

SUBJECT: Trail Groomer

PREPARED BY: Administration

DATE: December 9, 1998

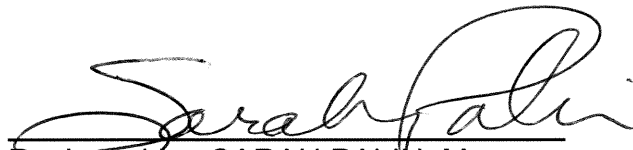
FOR AGENDA OF: December 14, 1998

SUMMARY:

We have been requested to discuss contribution to the multi-use trail groomer in the Valley. Please see attached.

FISCAL IMPACT: ___No ___Yes, amount requested: Fund:

RECOMMENDED ACTION: For discussion purposes.


Reviewed by: SARAH PALIN, Mayor

Attachments: Trail Groomer information

BIG LAKE CHAMBER • SNOWMOBILE GROOMING

1999

GET RID OF THE BUMPS

Big Lake
Chamber of Commerce
Getting Rid of the Bumps!



Actual Size Reflectors
6x6x9"

**Red & Green
High Density Reflectors**

**Add your decal for the
100 Mile Club
50 Mile Club
25 Mile Club**

Big Lake Chamber of Commerce Getting Rid of the Bumps!

October 28, 1998

Mayor Sarah Heath-Palin
City of Wasilla
290 E Heming Avenue
Wasilla, Alaska 99654-7091

Dear Mayor Palin,


A high-tech trail groomer, known as the ASV (All Season Vehicle), awaits its inaugural run on 70+ miles of trails in the Big Lake area. The Big Lake Chamber of Commerce is committed to raise \$100,000 to purchase trail grooming and marking equipment and pay for the ASV's first year operations. Trails will be marked with 1,620 high-intensity green and red reflectors.

To accomplish our goal, we need your help! Enclosed you will find an outline of benefits you receive as a donor. Would you consider a Marker Club level?

The Big Lake snowmobile area is only 50 miles from Anchorage, and we attract more than 10,000 riders on a great snowy weekend. For many, Big Lake is a second home to Anchorage residents, for others, Big Lake is the closest area in which to ride for day trips or extended weekends. Be a founding partner with Big Lake Chamber--improving "Alaska's Best Year-Round Playground".

We have already raised more than \$22,000 toward our goal. Please join the other businesses and individuals that have pledged their financial support of our plan. I look forward to talking with you regarding the level of sponsorships available.

Big Lake Chamber of Commerce
Varoomin' & Groomin'


Harriett Fenerty
Fund Raising Coordinator

P. S. For every \$200 investment you make your name goes on one of the reflective trail markers used on our trail system.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The Mat-Su Borough has included Big Lake Trails in their "Recreational Trail Plan".

The Big Lake Trail Grooming project has been proposed and is supported by the Big Lake Chamber of Commerce and the Big Lake Community Council.

The Big Lake trails were developed in 1988 and have been marked by various Big Lake groups over the past decade. The trails were developed using the easiest and best routes possible.

We believe Big Lake is a destination of the riders that will be attracted to your staging area near the Wasilla Airport. We would entertain the opportunity to expand our grooming activities to the Wasilla trailhead.

SPONSORS COMMITMENT

- Financial Support, Financial Support and more Financial Support
- Big Lake Chamber Commerce is a group of business owners and operators with great management skills
- Contract labor
- \$18,000 has been committed by local business, and a fund raiser has been hired to meet the financial goals required to begin the Trail Grooming Project
- This trail has been in existence for 10 years, it requires annual upkeep, once new signage is in place and equipment purchased, the decal program should enable the Big Lake Chamber to attract financial support for years to come.

The Big Lake Chamber of Commerce is committed to the development of the Best Trail System in South-Central Alaska. It is our intention to groom the 70 miles of trails in the Big Lake area to attract the avid snowmobile enthusiasts and winter recreationalists.

Our plan is to employ an operator on a contract basis to groom the trails four days per week for 17 weeks beginning in mid-November, 1998 and continue grooming until mid-March, 1999. It has been our experience, when dependent on volunteer help; the trail grooming is done on an "as-available" basis and has hindered the efforts of the trail-grooming plan. The equipment we are purchasing is very easy to operate, but because of the expense we would prefer to keep in top operating condition, therefore would like to employ a qualified operator.

We have received a financial commitment from at least 18 individuals and Big Lake Business owners at the \$1,000 level and a renewal of \$500 for next year. The decal program will be an annual event that users can support by renewal of their decals, made available at Big Lake business locations as well as the Anchorage and area snowmobile dealer outlets. We believe once users become accustomed to well-groomed trails, they will reach in their pockets to continue supporting the trail grooming efforts.

DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Grooming and marking 70 miles, from Big Lake to Wasilla, to Nancy Lake Recreational Area, to the Big Susitna River. The trails are used by various groups and individuals, from snowmobilers to dog mushers, cross-country skiers and a host of Alaskan events such as the Iron Dog Gold Rush Classic and the Iditasport. Big Lake Chamber of Commerce is leading the effort to fund this \$100,000 project with the help of the private and public sectors.

HOW THE FUNDS WILL BE USED

- Grooming 70 miles of existing trail system in the Big Lake Area
- Marking the trail system in the Big Lake Area with color coded high intensity reflectors
- Operational funds to hire staff to operate equipment 4 days per week for 17 weeks
- Purchase trail marking equipment
- Operation funds to maintain and store equipment
- High-Tech Equipment = Low impact on terrain
- Snowmobilers, Skiers, Dog Mushers, Iron Dog, Iditarod and Iditasport, Residents, Recreational Home owners, Business owners, Alaskan and other Tourists

The Big Lake Chamber of Commerce has adopted a plan to purchase a high tech and compact trail groomer for the narrow trail system in the Big Lake area. In addition to raising the funds to operate and maintain the equipment, our plan is to adequately mark the trail system with red high-intensity reflectors for the trails heading away from the Big Lake area and green high-intensity reflectors for the trails heading back to the Big Lake area.

Our plan is to raise at least \$100,000 from private sponsor donations as well as a decal program that individuals can purchase to show their support of the trail grooming efforts. The sponsor donations have benefits that include signage, trail markers, and free decals.

The users of the Big Lake Trail system are Mat-Su area residents, lodge owners from the Yentna and Skwentna area, Iditarod, Iditasport, Iron Dog racers and recreational trail riders. Big Lake attracts as many as 10,000 riders on a fantastic winter weekend, many of who are Alaskan tourists looking for a great day ride or have a second home in the Valley area. There are approximately 70 miles of trails that have been used for more than a decade by area snowmobile riders, dog mushers and cross-country skiers.

The Big Lake trail system is the gateway to **Bigger Alaska**, you can get to Mt. Susitna (Sleeping Lady - the majestic mountain you can see on a clear day from Downtown Anchorage), follow the Iditarod and Iron Dog trail to Skwentna, Finger Lake and Rainy Pass. Heading up the Parks Highway the Nancy Lake Recreational Area offers an access to Hatchers Pass area and beyond.

There are 8,000 new snowmobiles sold in Alaska each year, many of which are sold right here in the south-central area. With 17 weeks of enough snow-cover to ride in the Big Lake area we have the potential to draw an even larger group of recreationalists, we want to be

prepared to adequately handle the crowds, with superior trail marking and keeping the trail in excellent condition.

At just 6 feet wide the high tech grooming equipment to be purchased will enable the groomer to get on the very narrow trail to the Big Susitna River, the access point to Yentna, Skwentna and beyond. The equipment is a newly developed groomer that has a very high weight displacement (approximately 2 inches) and has low impact on the terrain.

BENEFITS

WHY? The Big Lake area trail users had a trail-grooming program that was set up several years ago, and because it was a "Volunteer Program", it was very difficult to manage. As a result the program has splintered and the Big Lake Chamber sees a niche that needs to be filled. The Big Lake area is just 50 miles from the largest population pool of residents and winter tourists. We already attract more than 10,000 users of the trail system on a good weather weekend. The trail is very bumpy after a heavy use and if the groomer waits too long to go out and re-groom the trail, it becomes impossible to groom the trail until another substantial snow has fallen to fix the moguls that have developed from heavy use.

The trail groomer that was previously used in the Big Lake area was also too big. At 14 feet it was unable to groom but the widest of trails in the area and absolutely impossible to go on the trail most used to gain access to the Big Susitna River. This is the trail that is used by both the Iron Dog and Iditarod to get to Yentna Station and Skwentna. On race day for both these World-Class Alaskan events, there are thousands of spectators on the trail system.

WHO & HOW? Residents and tourists alike will benefit from the trail-grooming program. It makes for a much more pleasant riding experience in Alaska's Year-round Playground. The trail-marking program will enable both the experienced and non-experienced trail users to find their way from and back to Big Lake with the assistance of high-intensity color-coded reflectors. Racers in all events will have a much safer racing experience to Skwentna with flatter trails and better permanent trail marking.

As more and more riders become familiar with other areas of the state to ride, Big Lake loses riders every weekend. Although the Wasilla-Big Lake area is much closer, riders will head to the areas, which have easier access and less impact on their equipment. Riders in the Wasilla-Big Lake area have the benefit of an infrastructure to support their riding, from convenient fueling, to easy access lodging and destinations.

USERS? This is multi-use trail system. During the winter it is enjoyed by snowmobilers, skiers, dog mushers, competitive racing in Iditarod, Iron Dog, K-400 Snowmobile race, and Iditasport. Lodge owners, lodge visitors, vendors delivering building materials & fuel, homeowners, tourists, day visitors, residents, media,....

Big Lake Chamber of Commerce Getting Rid of the Bumps!

100 Marker Club \$10,000+

Entitles you to display 100 full color decals on 100 trail markers
100 free trail supporter decals valued at \$5.00 each
One four-corner intersection named in your honor
Top billing on all store front full-color signage (100 displays)
Top billing in our thank you ad
Top billing in Sponsor Line-up in direct mail campaigns ending 12-98
Top billing in membership drive and sponsor updates ending 12-98

50 Marker Club \$5,000-\$9,999

Entitles you to display 50 full color decals on 50 trail markers
50 free trail supporter premium decals valued at \$5.00 each
One trail head named in your honor
Prominent mention on all store front full-color signage (100 displays)
Prominent mention in our thank you ad
Prominent mention in Sponsor Line-up, membership drive, sponsor updates and in all direct mail campaigns ending 12-98

25 Marker Club \$2,500 - \$4,999

Entitles you to display 25 full color decals on 25 trail markers
25 free trail supporter premium decals valued at \$5.00 each
One trail head named in your honor
Mention on all store front full-color signage (100 displays)
Mention in our thank you ad
Mention in Sponsor Line-up, membership drive, sponsor updates and in all direct mail campaigns ending 12-98

Big Lake Chamber of Commerce Getting Rid of the Bumps!

1998-99 Budget

\$60,000.00	Equipment Purchase
\$14,000.00	Contract Labor
\$ 1,200.00	Insurance
\$ 1,200.00	Trail Signage
\$ 1,500.00	Store Front Signage
\$ 3,500.00	Trail Support Decals
\$ 700.00	Fuel
\$ 1,200.00	Maintenance
\$ 3,000.00	Storage
\$ 1,000.00	Office Supplies & Expenses
\$10,500.00	Fund Raising Expense
\$ 2,000.00	Reserves
\$100,000.00	Total

Equipment purchase price will be negotiated.

Contract Labor is based on \$25 p/hour, 32 hours per week for 17 weeks.

Trail Signage is high density color reflector, triangle cut, permanent markers.

Store-front signs are full color vinyl, 8x10" door signs, featuring major donor logos.

Trail Support decals are for individual use, given as premiums to donors for display on snowmobiles.