Domestic water was collected from the roof, toilet facilities were out back and bathing could be accomplished in fresh water in one direction and salt water in the other. This was Gruening’s actual residence after he left the Governors Mansion and legal residence until he died. The cabin is on the Register of Historic Buildings. Gruening’s grandsons remember summer days there with relish except perhaps for the obligatory cold water swim before breakfast. There has been no state funding for restoration of the cabin or development of interpretive material there. The Juneau State Parks Advisory Board has been trying to develop a management plan for the area that will include more protection and more public use. A recent grant will provide for some interpretive signs in the near future. So far there seems to be a consensus that the area should not be drastically changed from the way the Gruening family liked and used it.

Sandpipers That Nest in Alaska Encircle the Pacific Ocean in Winter but Some Always Stay on Eagle River Flats

(7) - Eagle River State Recreation Area – This 640 acre SRA was dedicated by Governor Knowles executive order in 1996. This was a rather nondescript piece of public land part of which had been a Victory Garden during WWII and part of which had been a gravel mine when the highway was built. The rest includes some rather spectacular rain forest groves, frontage along Eagle River and considerable intertidal flats. There are two inholdings in the park, the 48 acre, Methodist Camp and the Forest Service, 35 acre, Eagle Beach Picnic Area. The possibility of transferring the FS inholding to the State park is being discussed. This park abuts the Boy Scout Camp across Eagle River. Users had included everything from berry pickers to Saturday night car crashers. This is an example of the opportunity and need for integrated planning and management.

This park is being developed with Federal transportation funds administered through DOTPF with State Parks advice. It will include a parking area, a state campground with host and maintenance facilities, various year-round trails connecting with and complementing the neighbor’s recreation programs and so forth. The idea of a foot bridge across Eagle River permitting a paved, off road trail, through FS, State and CBJ parks, from near the Shrine of St. Therese, to past the Eagle River picnic area, is described in the Juneau Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (CBJ 1997) but has not been approved.
Other State Lands

(8) - Eagle River Forest - There are another 600 some acres of state land adjacent to and across Eagle River from the Eagle River SRA. This was selected from the USFS for establishing an outdoor education center. The potential exists but there has been no follow through yet and the land remains undedicated state land. CBJ had the chance to select this land several years earlier but the public, fearing subdivision and gravel mining, were able to block the transfer.

(9) - Favorite Channel Islands - North Island and Benjamin Island lie between Sentinel Island and the Green Zone shore. Gull Island and Bird Island lie off Amalga Harbor. A spectacular sea lion haulout on Benjamin Island is sometimes used as a university study area. Bird Island has a small seabird nesting colony. There are popular picnic/camping beaches on these islands except for Bird Island. Under FS management these islands were designated for recreation and were selected for recreation purposes by the state. They are part of 13 Favorite Channel and Auke Bay islands long proposed as an Islands State Park. The CBJ Assembly has supported the dedication of an Islands State Park. Without formal recreation management littering and campfire damage has been a problem. This awaits legislative or executive action.

(10) - Fishing Access - The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) regards Peterson Creek, tributary to the Amalga Harbor Salt Chuck, as an important stream for sport fish as well as commercial species. Steelhead trout there are a premier species for sportsmen. A federal excise tax makes funds available to the states to provide access to and protection for such streams. ADF&G between 1987 and 1990 acquired two parcels of private land along Peterson Creek totaling 90 acres that will protect fishing access in perpetuity. These ADF&G lands also protect the trailhead for the USFS trail to Peterson Lake and popular fishing places there. This is an example of good joint agency planning to better serve the public.

(11) - Mental Health Trust Lands - There are two parcels of Mental Health Trust lands in the Green Zone. One piece of some 280 acres lies between the Boy Scout Camp and CBJ Natural Area Park lands. This land is steep, may not have good access and does not have a premier timber resource. This parcel may have a potential as a complement to the Green
Zone rather than being developed for some other use. The other parcel borders Glacier Highway on the uphill side for the first 1.5 miles past Cohen Drive and perhaps has a lower recreation potential. These lands were acquired for the purpose of making money for mental health programs and could only be protected for recreation through a land swap or purchase. Both parcels are in a “custodial” category now with no plans for any development for at least the next ten years.

State Tidelands – The Alaska Statehood Act gave the state jurisdiction over all lands and waters from mean high tide out to the 3-mile limit. In Juneau with a maximum tidal fluctuation of near 25 feet, hundreds of acres of state tidelands are exposed at lower tides. These are used for a wide range of recreational activity. Some state tidelands are being turned over to CBJ. Both the state and CBJ have the prerogative to grant long term tideland leases providing inducement for investments in docks and other structures. Long term leases of tidelands adjacent to public parks have the potential to create conflicts.

Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTPF) - Glacier Highway, also termed Veterans Memorial Highway, provides access to most of the features of the Green Zone. Other areas are accessible only by boat or helicopter. The highway is in good shape and largely adequate for auto traffic at this time. The 1997 Juneau Non-Motorized Plan points out that there are no bike lanes and that guard rails force bikers to use the traffic lanes, a dangerous situation. Widening is needed to provide bicycle lanes on both sides. There are a number of unmaintained right of way turnouts where trail and beach users park. During periods of deep snow these users sometimes park partially in the traffic lane causing dismay to high-speed drivers and police officers. Posted speed limits run from 35 to 50 MPH making compliance difficult.

A proposed Goldbelt community north of Echo Cove would increase traffic on Glacier Highway, as would a suggested new ferry terminal. Highway extension to mining north of Berners Bay and on to Skagway is being discussed. There may well be a future inducement to rebuild this road for higher speed traffic. The CBJ Comprehensive Plan shows a “study area for future road corridor” west of Amalga Harbor. CBJ is working on a long term transportation plan that may include other road proposals for this area.

DOTPF manages federal funds such as those being used to develop Eagle River SRA and the possible paved trail and bridge north from The Shrine of St. Therese.

CBJ Lands

Under the Statehood Act, the State was allowed to select lands from the Tongass National Forest for community growth and recreation. The lands would be transferred from the FS to the BLM and then to the State, which would make some available to local governments. Initial criteria in Juneau were to select lands suitable for waterfront subdivisions and gravel mining sources. It turned out that such places were the very places most valued in Juneau for public recreation. Exhaustive hearings and review by CBJ Boards and Commission’s left no doubt that the people of Juneau wanted to protect these undeveloped areas for dispersed recreation. Both the State and the Borough have acquiesced by establishing parks.
(12) - **Natural Area Parks** - The 1996 Parks & Recreation Plan created the Natural Area Park category to give a number of lands formerly zoned “open space” a designation more consistent with the way they were being used. The Green Zone has 15 Natural Area Parks ranging in size from a 0.02 acre islet in Amalga Harbor to 358 acres at Bridget Cove, 839 acres in all. The Comprehensive Plan also recommended acquisition of several key private holdings and 3 of these totaling 523 acres have been added since 1996, two by purchase and one by gift. These CBJ Natural Area Parks tie the FS areas, state parks and camp lands together as one grand public use area catering to a variety of public desires.

![The Future Juneau Botanical Garden](image)

(13) - **Botanical Garden** - The botanical garden was donated to CBJ. This land is covered by a conservation easement with SEALTrust that insures the land will always be managed as the donor intended. A development plan for this area is being developed.

(14) - **Other CBJ Lands** - Several thousand acres of CBJ lands in the Green Zone are uplands mostly east of the road thus away from the waterfront recreation allure. A northern portion of these lands is zoned for Resource Development (RD) and a smaller southern portion zoned for Rural Dispersed Residential (RDR). These lands might ultimately be developed to compliment the Green Zone but if not do not pose any recognizable threat. The RD lands abut private lands near Echo Cove that are designated a “New Growth” area in the CBJ Comprehensive Plan that can develop when sewer, water and other urban amenities are provided. The CBJ Assembly, Planning and Policy Committee is currently reviewing possibilities for satellite heliports that would serve to disperse tourist oriented helicopter noise. Some of the sites they are evaluating are in the Green Zone.
Protected Stream Corridors (SC) - These are recognized along Herbert and Eagle Rivers and there is a Conservation Area (CA) designated along Cowee and Davies Creeks. These are not CBJ lands but these are zoning designations that would guide any future activity.

(15) - CBJ Boat Launch Ramps – CBJ, under the Port Director, manages 2 boat launch ramps in the Green Zone, one at Amalga Harbor and one at Echo Cove. These include toilets, car park, garbage disposal and a small camping/picnic area at Echo Cove. Permits are required for boat launch providing funds for servicing and maintenance. There is limited opportunity for expansion or additions to these facilities.

PRIVATE CAMPS

The Green Zone is not zoned or otherwise identified as a place for private camps. It is evidently an area that attracts those interested in developing private camps and also attracts "investors" and users from Juneau, other parts of Alaska and other states. Once established Green Zone camps seem to thrive and be under pressure to expand facilities to serve more people. There is no analysis of why this has happened and whether it is a trend worth encouraging.
Shrine Island encloses a chapel and adjoins a mainland picnic and retreat center revered by people of all faiths.
(16) - The Shrine of St. Therese – By a special act of Congress in the 1930’s the Catholic Church was authorized to buy 46.5 acres from the Tongass NF. Their objective was to have, “a place of refuge and retreat for the Diocese of Juneau, other religious groups, and for others who use it with reverence and care.” A 400-foot causeway was built to Shrine Island where a stone chapel was constructed in 1938. There is now a caretaker’s house on the mainland and separate lodge facilities that sleep about 30 people. A road has recently been built to the south side of Shrine Creek where lodging for an additional 80 some people will be built in the next few years. The superlative natural setting, carefully nurtured, is an important asset to the mission of this place. The open door policy makes Shrine Island well known to everyone in Juneau and there is a steady stream of visitors in all seasons.

(17) - Boy Scouts of America, Camp – The Scout authorities moved their camp facilities to what was then known as Eagle River Bar in the 1930’s under a FS permit. In the early 1950’s they were granted title to their camp area which was later enlarged several times. The Boy Scouts now own some 263 acres including the upland along the best public beach in Juneau, 1.5 miles of sand from which trout and salmon can often be caught by casting and where small boats can be beached for picnics. This beach lies partly on the south side of the mouth of Eagle River and across from the Eagle River SRA. Access is by a 1.5-mile trail or by boat from nearby Amalga Harbor and beyond. The Scouts have a very nice lodge building and a number of sleeping quarters for the campers in the woodland well back from the beach. The public uses the Boy Scout Beach area as if it were a public park. This is a matter of concern to the Scout authorities who worry about conflicts with scouting activity, occasional vandalism and the ever present threat of liability for accidents. Mostly such problems do not occur and it seems likely the Scouts could work out something with CBJ to further alleviate the chance of problems. The Scouts see a need for a better trail from the road so that there could be wheelchair access and so a small tractor could be used to haul supplies and be available for a possible medivac. They do not see a need for an automobile road.

(18) - Methodist Camp – Shortly after WWII the Juneau Methodists leased 48 acres, near Eagle River, from the Tongass Forest for a camp. The road ended on the other side of Eagle River when they started to build and they used a rafting arrangement to get across. Glacier Highway now passes along their south boundary. Some land problems developed when the State selected the whole area but were eventually settled with the camp now owning their original plot even though completely surrounded by Eagle River SRA. The camp has a large dining/meeting facility, several smaller all weather buildings and a number of sleeping cabins. These facilities stay full all summer and most of the winter. The Juneau School district is a regular user during the school year. Work parties come from outside and are an important element in expanding the facilities. Slow growth is likely for the foreseeable future.

(19) - Echo Ranch Bible Camp – This property was settled by Alan McMurchie, farmer and logger, in the early 1940’s, long before there was a road anywhere near. McMurchie’s donated their land to the Gospel Mission Union for a camp in 1973. The
Alaska State Parks has allowed the camp horses to use the adjacent Point Bridget State Park meadows in return for some help including housing park volunteers. Though popular with Juneau families this camp continues to attract increasing numbers from other parts of Alaska and outside. Several thousand people now participate in Echo Bible Ranch programs each year. Growth will continue. As with the other camps there are trails that connect through camp property to public lands and beaches and the public continues to use them without restriction. There is still no direct road access to Echo Ranch though they have used 4-wheel drive equipment along the beach from the road head at Echo Cove.

(20) - Southeast Alaska Guidance Association - The SAGA, Serve Alaska Youth Corps, is a work/education program for young people having difficulties. Vigorous outdoor work often on trails or in parks is combined with some classroom effort to give them a helping hand into the adult world they must face. SAGA has their program headquarters in a building they rent from CBJ in the Amalga Meadows Park just north of Amalga Harbor. They maintain a “Rope Course” training facility on CBJ parkland that is a popular “testing ground” for youths in their program and for others. SAGA has a very successful program that has touched the lives of thousands. SAGA enjoys great community support.
Other – Continuing the trend going back to the 1930’s and considering the increasing demand for camp use, there have been several proposals for new camps. The Goldbelt plan (1996) includes a cultural/tourist education facility on their land at Echo Cove (21). A privately funded, non-profit, outdoor education facility has been proposed for the Eagle Beach SRA (7). The as yet undedicated state lands at Eagle River were originally selected for an outdoor education center (22). There are 147 acres of private land, now for sale, that border the road to the Scout Camp and abut CBJ and State recreation lands that have been suggested as a wonderful addition or compliment to the Scout Camp or perhaps a site for a new camp (23). A private enterprise at Yankee Cove offers facilities for kayakers, helicopter skiers and a variety of activities including weddings, reunions, meetings and so forth (24).

A Wealth of Berries Attract Many to the Green Zone

OTHER PRIVATE LANDS

(2) - Goldbelt – Goldbelt is by far the biggest private landowner in the Green Zone though one might construe that their lands lie beyond to the north. Goldbelt has an ambitious plan to develop a small community built around servicing mines on the north side of Berners Bay and ferry service that would connect the roads of Juneau, Haines and Skagway with shorter water runs. The Goldbelt plan gives a good deal of attention to environmental quality and would not appear to interfere with most existing activities in the Green Zone (Goldbelt Inc. 1996).

Other - The CBJ Assessor recognizes 65 private lots in the Green Zone with 54 owners and an assessed value of about 10 million dollars. Only 44 of these lots have buildings. These domestic facilities are in 5 little community clusters including 5 near the Shrine, 12 along the beach at Amalga/Huffman Harbor, 29 in the Amalga Meadows along Glacier Highway, 6 at Yankee Cove and 2 within Bridget State Park. Response to our inquiry about hopes and dreams suggested the local residents are essentially happy with the way things are. One respondent suggested a need to get more beach frontage on the tax rolls. A few owners, of course, are holding lands for speculation. Response from public agencies and camps suggest that at present there is no conflict between their mandates and responsibilities for public service with these few residents.
MATTERS IN THE GREEN ZONE WARRANTING COMMUNITY ATTENTION

Things are not static in any community and choices will keep coming up. Some things being discussed in Juneau now are:

1) The 1996 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan (page 8-4) recognizes the need to “develop a management concept for Tee Harbor to Berners Bay” and “interagency strategies” and to do a plan to “recognize, protect, and enhance the multiple recreational, spiritual and educational facilities found in the area.” Public pressure to do some joint planning is building.

2) Glacier Highway with its shoulderless traffic lanes and confining guardrails is not suitable for an area where recreation predominates and is in fact dangerous. This is recognized in CBJ and DOT documents. Designating this road as a recreation highway with reduced speeds, bike lanes and increased parking has been suggested. There may be places where will be necessary to use highway right-of-way to connect elements of an extensive trail system.

3) An off road, paved, multi use trail has been suggested from near The Shrine to near the Eagle River picnic area including an Eagle River footbridge and is recommended in the CBJ Non Motorized Transportation Plan. There may be ways to connect it further along the coast.

4) Juneau trail enthusiasts have been suggesting the possibility of a Point Bishop to Point Bridget trail much of which is already in place but which needs a few connecting links, some of which are in the Green Zone. This would suggest need for some new overnight cabins.

5) None of Juneau’s economic studies and projections have looked at the true value of the Green Zone. The camps are a growing element of Juneau’s visitor industry as are the rental cabins, the trails and the beach parks. There has been no effort to evaluate how much growth is possible before conflicts emerge.

6) The value of the Green Zone parks in preventing the sort of urban sprawl that cause so many communities an endless struggle to pay for ever more costly sewer, water, fire, police and school services, has not been recognized or assessed.

7) Forest Service budgets for recreation planning and development have been declining in recent years even as recreation use of the forest increases. There are many opportunities for more trails, picnic areas, campgrounds and rental cabins on National Forest lands.

8) Planning and development at the Ernest Gruening SHP does not fulfill the hopes of those that initiated and supported this park acquisition.

9) A Sawmill Creek trail and park would require cooperation between State Parks, the Forest Service and Goldbelt.

10) The Davies Creek Trail into perhaps Juneau’s most spectacular mountain valley is in poor shape and lacks appropriate access through Goldbelt lands.

11) There may be ways to do more to encourage the existing and possible future camps.

12) There may be opportunities to purchase more private property and possibly the Mental Health lands to enhance the integrity of the Green Zone.

13) The Islands State Park proposal is still pending.

14) CBJ lands in this area that are not now dedicated to recreation need further scrutiny.
15) Boy Scout executives depend on extensive support from the people of Juneau yet have legitimate concerns over unregulated public use of their lands. There may be mutually beneficial solutions.

16) There is one property in the Green Zone protected by a conservation easement now and there may be other places where a private property owner and the public could benefit from a conservation easement.

17) State tidelands adjacent to State Parks are part of the park but not so with CBJ or Forest Service parks and recreation lands. This should be dealt with.

18) A review of Tongass land management plans and designations may be warranted.

19) The impact of new heliports on the Green Zone needs careful consideration.

20) A vision document for the Green Zone is needed that attempts to accommodate as many present and future users as possible. Commercial uses of public land, user fees, zoning of private lands and so forth need to be dealt with so all enhance rather than degrade or conflict with each other.

21) A Green Zone Advisory Board has been suggested as a means to help ensure that all interests are represented as the Juneau population continues to grow.

DISCUSSION

The population of the United States is expected to double within the lifespan of those in highschool today. This will mean a doubling of all the infrastructure and support systems we require. Even so this will not move Juneau into the mainstream of development. Juneau is destined by its geography to remain a unique community. So how can Juneau participate and benefit from this massive change in the infrastructure of our country?

Juneau has two really unique elements to offer the world of 2050. One is represented by the camps, largely supported by volunteers and contributions, which can barely keep up with present demand for their services. The second is UAS, a university campus not surrounded by miles of urban sprawl but by America’s great northern rain forest. Developing the useable grandeur of the Green Zone in ways that support the image and opportunities these institutions project may be the most important thing we can do for ourselves and for our posterity.
CONCLUSION

The Green Zone is a public asset largely unparalleled in modern American communities beset as they are with inducement to sprawl across their "open spaces." No other Alaskan coastal town has retained so much of it's waterfront for public uses. The features of our Green Zone operate every day of the year in contrast to the tourist oriented features closer to our city center. Somehow this happened in our community without a formal planning effort. We have the opportunity to encourage and enhance it. We also have the possibility of changing directions.

A Public Rental Cabin At Point Bridget State Park

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REFERENCES

The Agencies have a lot of maps, documents and files related to the Green Zone. The references listed here are just a few that were particularly important in preparing this report.


Alaska State Parks, 1992, Point Bridget State Park Management Plan, a draft.

CBJ, 1996, Comprehensive Plan Of The City And Borough Of Juneau.

CBJ, 1996, Juneau Parks And Recreation Comprehensive Plan.


Sunshine Cove Was Used By The Tlingit Back Through The Ages