



Municipality of Skagway West Creek Master Plan



July 2014

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Skagway Ordinance No. 14-09

Acknowledgments

The West Creek Master Plan is a direct result of the guidance and assistance the following individuals provided who graciously shared their time, insights and expertise.

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CONTENTS

1 PURPOSE AND NEED.....	1
Figure 1-Location Map.....	3
2 LAND OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	4
Figure 2-Land Ownership	6
3 NATURAL CHARACTER	7
Geology and Topography	7
Vegetation and Mammals	8
Earthquakes.....	8
Flooding.....	9
4 ROAD OWNERSHIP & MAINTENANCE.....	10
5 HISTORY.....	12
Early Days in West Creek.....	12
1930's.....	12
1940's.....	12
1950's-1960's.....	14
1970's-1980's.....	15
1990's.....	16
2000's.....	16
2010's.....	18
6 CURRENT LAND USES, VALUES, OPINIONS & OBSERVATIONS	20
Why We Value West Creek.....	21
Current Uses	22
Modest Infrastructure Improvements	22
Recreation and Trails	22
Activities to Always Allow - Recreation & Firewood	24
Activities to Always Prohibit - Commercial Tourism Uses.....	24
Residential Use	25
Signage.....	25
Firewood.....	25
Hydroelectric Facility	26
7 WEST CREEK MANAGEMENT PLAN	28
OVERVIEW - RECREATION AND RESOURCES.....	28
Figure 3 – Current Land Use.....	30

Figure 4 – Future Growth, Management, and Improvements	31
Figure 5 – Comprehensive Plan Figure 7-10 (updated May 2014).....	32
MANAGEMENT AREA 1 (West Creek Bridge to “The Hump” - RESOURCE RESERVE.....	33
1. Current Land Uses	33
2. Future Land Management and Improvements	34
<i>a. Road Maintenance</i>	34
<i>b. Signage</i>	34
<i>c. Toilets</i>	35
<i>d. Litter and Garbage</i>	35
<i>e. Firewood Gathering/Timber Harvest & Related Trail-Building</i>	36
<i>f. Firearms, Hunting, and Trapping</i>	39
<i>g. Horse Riding</i>	40
<i>h. Residential Development</i>	40
<i>i. Commercial Use</i>	40
MANAGEMENT AREA 2 (S. of West Creek and “The Hump”) - RECREATION/OPEN SPACE.....	40
1. Current Land Uses	40
2. Future Land Management and Improvements	41
<i>a. New Trails</i>	42
MANAGEMENT AREA 3 (“The Hump” to Back West Creek Valley)– FUTURE GROWTH AREA	43
1. Current Land Uses	43
2. Future Management and Improvements	44
<i>a. New Trails</i>	44
<i>b. Possible West Creek Hydroelectric Facility</i>	44
RECOMMENDED NEW ZONING DISTRICT FOR WEST CREEK AREA.....	47

APPENDIX A – SUMMARY: MANAGEMENT DIRECTION AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS



Looking Westward Back West Creek Valley during Climb to Lost Lake, photo: David Van Horn

1 PURPOSE AND NEED

In 2014, the Municipality of Skagway will receive title to 3,040 acres in the western part of the borough in the West Creek area as part of its municipal entitlement from the State of Alaska (Figure 1). The West Creek Master Plan reviews the history and sets out Skagway's desired future and management intent for this beautiful place. Figures 3-5 and the last chapter, the "West Creek Management Plan" are adopted as an amendment to the Skagway 2020 Comprehensive Plan (2009). The purpose of the West Creek Master Plan is to let everyone to know how to use the area and ensure that it can be enjoyed into the future in the manner that Skagway resident's desire.

The West Creek Master Plan:

1. Includes a Current Land Use map (Figure 3) and a Future Growth, Management, and Improvements map (Figure 4) for the West Creek area.
2. Establishes a priority list of desired trail improvements and clarifies road and trail maintenance schedules and priorities.
3. Details a new Skagway Firewood/Timber Trail annual permit, identifies several proposed Firewood/Timber Trails for future firewood collection and firewood/timber trail building and harvest (Figure 4 and chapter 7).
4. Describes desired future land use, management intent and actions, and improvements in three West Creek Management Areas.

5. Updates the Skagway 2009 Comprehensive Plan's future growth map (Figure 7-10) to include West Creek Management Area 1: Resource Reserve; Management Area 2: Recreation and Open Space; and Management Area 3: Future Growth Area. (see Figure 5 in this Plan)
6. Identifies actions needed to implement West Creek Area Master Plan, including Skagway Municipal code changes.
7. Recommends a new "Remote Recreation and Resources Zoning District" (Table 1) and sets out the district's allowed, conditionally allowed, and prohibited uses as well as other rules.
8. Identifies concerns and possible impacts to be addressed if a hydroelectric facility is built in the area and suggests several mitigation measures.

The process to prepare the West Creek Master Plan included:

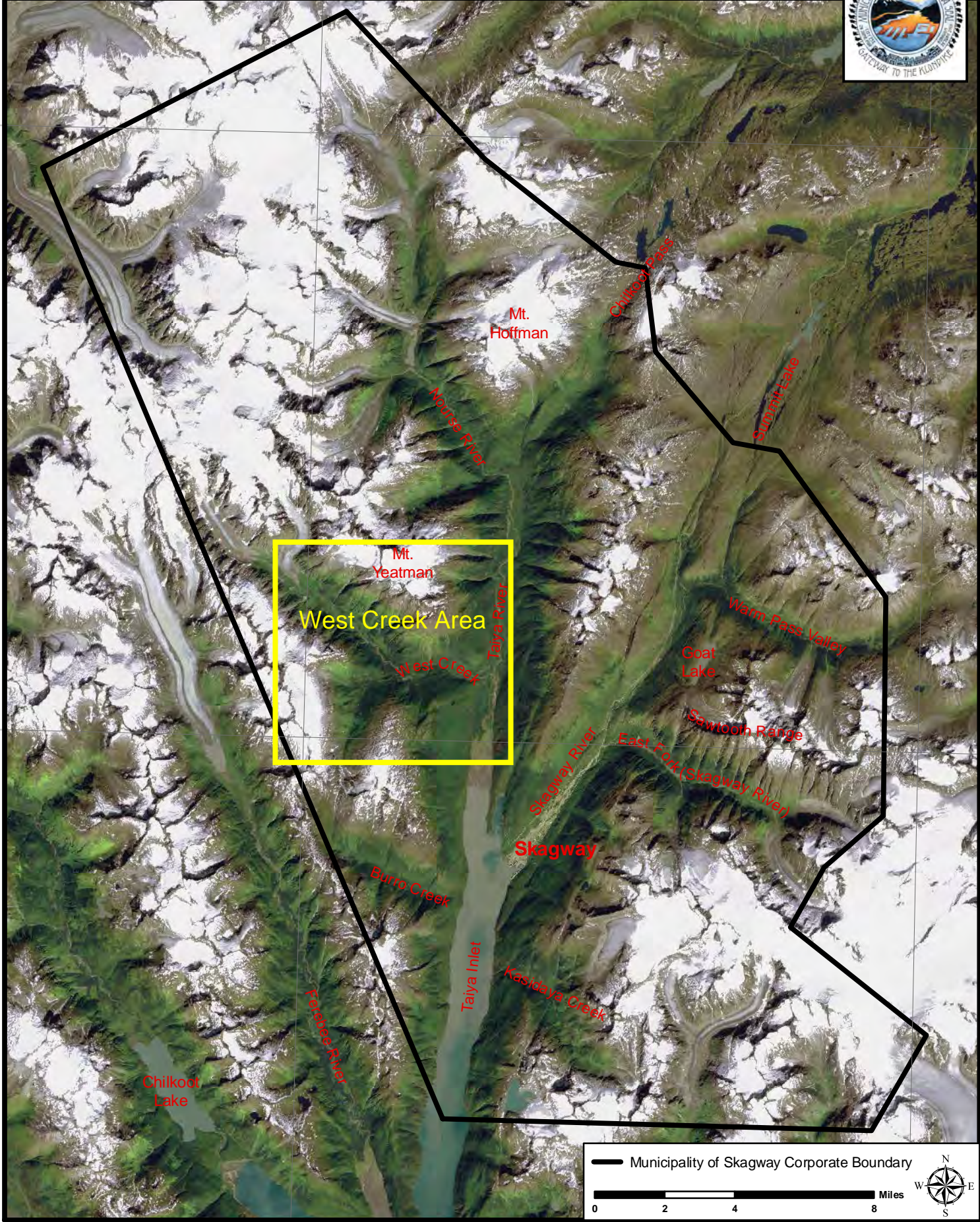
1. Community meetings and work sessions in January, May, October, and November 2013.
2. Community Opinion Surveys in 2010 and in February 2013, and a question about West Creek as part of the scientific 2008 Community Opinion Survey.
3. Research, data gathering, and interviews with local residents, state, and federal officials.
4. Regular updates to a project contact list via email and posts on a project website.
5. Fields trips by foot and helicopter to the area in December 2012, June 2013, and November 2013.
6. An open-to-the public advertised group field trip in June 2013 that 18 attended including an invited state forester from the Haines State Forest (Roy Josephson).
7. Release of the "West Creek Issues & Management Alternatives" paper in November 2013 at a Town Meeting, which was out for review and comment for 2 months.
8. Review, discussion, and ultimately approval at a Planning and Zoning Commission Public Hearing on March 13 and April 10, 2014 (P&Z Resolution 2014-03).
9. Review, discussion, and adoption by the Skagway Assembly as part of Public Hearings on April 17 and May 1, 2014 (Ordinance No. 14-09).

Figure 1 Municipality of Skagway Aerial Photo



59°45'0"N

59°30'0"N



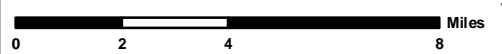
West Creek Area

Mt. Yeatman

West Creek

Taiya River

— Municipality of Skagway Corporate Boundary





2 LAND OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Land ownership in the West Creek area is shown on Figure 2. The 3,000+ Municipality of Skagway-owned acres here surround West Creek. Municipality of Skagway land will be managed in accordance with this West Creek Master Plan.

Skagway municipal land is bordered to the north and south by State of Alaska land managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The Alaska DNR “Northern Southeast Area Plan” (October 2002) classifies all the state land surrounding the West Creek Area as General Use, to be managed for multiple uses, including dispersed recreation, habitat and wildlife, and mineral values. Minimal development is anticipated given the remoteness and mountainous terrain, with only mineral related activity considered at all likely. Mountain goats concentrate in the mountains surrounding West Creek on both the north and south (state and federal land), and goat hunting occurs here in the fall.

Surrounding the state land is federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land that is selected by the state but managed by BLM. The BLM’s “Ring of Fire, Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment, Haines Block Planning Area” (December 2012) evaluates whether or not to retain a Special Recreation Management Area designation among other matters. The final document has not been issued. It mostly pertains to land in the Haines Borough and heli-skiing issues.

In the West Creek area this draft BLM Plan documents the:

1. Location of summer goat habitat, which is along the lower slopes of all mountains surrounding West Creek to the valley floor (BLM Haines Planning Map 3)
2. Location of winter goat habitat, which is on the mountain peaks and upper slopes north and south of West Creek(BLM Haines Planning Map 6)
3. Helicopter flightseeing routes (includes a West Creek Route up the valley), landing zones, and highest probability goat use areas), none of which are in the West Creek Master Plan area (BLM Haines Planning Map 4)

Most of the information on the maps cited above is reproduced in this plan on Figure 3. To view the BLM maps and draft plan refer to the BLM website:

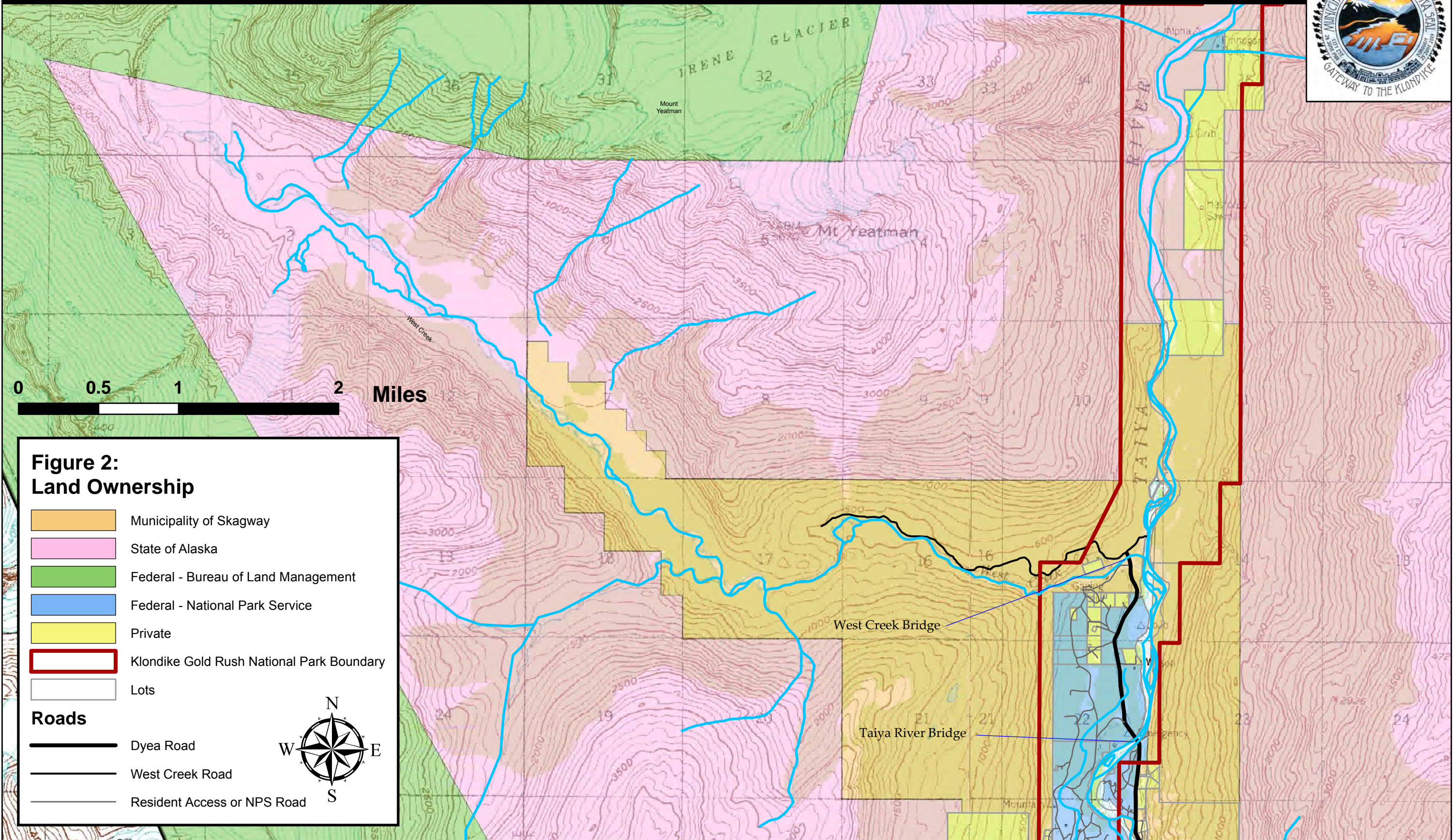
http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning/ring_of_fire_plan/Haines_Block_Supp_EIS_Amen_d.html

There is federal National Park Service land in Dyea valley that is part of the Klondike Gold Rush Historic Park (KGRNHP), including the start of the 33-mile Chilkoot Trail. The KGRNHP includes land that is within the Park but owned by others (Skagway, state, and private). This includes land just south of the Taiya River Bridge, to about one-quarter of a mile up the West Creek Road. The West Creek Road also takes another short jog back into the Park about 1,000 feet up the road. These land ownership and jurisdictional boundaries are on Figure 2.

June 2013 West Creek Field Trip to Support Plan Development



West Creek Master Plan





Lost Lake, photo: David Van Horn

3 NATURAL CHARACTER

Geology and Topography

West Creek originates in and flows through the intensely glaciated mountains of the Coast Range of southeast Alaska. The Coast Range mountains are an intrusive complex of Jurassic or Cretaceous age composed of gabbros to granites with predominant rock types of granodiorite, quartz monzonite, and quartz diorite.

The West Creek stream is about six miles long from the glacier where it originates to its mouth, and it drains an area of roughly 39 square miles. Approximately one-third of the drainage basin is covered by glaciers and ice fields.

The total relief within the West creek drainage area exceeds 7,000 feet, with altitudes ranging from less than 100 feet at the confluence of West Creek and the Taiya River to about 7,500 feet at the head of the glacier that feeds the stream. In the West Creek area, valley walls and mountain spurs are smooth and rounded to an altitude of 3,500 to 4,000 feet. Above this altitude, the peaks and ridges have a rugged serrate form resulting from alpine type glaciation. At its height, the ice sheet filled preexisting stream valleys, and scoured them to the characteristic U-shaped

troughs there today. Many of the valleys are still occupied by remnant valley glaciers. The U-shaped valley floor is fairly flat and formed on an undetermined thickness of unconsolidated sand and gravel deposits of glaciofluvial and lacustrine origin. Alluvial fans extend into the valley from both walls. West Creek flows along at a mean altitude of about 650 feet over a broad floodplain and has the typical braided channel of a glacial stream.

Approximately two miles above the confluence of West Creek and Taiya River, a bend in the valley of West Creek occurs where the creek cuts through a bedrock knob of strong massive homogeneous granodiorite, that varies from 700-800 feet high, to create a relatively deep and narrow gorge. This knob is locally called "The Hump" and ATVs have a hard time getting past this point unless they are winched up and over. The stream gradient here is much steeper and rapids flow through "the canyon."

Vegetation and Mammals

The well-drained mountain slopes surrounding West Creek up to timberline at 2,000-3,000 feet elevation are covered with spruce, hemlock, alder, and scattered cottonwood trees. The south side of West Creek has thick old growth timber in places. Along the north side of West Creek where timber was harvested in the 1950's-1970's are second growth trees ranging from about two to six inches in diameter. Some are at densities thick enough that it is hard to walk through in places. This young growth wood is a main source of firewood that residents gather. Near timberline, the forest changes to scattered and stunted mountain hemlock and fir. Above timberline, alpine tundra and barren ground dominate the landscape. The forest understory is a variety of shrubs and herbivorous plants, including willow, red alder, berries, devil's club, and skunk cabbage.

The wide U-shaped West Creek valley floor from Back and West Creek Glaciers to "the canyon" area is where the braided West Creek stream meanders through either sandy or wet boggy areas with mosses, grasses, sedges, and rushes.

The shrubs, grasses and other vegetation in West Creek Valley support mountain goats. High meadows and talus slopes in rugged, remote alpine areas provide important summer habitat for mountain goat. In winter, goats move into coniferous forests adjacent to steep slopes and rock outcrops for shelter, food and to escape predators. There is black bear habitat in the semi-open forests in the Taiya River/West Creek valleys. Spring sightings of both black and brown bear occur in these areas. Other mammals in the area include beaver, mink, otter, muskrat, marten, wolf, coyote, fox, lynx, wolverine, marmot, porcupine, and similar small mammals.

Earthquakes

Between 1899 and 1952, nine earthquakes of intensity between 5 and 6 on the Modified Mercalli Scale were recorded in the area between Juneau and the Alaska-Canada Border north of Skagway and Haines (Heck and Eppley, 1958, p. 72-78). The epicenters of these were concentrated along the Chatham Strait lineament (a right-lateral strike-slip fault), which is a

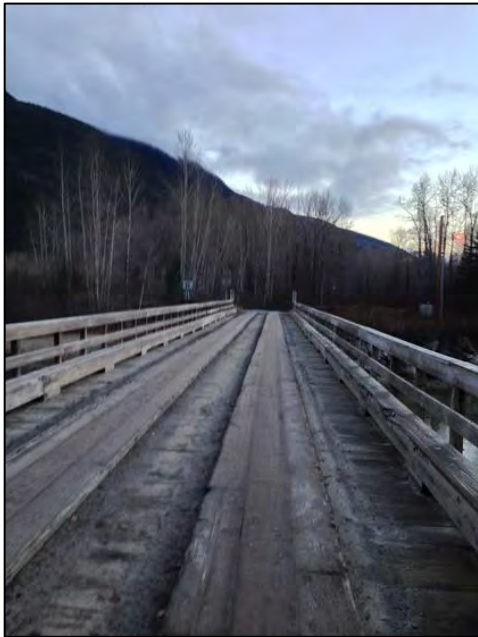
split or extension of the Denali fault. On May 9, 2014, a 3.9 earthquake occurred west-northwest of Skagway just across the Canadian border. On June 4, 2014, there was a strong 5.8 earthquake in the east arm of Glacier Bay National Park that was felt by many in Haines and Skagway. Severe earthquakes in 1899 and in 1958 centered in the Lituya Bay-Yakutat Bay area were felt strongly at Skagway and Haines.

Flooding

On July 23, 2002, a large flood event occurred when the lateral moraine of the West Creek Glacier liquefied, causing debris to slide into a glacial lake located in front of the glacier's terminus displacing a tremendous volume of lake water into West Creek. In reaction, the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park funded a six-month investigation of geologic hazards conducted by a volunteer student geologist. This investigation identified a second lateral moraine, adjacent to West Creek Glacier Lake, which could repeat this event with similar results.

This same study identified a much larger potential threat at the Nourse Glacier, located within a tributary of the Taiya River. Nourse Lake has formed within the past 50 years due to the retreat of its glacier. This lake has a surface area of approximately 170 acres with a maximum depth of 95 feet. The lake has formed behind a 3,944-foot high terminal moraine. A catastrophic failure of this moraine could result in a peak discharge twice as large as the West Creek glacial flood (Capps, 2004). A June 2004 a multi-agency teleconference to discuss the potential threats of geohazards within the Taiya River watershed was held. Both the West Creek Glacier (latitude -135.5105, longitude 59.5693) and the Nourse Glacier (-135.4250, 59.5693) are on lands currently administered by the Bureau of Land Management, but selected for conveyance to the State of Alaska under Section 6 of the Alaska Statehood Act.

After inspecting these glaciers and consulting with Brent Lewis (Geophysical Survey Specialist, BLM National Science and Technology Center), the conclusion was that the West Creek Glacier area has a low potential to cause further flooding, but Nourse Glacier, though currently stable, has the potential to cause flooding from a glacial lake outburst flood.



West Creek Bridge

4 ROAD OWNERSHIP & MAINTENANCE

The Dyea Road - up to the West Creek Bridge - is owned and maintained by State of Alaska. The West Creek Bridge, West Creek Road, and Jay Frey Recreation Bridge are owned and maintained by the Municipality of Skagway with one exception: the Alaska Department of Public Facilities and Transportation (ADOT&PF) does a West Creek Bridge inspection every two years.

The original West Creek Bridge(s) were built in the 1950's by residents to provide access to their homesteads. The current 163-foot long, one-lane 14-foot wide West Creek Bridge was installed in the 1992 by the Municipality of Skagway. It is a steel stringer bridge with timber plank decking. The last ADOT&PF West Creek Bridge inspection was completed in spring 2013. The bridge condition is currently fine for typical uses, but if future use included gravel or log hauling or heavy equipment crossings the bridge would need an upgrade. If the inspections identify any "work candidates," the Municipality of Skagway works to accomplish them.

In the winter, the ADOT&PF snowplows the Dyea Road to the town end of the West Creek Bridge. No one, including the Municipality of Skagway, plows west of the town side of the West Creek Bridge other than residents to access their homes.

The West Creek Road was originally built as a logging road in the 1960's to provide access to a State of Alaska timber sale on the north side of West Creek. This plan's chapter on West Creek History provides more details on both.

Once over the West Creek Bridge, the West Creek Road is hard packed dirt varying from 10 to 20 feet wide. A high clearance vehicle is recommended and in rainy or slick conditions, 4-wheel drive is needed in places. There is no winter maintenance and it quickly becomes snow and ice laden. Winter use is by snow machine, snowshoe, and cross country skis.

The 115-foot Jay Frey Recreation Bridge was installed in 2008. It provides a pedestrian crossing of West Creek about 1.6 miles after the West Creek Bridge, in Section 16 of T26S, R59E on USGS Skagway C-2 1:63:360 quadrangle map. The Recreation Bridge is currently marked to prohibit motorized use across it or south of West Creek. The Jay Frey Recreation Bridge has not been inspected since it was installed. Crossing the Jay Frey Recreation Bridge there is a 10-12 foot wide trail roughly parallel West Creek running west for about 1,200 feet.

The road narrows and is quite overgrown with alders here and was last brushed 10 years ago.

Just 0.75 mile past the Recreation Bridge (on the main West Creek Road), the road ends, and one must climb up "The Hump," a 100 foot or so high overgrown cliff-like area that effectively prevents further motorized access by car or truck. However, ATVs, snow machines and motorcycles sometimes travel over The Hump. Climbing over The Hump, there is a narrow foot-wide trail that continues for about another 1.5 miles, until it fades out into muskegs. From here, hikers, berry-pickers, snowshoers, skiers, motorcycle riders, and others follow the river or other informal trails back to the West Creek and Back Glaciers.

There is no regular maintenance program for West Creek Road. The Municipality of Skagway funded a culvert project in 2003-2004 following the 2002 flood and installed about 20 culverts along West Creek Road. At that time, they also removed brush, cleaned ditches, and fixed up rough spots with an excavator. Work occurred on the entire West Creek Road, including widening it the last quarter-mile to "The Hump."

The Municipality of Skagway public works staff usually travels West Creek Road once a year to clean-up larger abandoned trash.



Building West Creek Road, Photo courtesy of Andrew Beierly

5 HISTORY

Early Days in West Creek

There is a good deal written about the Alaskan Native and Gold Rush era history for the Dyea and Chilkoot areas, but not much about the West Creek area. Alaska Natives and others went fishing, hunting, and blueberry picking back in the West Creek area. It has always been known as a good goat hunting place and the creek had some deep pockets with Dolly Varden. Before the West Creek Road existed people just followed the river to get back to the area.

1930's

Homesteaders lived in the Dyea area, on an intermittent basis, since the gold rush period. The lack of access, however, prevented all but the most self-sufficient from living there. By 1932, nine families were homesteading and in October of that year they petitioned the government to construct a road to the valley from Skagway¹. Officials from the Forest Service, the Bureau of Public Roads, and the Alaska Road Commission all denied the petitioners' request; the Alaska Road Commission (ARC) did, however, provide sufficient funds to allow for the clearing of a hiking trail, which connected Skagway with the Taiya River². Three years later, the Skagway Chamber of Commerce again suggested the construction of a road to Dyea, but the road commission curtly replied that it had no funds to spare for "tourist roads³."

1940's

The road project from Skagway finally got off the ground in 1940. Ernest Gruening, who had been appointed Alaska's governor in 1939, recommended the idea to the Territorial Road Board,

and in May 1940, ARC engineers were dispatched to the area for a preliminary survey⁴. By August, an engineer had estimated that the entire 8.5 mile road, from Skagway to Dyea, would cost \$257,500. Meanwhile, the ARC, having been given \$27,000 for Dyea Road work, made plans for the summer construction season. Work proceeded slowly due to a lack of equipment, but by mid-September local foreman J. Ludwig Frolander and his crew had completed 2.3 miles of gravel road. Dyea Road, by now, extended all the way from its turnoff from the main road to its intersection with the Skagway Alpine Club's AB Mountain Trail⁵.

After the 1940 season, work continued on the Dyea Road project. By the following April, the Army had made it known that it was proposing to construct an airfield on the Dyea flats, because it was the only place in the Skagway area where a facility fitting the Army's needs could be built. Perhaps as a result, Gruening insisted that \$25,000 be allotted that year for the project⁶. Frolander, supplemented by the U.S. Army 18th Engineers, completed only a half mile of road that year because "practically every foot is heavy rock work with no choice for evading it." By the end of the 1942 season, the road was extended to the head of Long Bay⁷.

Thereafter, road construction continued in small increments. Half-mile sections of road were completed in 1943 and 1944; a mile was completed in 1945, and 0.6 miles of new road was finished in 1946⁸. By the fall of 1946, the road had been completed far enough that the four Dyea homesteading families--those of Wesley Patterson, Kenneth Lamoreaux, Alfred Nelson, and Malcolm Moe--began to use the road to go to and from Skagway. But, because the road had not yet reached the flats, all four homesteaders could only drive to their homesteads at low tide or over the ice⁹. That problem, however, was soon overcome. In 1947, the ARC extended the road another 0.3 miles, and the following April the agency erected the 200-foot steel bridge over the Taiya River. Ceremonies dedicating the new Taiya River Bridge took place on September 2, 1948. Later in 1948 the road was completed all the way to West Creek.

Governor Ernest Gruening, whose efforts were largely responsible for the completion of both the road and bridge, attended the dedication ceremony¹⁰.



Taiya River Bridge

During this postwar period a series of logging operations in the lower Taiya River Valley commenced. The White Pass and Yukon Route needed a source of lumber for wharf pilings, bridge timbers, and switch ties. In response, local resident Edward A. Hosford formed the Skagway Lumber Company. In 1946 or 1947, he and Wes Patterson built a cabin three miles

upriver from Dyea. The construction of a mill, and the removal of lumber, began shortly after the completion of the Taiya River Bridge. On the south side of West Creek was the logging operation's campsite, spare tools, the camp cook's operation and Hosford's camp¹¹. The mill was at Finnegan's Point.

1950's-1960's

The Taiya River flooded in July 1953 and washed away the home of Dyea homesteader Bill Matthews and other cabins were lost along West Creek¹².

Timber cutting operations continued on a year-round basis until 1956. Ed Hosford put in a road from Dyea north to Finnegan's Point. During these eight or nine years of operation, most of the mature spruce forest between Finnegan's Point and the mouth of West Creek was logged. During the early 1960s, Hosford contracted with Mrs. Mark R. Noyd, the owner of the Pullen and Matthews homesteads, and logged most of the Taiya River valley south of West Creek.

Ed Hanousek, Sr., who homesteaded on land north of West Creek, built the first bridge across West Creek during the 1950's in order to get to his homesite; that bridge is about 100 feet upstream from the current bridge's location. Ed Hosford built a stronger bridge in 1965 to handle his equipment and tore out Ed Hanousek's bridge. ¹³In the mid-1960's, Ed Hosford received a contract from the State of Alaska to log spruce in the north West Creek drainage¹⁴. The West Creek Road was built to past the current site of the Jay Frey Recreation Bridge by H&M (Hosford & Mahle) Logging Company in the 1960's to access timber for its State of Alaska logging contract on the north side of West Creek.

The wide flat spot in the current West Creek Road is where H&M would store logs during timber harvesting in West Creek valley. They

Building West Creek Road and Logging the Area in the 1960's, Photos courtesy of Fred Hosford



would bring trucks in and load them here because a wide spot was needed to turn the trucks around. A man from Haines did the hauling (Bill Waldo). If H&M would have had larger more modern equipment they would have built the road along a different route, but with their small equipment, they had to choose the easiest route. A D-6 was the biggest piece of equipment used and the area was blasted with dynamite only once. Most of the pulp wood from the West Creek timber harvest went to the pulp mill in Sitka, and the saw logs went to John Schnable's sawmill in Haines. This State of Alaska West Creek timber sale resulted in less commercial timber than the State had estimated and was not as profitable a venture as H&M had expected. Timber was only harvested on the north side of West Creek (Figure 3)¹⁵.

The new West Creek logging road provided easier access and the area became increasingly popular for hunting, hiking, gathering firewood, cutting house logs, and berry picking.

Research into the potential for a West Creek hydro project also began in the 1960's. In 1965, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) published the "Geologic Reconnaissance of the West Creek Damsite near Skagway, Alaska"(USGS Bulletin 1211-A).

1970's-1980's

The Hosford boys and Ed Hanousek Jr. did some rebuilding and repairs to the West Creek Road in the late 1970's as part of a contract to support a hydrology study¹⁶.

In 1978, a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and State of Alaska was signed about land management in Dyea/Chilkoot area of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park.¹⁷

In 1981, Alaska Senate Bill 26 passed, authorizing the Alaska Power Administration (APA) to spend \$1 million on a detailed West Creek dam feasibility study. Soon after the bill's August 4 implementation date, a contract was awarded to R. W. Beck Associates from Seattle, and by September, drillers and geologists were working in the Dyea area and attempting to determine whether the geological substrate could support the proposed 107-foot dam. The contract called for a completion date of March 1982. APA officials at the time predicted that dam construction could begin as early as 1984, with the dam complete and operating in 1986.

Beck representatives presented their study findings in April 1982 and noted that there were three feasible projects in upper Lynn Canal: West Creek, Goat Lake (in the Skagway River Valley), and upper Chilkoot Lake (north of Haines). Each of the projects, if built, would serve both communities; Haines and Skagway would be connected by a submarine cable. Of the three, West Creek project was the top choice. However, the project's cost had risen by now to \$63.5 million—high enough "to scare people," noted a local newspaper story, but still cheaper than either existing systems or other energy alternatives. Officials were predicting that construction would begin in 1986.¹⁸

In October 1982, the Faro mines in the Yukon territory shut down and the White Pass and Yukon Route railroad ceased operating. Soon afterward, the White Pass announced that it might not operate passenger trains in the summer of 1983. Because the White Pass was Skagway's largest single power user, its discontinued service caused APA officials to withdraw \$350,000 that had originally been earmarked for the West Creek project.

1990's

The Municipality of Skagway replaced the West Creek Bridge in early 1990s. Ed Hanousek did the work and built a new one with materials donated from the State and the City of Skagway with a great deal of volunteer help¹⁹.

2000's

At approximately 6:15 am on July 23, 2002, the lateral moraine of the West Creek Glacier liquefied, causing debris to slide into a glacial lake located in front of the glacier's terminus. The debris displaced a large volume of lake water into West Creek, generating a tremendous flood that poured down West Creek, the community of Dyea, and the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park. This flood caused extensive damage to private property, bridges, and roads and forced the immediate evacuation of Dyea residents and approximately 50 campers from nearby campgrounds. This flood event surpassed the estimated 500-year flood for West Creek producing a peak discharge of 16,209 cubic feet per second (Capps, 2004). Borough Manager Bob Ward said, "The West Creek riverbed raised 18 feet, making it 6 to 8 feet higher than the surrounding area. There's water flowing out in both directions."

In 2002-2003, the Municipality of Skagway funded a culvert project following the flood and installed about 20 culverts along West Creek Road. The contractor was H&H Construction. At this time, they also removed brush, cleaned ditches, and fixed up rough spots with excavator. Work occurred on the entire West Creek Road, including widening it the last quarter-mile to "The Hump."

In July 2008, the Municipality of Skagway proposed to construct the West Creek Hydroelectric Project located on West Creek to provide enough power to offset diesel generation by cruise ships that dock in Skagway from May through September each year. Up to five cruise ships per day dock in Skagway for 12-15 hours and continuously operate their diesel plants to provide on-board electricity. The continuous stack emissions spread a blue haze at about the 1,500-foot elevation where vegetation has been noticeably affected. The proposed project would improve air quality and save vegetation in the area (there may be other unknown environmental benefits). This proposed project is significantly different from the 1981-82 proposal by Beck in that the installed capacity would be greater (25 MW) and the reservoir storage would be less. The costs and benefits of capacity/storage alternatives would be a primary focus of proposed project studies.



Ray & Beryl Hosford's home near West Creek surrounded by water Tuesday morning, July 23, 2002. Aerial photo by Stan Karti, special thanks to Temsco Helicopters and City of Skagway for use of the photo. Skagway News



Wayne Ames shows his wife Shannon and friends how the creek cut through the old Hanousek property and came down the road just before the West Creek Bridge. City workers were able to put part of the road back together to allow access for raft tours on the nearby Taiya River. Jeff Brady, Skagway News



The collapse left the appearance of a crater seen high above the glacier.

During 2009, the old Alaska Marine Highway System 115 ft. long ferry transfer ramp was donated to Skagway, repaired, and relocated to West Creek to improve pedestrian access to this popular, but underutilized area where the municipality selected over 3000 acres as part of its land entitlement from the state. Installation was done by the Municipality of Skagway through a contract to Hamilton Construction.

The Skagway Assembly unanimously passed a resolution naming the pedestrian bridge over West Creek the Jay Frey Recreation Bridge in October 2009. Members said Frey, who was a city council member for 14 years until his death in 2005, was an avid recreational user of the area, driving out to Dyea almost daily. Assemblyman Mike Korsmo said he and local resident Dean Anderson talked about how Frey spent an incredible amount of time up there with his fishing pole and his dog. “And hanging out with the mayor of Dyea (Paul Jones),” added Dan Henry. The resolution stated that, “while the true measure of a man will never be land, money, or fame, Jay Frey will be remembered for his good deeds on behalf of his fellow man in the Dyea Valley and West Creek specifically.”

2010's

Chapter 4 of this Plan on “Road Ownership and Maintenance” details improvements and inspections to area bridges during the 2011-2013. The ADOT&PF completed a significant Dyea Road widening project in 2012-2014. Extensive blasting and rock removal is lowering grades and straightening portions of tight turns out about six miles down the road where it overlooks the Dyea Flats.



Jay Frey Recreation Bridge

Study of a West Creek hydroelectric project moved to the front burner again in October 2013 when the State of Alaska and Yukon Government signed an agreement to collaborate on identification and evaluation of an economic corridor between Southeast Alaska and the Yukon to transmit electric power and telecommunications.

Following up, in April 2014 a study began to investigate the feasibility of an energy and telecommunications link. “Yukon and Alaska have enjoyed a long history of working together and collaborating on projects like this allowing us to strengthen and grow our economies as well as our friendship,” said Yukon’s Economic Development Minister Currie Dixon. “Infrastructure projects like this will provide benefits for both our economies and will further integrate our already well-connected jurisdictions.” Connecting Skagway to Yukon’s energy grid could offer benefit to both jurisdictions. Skagway needs power in the summer to fuel its tourism businesses and activities, including the ability to connect cruise ships to shoreside electricity and eliminate the need to burn diesel in port. The summer is when the Yukon has an excess supply of hydro. In the winter, when Yukon’s power demand peaks, Skagway’s power demands are significantly reduced. The West Creek Hydro project could serve both jurisdictions well, if there were a link between the two. This project is still in the investigation stage, but an energy link to Whitehorse would make the project look more attractive to the Alaska Energy Authority and could potentially bump it up the priority list.²⁰



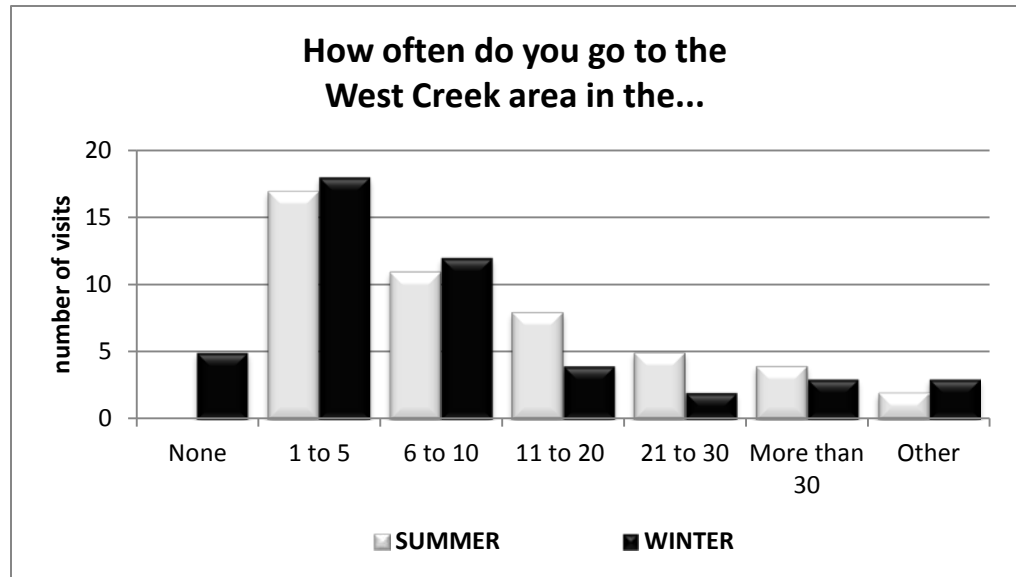
6 CURRENT LAND USES, VALUES, OPINIONS & OBSERVATIONS

The information in this section comes from four sources: 2013 and 2010 community opinion surveys about West Creek (51 and 97 surveys completed, respectively); from 20 interviews conducted in 2013 to help identify opinions, concerns, and issues that the West Creek Area Master Plan should address; and from a question on the 2008 statistically valid Community Opinion Survey.

*“The area
shouts, this is
Alaska!”*

The information from all but the 2008 effort was not gathered randomly, so cannot be generalized to represent the opinions of all of Skagway. However, this information does represent the ideas of those that care enough about the area to take the time to comment, and those who actively use the area and have local knowledge of conditions and would be most impacted by the Plan. Thus, these are important opinions and observations to use during plan development. Places where comments indicate strong preferences should be considered carefully, and places where there is a wide range of opinions should be probed more thoughtfully to address issues raised.

Mostly year-round and longtime residents participated in the 2013 opinion survey. Of the 51 who did the survey, over three-quarters (78%) live in Skagway year round and over half (54%) have lived in Skagway between 6 and 20 years. See the 2013 West Creek Opinion Survey Report for full details.



Those surveyed in 2013 use the West Creek area regularly.

Why We Value West Creek

West Creek provides relatively easy access for residents while remaining remote enough to attract very few tourists. Skagwegians love this area because here they can escape the summer crowds from town and Dyea and do a variety of recreational activities in a place that is remote, beautiful, peaceful, and quiet. They value the natural setting with little trace of human impact other than the road, trails, and where firewood is gathered. The area offers abundant resources and recreational opportunities that residents enjoy. These values are captured in the quotes here that are from written comments submitted on the 2013 survey.

“The area shouts, this is Alaska!”

Skagway residents value West Creek’s remoteness including the area’s peace, quiet, seclusion, solitude, and the chance to escape from summer tourism and crowds. Others say they value the natural setting and wilderness in West Creek, including an appreciation for the wildlife, beauty, lack of development, and low level of human impact here. Residents say it is easy to get back to West Creek, but not *too* easy – which they appreciate because that keeps crowds away. Surveys results from 2010 list recreational values highest and



“This gives us a getaway in the summer.”

2013 results list the area's remoteness, but both mentioned both. Interviews confirm these answers.

"I like the solitude and remoteness of the area."

"I enjoy being able to be alone almost anywhere in the area."

"This gives us a "getaway" in the summer."

"The natural surroundings and convenience of the trail."

"Peaceful, natural setting, remoteness (not over run with tourists)"

"Pristine ground with a lot of history."

"The water and the river, the trees in the forest, and the mountains make this place a keepsake for generations to come."

"Easy access, True nature, Raw beauty"

Current Uses

People use West Creek to hike, camp, walk, snow-machine, ATV, gather firewood, cut wood, ski, snow-shoe, mountain bike, hunt, pick berries, shoot, relax, kayak, trap, and horseback ride.

Modest Infrastructure Improvements

There is support for modest West Creek Road maintenance and the addition of restrooms. A concern is that improved maintenance and new trails or infrastructure not substantially increase use of the area, especially by non-residents. Also, infrastructure or facilities should not be located or used in a way that detracts from the area's beauty.

Recreation and Trails

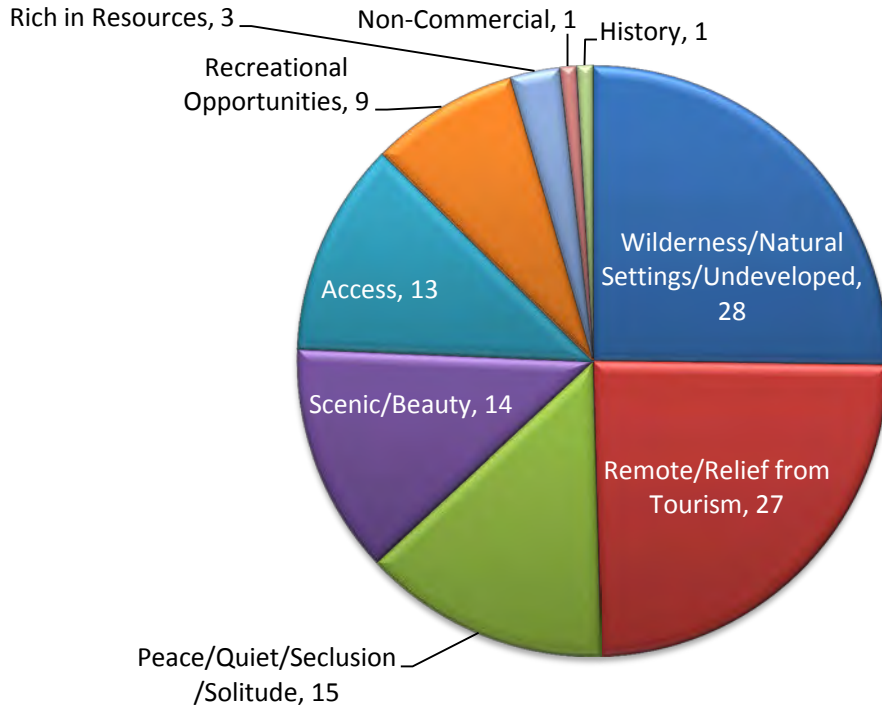
There is strong support for recreational use in the area, especially trails for hiking, walking, horse-riding, ATV-ing, snow-machining, skiing, and snowshoeing. Over half of the 2013 survey respondents said more trails are desired here to enhance enjoyment and use of the area.



In response to a question that was part of the 2008 statistically representative Community Opinion Survey, 75% of Skagway residents supported “Improve West Creek Valley trail system for year-round recreational use.”

What Qualities do you Value about the West Creek Area?

(response & number who said this, 2013 survey)



In addition to just getting away, trails are used to access areas for berry picking, hunting, fishing, and trapping. There are occasionally times when motorized users affect the enjoyment of non-motorized users (in both the winter and summer) but it doesn’t happen very often. Most feel that there is no need to segregate motorized and non-motorized users at this time. “We share well back here.” However, this plan could identify “trigger points” that, if exceeded, would indicate more active management of motorized use is needed. Trigger points could be things like excessive erosion of the trail system or ripping up of the environment by four wheelers.

Several commented that the number of hikers in West Creek Valley has noticeably increased over the last five years. There is a marathon from town to West Creek in the summer, and the winter ski/snowshoe challenge includes West Creek as a ski or snowshoe trail. The top three desired trail improvements are:

1. Maintain existing trails.
2. A new trail to Lost Lake that leaves from the Jay Frye Recreation Bridge and “zigzags” or “sidehills” up the steep mountain to Lost Lake to improve access to the lake. The current 2.5 mile (one way) trail leaving from the Slide Cemetery is quite steep and in

rough shape (though if it too is improved the result would be a loop system). Lost Lake is a jewel with irises, bog orchids, and a little waterfall at the south end. Other improvements mentioned for Lost Lake are to stock the lake with trout and build a municipally owned rental cabin here, perhaps with a little rowboat.

3. A trail along the north side of West Creek to the West Creek Glacier terminus. Or, a trail along the north and south sides that connects at the West Creek headwaters/Back Glacier area to make a loop. If there was a trail on both sides of West Creek, the south side could be for non-motorized use and the north side for motorized use if desired. These trails would also enhance access to the backcountry.

Others desired trail improvements mentioned are: (1) to make it easier to get ATVs over “The Hump” where the road ends and trail begins – although this access improvement could increase use to the back part of the valley causing it to potentially lose some of its remote character; and (2) to improve the path from Lost Lake to Face Mountain though given the terrain fewer people do and would use this.

Activities to Always Allow - Recreation & Firewood

In the 2013 survey more than half of those who responded said two types of activities that should always be allowed in the West Creek area are hiking-backpacking-trail building-exploring (67%) and wood harvest-wood cutting-wood gathering-firewood (50%). These same two activities were the top two mentioned in 2010 also, with over 40% each saying these activities should always be allowed. These aren’t statistically representative results, but do represent the views of those who use the area and care about it enough to weigh in.

Activities to Always Prohibit - Commercial Tourism Uses

There is only one activity that the majority who answered surveys consistently wants prohibited here: commercial tourism uses. At least half who responded in 2013 want commercial activity/use prohibited. In 2010, no activity had over 25% recommending it be prohibited. However, knowing that commercial use was a key question to address, both years there were survey questions asking about it specifically. No commercial tourist activity in West Creek was the preference for 53% in 2010 and 70% in 2013. Those interviewed also felt this way, though a few mentioned that limited commercial activity could help pay for part of the improvements here, for example horseback riding tours. However, most clearly oppose commercial activity because this is the major accessible area that locals use to escape from commercial use and tours and it would detract from the qualities people value in West Creek.

About 1.5 miles back West Creek Road is an area used for target practice and some concerns were concerns over unsafe shooting practices and the accumulation of junk and garbage here used as targets.

Residential Use

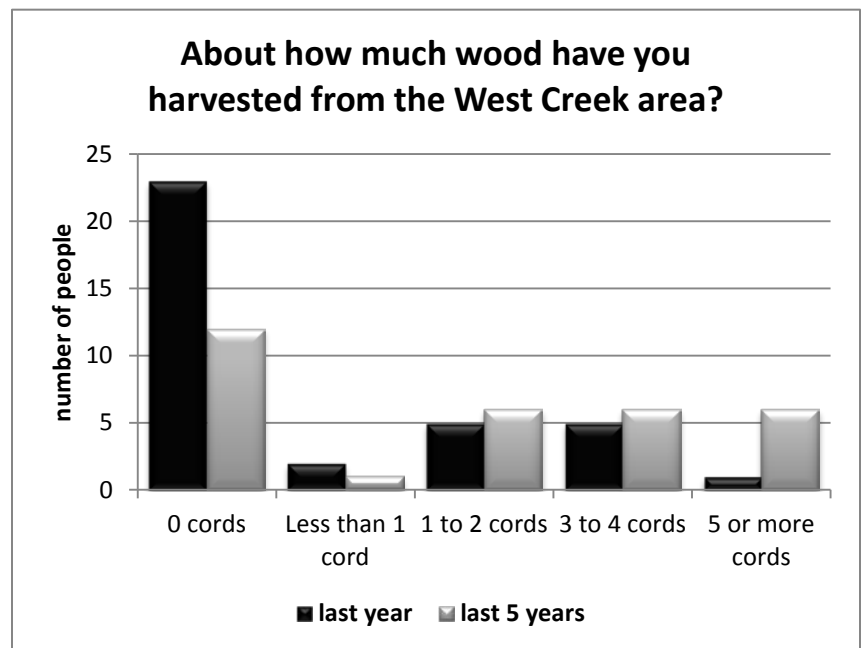
Clarity is needed on whether or not the Municipality should offer some land between the two bridges for recreational cabins or even year-round residential use. It must be clear that there can be no expectation for road maintenance, utilities, or electricity.

Signage

Signage at the West Creek Bridge is needed regarding area rules for matters such as firewood gathering, trash, shooting, and the level of fire danger. It would be good to let people when traplines are active to protect people and dogs.

Firewood

This is the only place close to town where firewood can be gathered, which is really valued and important to residents. There is support for dead and downed and possibly live wood harvest for local heating. Half believe some level of management for this activity is needed. "About 10 people are cutting in the same spot; we need to spread this out in a thoughtful way." Among the concerns are to: avoid overharvest in any one area so there is no negative impact on either forest health or aesthetics, eliminate big slash piles, better "piggy-back" firewood harvest and trail development, clarify (and simplify) borough code on firewood harvest, and prevent commercial timber harvest.



Field Observations & Conversations

Field conditions in the area were observed and discussion about timber, firewood, and trail development during a February and June 2013 West Creek trip by planning consultants and residents. The June drive and hike back West Creek was advertised and open to the public and 17 individuals attended. Joining the June field trip was an invited State of Alaska forester from Haines.

Currently, no one asks for approval to gather dead and downed wood. Some of the dead and down wood that is easily accessible and lying around is too old and rotten to be useful firewood. No slash piles were observed; people tend to spread their slash out.

Several trails used for firewood gathering and clearing were observed and mapped. There is an informal firewood harvesting/gathering etiquette in use. Most know where “family” trails are such as the Hosford, Harris, and Cochran family trails and firewood gathering areas, and, most avoid these trails in order to respect the work that people have put into developing the trails into “their” area. Others though don’t have an area and just harvest as close to the road as they can find. Still others don’t know about this informal etiquette. All these trails and the wood gathering activities are on municipal, not private, land.

Most wood gatherers are also harvesting live wood too. This occurs when they are extending a path to get back to an area, because there is a tree bent down and hanging across - or partly into - the road, and also some gatherers are blatantly harvesting live wood. Some girdle trees so they will die to prepare the tree for harvest the next year. All this live wood harvest is illegal, yet it seems to be a common practice.

Some individuals on the June field trip expressed an interest in using municipal wood for more than firewood. They would like to see some timber here made available – in a community accepted manner – for saw logs. There is interest in establishing a small sawmill to produce wood for local use like cabin, furniture, and home building. The individuals on the trip expressed interest in using pack horses to pull the trees out.

Given the high cost of heating fuel more homes in Skagway are being built with wood stoves rather, or in addition to, oil heat. Right now West Creek wood is essentially free except for the harvester’s time and the cost of gas for trucks and chainsaws and new parts for equipment. Given free wood and tallying up reasonable costs, it was estimated in summer 2013 that people are probably paying \$50/cord, and a cord generally heats a home for 2 to 4 weeks depending on house type, size, insulation etc.

Considering the respect commonly practiced toward one another, that most clean up after wood harvesting/gathering, and that generally the take of live wood is only to further trail development (as opposed to doing a clear cut), things are mostly working fine now in people’s opinions. However, all of these “rules” and conditions are informal. A question and a comment were, “What about when new people come that don’t know the rules?” “It only takes one bad actor to mess it up and throw the equilibrium off.” In fact, later in 2013 there was a more blatant live wood harvest in West Creek that upset some in Skagway. The pressures on the area and various interests reinforce the need to address firewood and timber harvest on municipal land in West Creek in a more systematic way.

Hydroelectric Facility

There are mixed opinions about a future hydroelectric dam and lake in West Creek. When asked if there was any infrastructure or facilities that, if built, would detract from the area, one-quarter in 2013 said a hydro facility, and a few (8%) said a hydro facility should be prohibited. In 2010 there was a question specifically about hydro development on the survey, 44% said they supported it, 31% said no, and 24% said maybe.

During interviews, those opposed stated concerns such as the impact on local electric rates, developing a project in an area special to residents whose benefits accrue to non-residents, the fact that additional power could facilitate new industry, noise from the powerhouse, improved and increased access to area by non-residents, and the combined effect of these and other concerns on area ecology, peace, recreation, and enjoyment. Impact on recreation and scenic values is concerns to some while others feel that the dam and lake would create its own set of recreational opportunities.

Those that support the idea do so because they want enough local power to require cruise ships to plug in while in port to reduce air pollution, this would be a year-round source of clean electricity (hydro is supplemented by diesel now in the winter), and because this would be a municipal-owned facility (though likely leased for development purposes).

Hiker Heading Up West Creek Road on A Sunny Winter Day



7 WEST CREEK MANAGEMENT PLAN

OVERVIEW - RECREATION AND RESOURCES

The intent of the West Creek Master Plan is to promote continued use and enjoyment of the entire West Creek area, including municipal land, as a place to hike, walk, ride horses, ride ATVs, camp, hunt, gather berries and plants, and get away from the summer crowds in town and Dyea. In the winter, it is a place to ski, snow-machine, snowshoe, trap, and experience deep winter. Natural resources in West Creek are respectfully used and enjoyed including lawful hunting, gathering, fishing, trapping, prospecting, and a combination of firewood gathering and managed trail-building or timber thinning that makes wood available for local use. Management is primarily for remote to moderately remote recreation, firewood and wood harvest, and to ensure the area continues as a nearby accessible place that screams, "This is Alaska!"

Infrastructure improvements will be more regular trail maintenance and new trails (prioritized list), a rental cabin at Lost Lake, and an every 5-year road maintenance schedule to ensure the area is accessible, but not too accessible. Modest signage kiosks will be installed at the West Creek Bridge and by the Jay Frey Recreation Bridge. They will be low-key in nature as there is no interest in promoting non-resident use of the area. Trash and recycling cans will be at both places and a possibly a vault toilet at the Recreation Bridge.

Firewood rules are clarified or changed to allow dead and down firewood collection and to prohibit live wood harvest unless it is: (a) to remove trees bent over roads or established trails, (b) part of one of several designated trail-building/wood harvest areas, (c) in a managed timber thinning area or sale, or (d) part of another harvest activity explicitly approved by the Municipality. Together these activities and enhanced management will provide a controlled and long-term supply of firewood and some saw logs for resident use and will ensure a healthy forest in maintained without overharvest or an 'industrial' clear-cut.

The informal target practice/shooting area will be better managed with state and municipal rules posted and a backdrop maintained. There will be no residential land disposal or commercial tourism.

The feasibility of hydroelectric development in West Creek is currently under study by the Municipality of Skagway, State of Alaska, and Yukon Territory. Skagway Comprehensive Plan policies 10.25 through 10.27 address this possibility. This development is not endorsed or prohibited in this Plan. However, the values, desired uses, and future management direction for this area is established in this Plan, the concerns of residents about hydroelectric development here are identified, and if developed concepts that can marry hydroelectric and recreation use are outlined, and mitigation opportunities suggested.

Figures 3 - 5 and the narrative in this chapter update the Skagway 2020 Comprehensive Plan for the West Creek area. Figure 3 documents Current Land Uses.

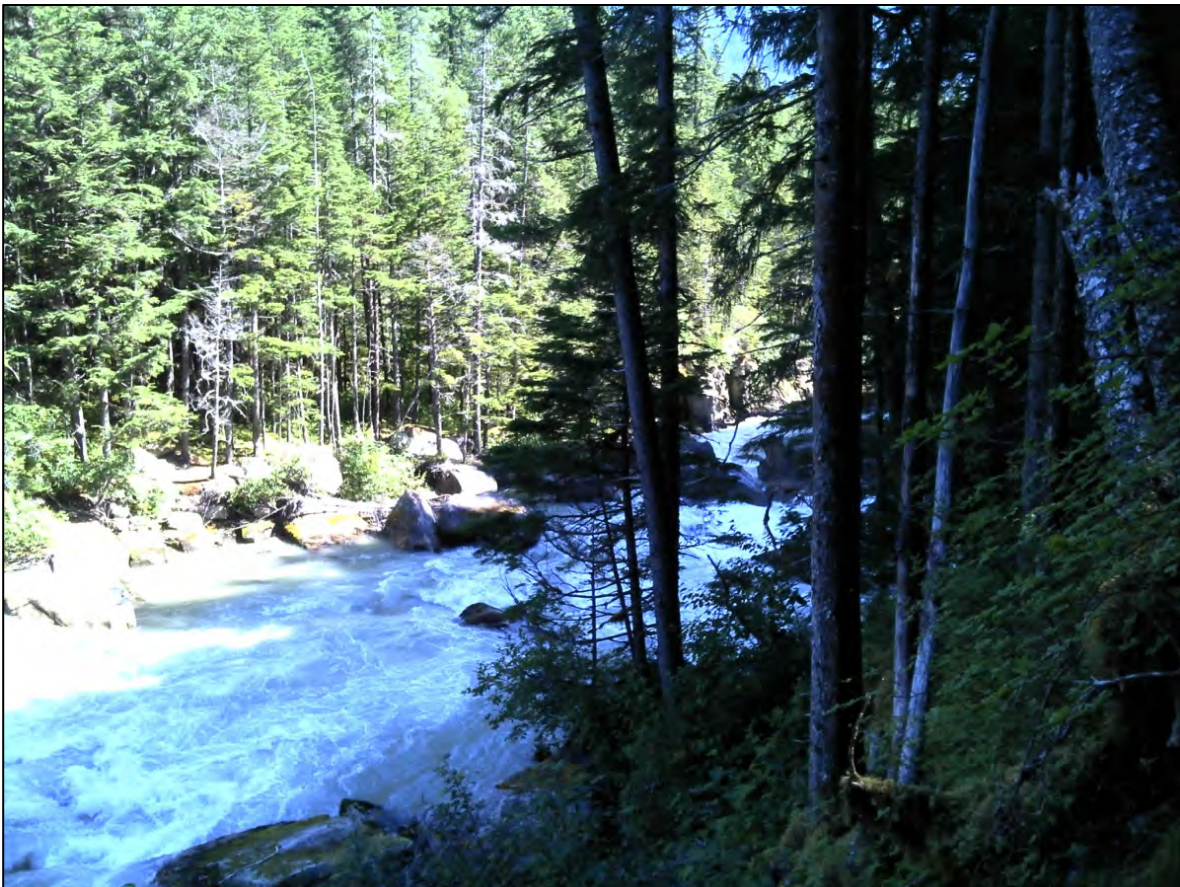
Figure 4 is a Future Growth, Management and Improvement Map that outlines three Management Areas and intent for West Creek valley.

Figure 5 uses the three Management Areas to update the Skagway Comprehensive Plan's Future Growth Map (Figure 7-10 of the Skagway Comprehensive Plan).

Management Actions, by topic, are described in this chapter now and summarized in Appendix A.

Several specific changes to the Skagway Municipal Code are recommended to make management of the West Creek area less confusing and easier. The area's current "holding" zoning district is Residential Conservation (RC). Because allowed and prohibited uses in the RC Zoning District do not align with the future management intent or actions described in the West Creek Master Plan, a new "Remote Recreation and Resources" Zoning District for the West Creek area is proposed and outlined on Table 1. After adoption of the West Creek Master Plan, the new zoning district would need to be adopted and codified.

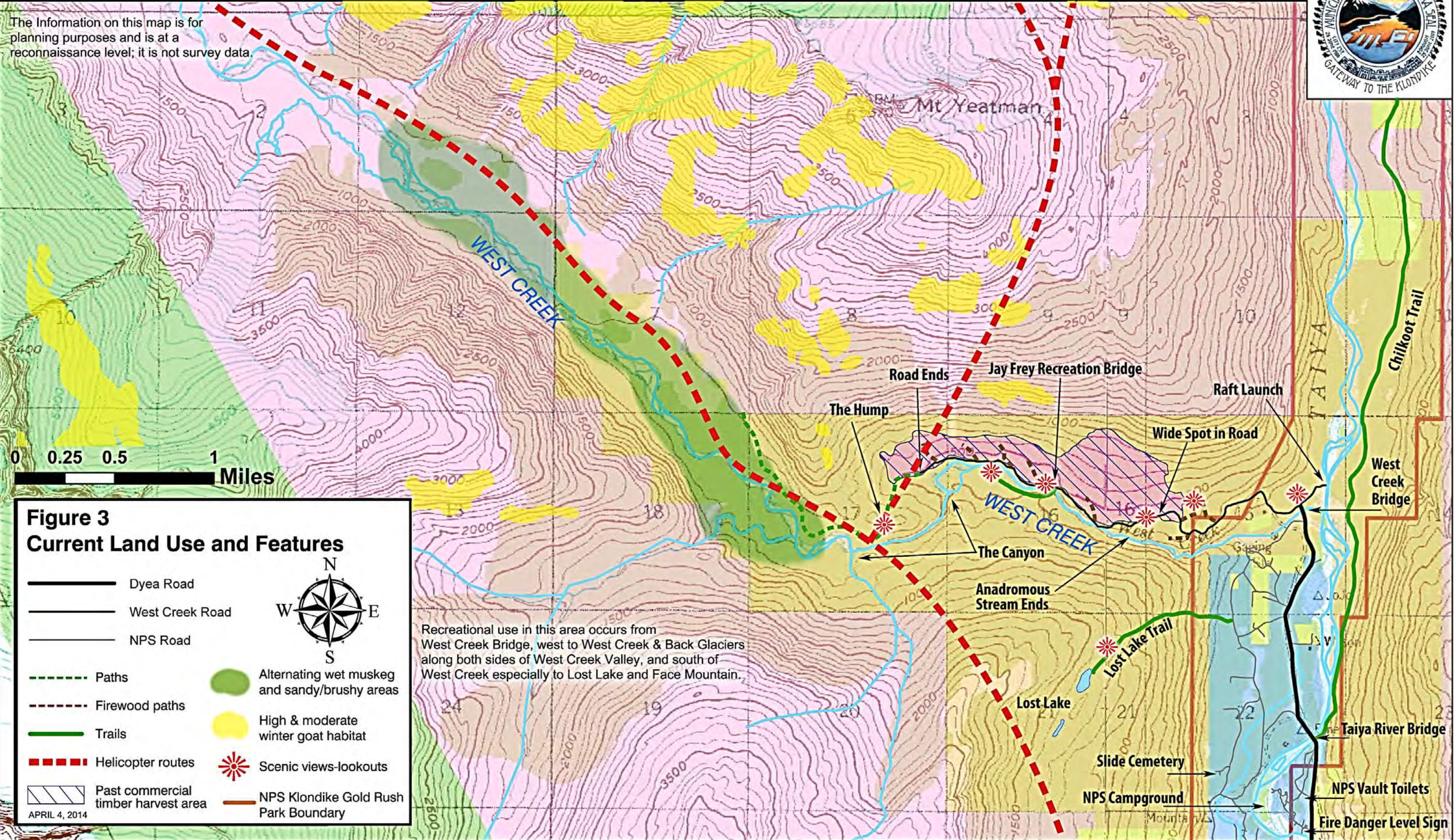
West Creek



West Creek Master Plan



The Information on this map is for planning purposes and is at a reconnaissance level; it is not survey data.



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

**Figure 3
Current Land Use and Features**

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| | Dyea Road | | |
| | West Creek Road | | |
| | NPS Road | | |
| | Paths | | Alternating wet muskeg and sandy/brushy areas |
| | Firewood paths | | High & moderate winter goat habitat |
| | Trails | | Scenic views-lookouts |
| | Helicopter routes | | NPS Klondike Gold Rush Park Boundary |
| | Past commercial timber harvest area | | |

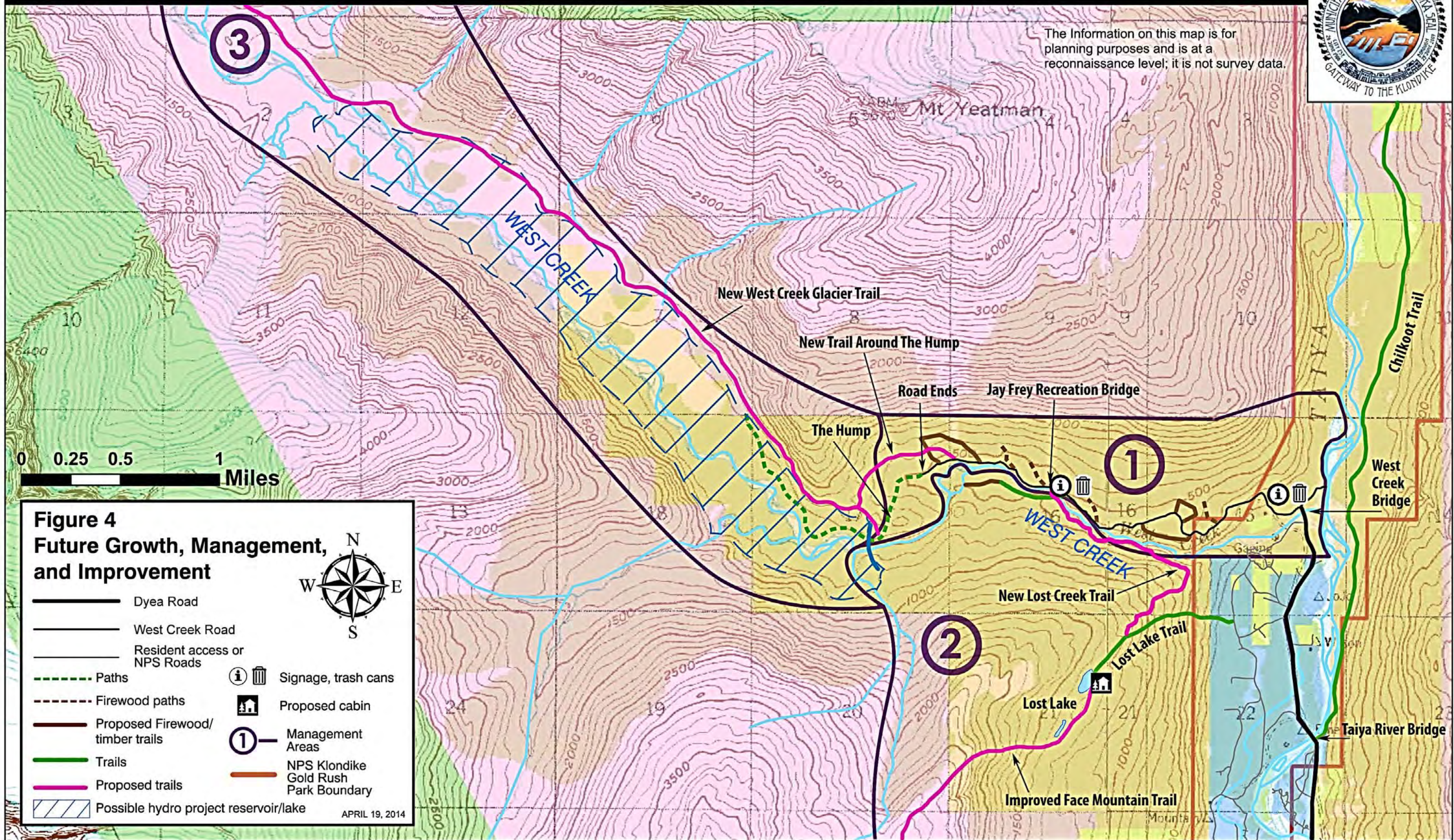
Recreational use in this area occurs from West Creek Bridge, west to West Creek & Back Glaciers along both sides of West Creek Valley, and south of West Creek especially to Lost Lake and Face Mountain.

APRIL 4, 2014

West Creek Master Plan



The Information on this map is for planning purposes and is at a reconnaissance level; it is not survey data.



**Figure 4
Future Growth, Management,
and Improvement**

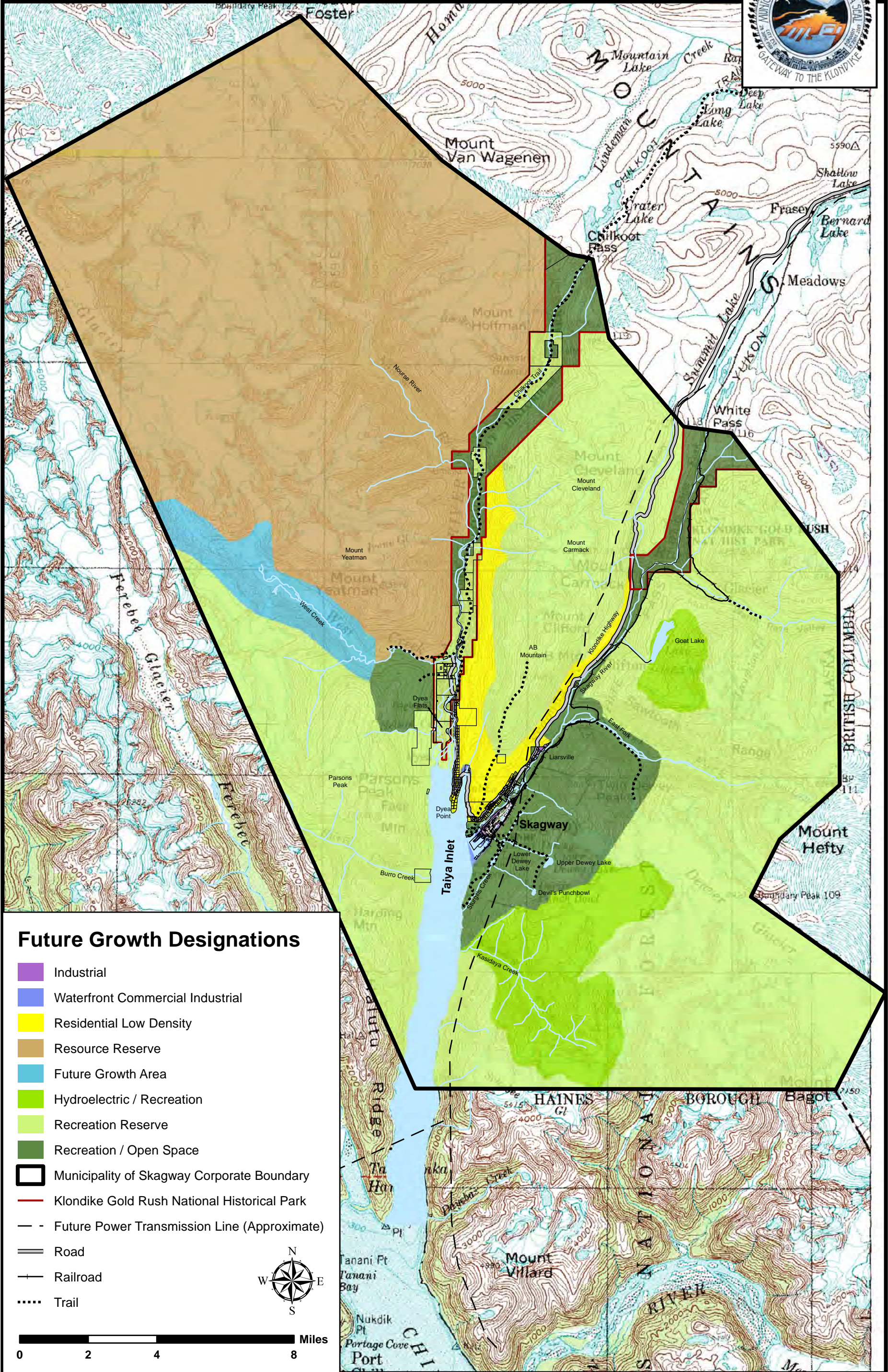
- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| | Dyea Road | |
| | West Creek Road | |
| | Resident access or NPS Roads | |
| | Paths | |
| | Firewood paths | |
| | Proposed Firewood/timber trails | |
| | Trails | |
| | Proposed trails | |
| | Possible hydro project reservoir/lake | |

APRIL 19, 2014

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

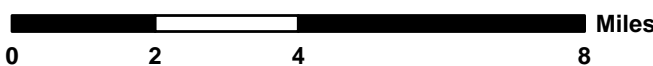
Figure 7-10 Skagway Future Growth Plan

Revised May 1, 2014 per adoption of West Creek Master Plan (Ord # 14-09). This is Figure 5 in West Creek Master Plan



Future Growth Designations

- Industrial
- Waterfront Commercial Industrial
- Residential Low Density
- Resource Reserve
- Future Growth Area
- Hydroelectric / Recreation
- Recreation Reserve
- Recreation / Open Space
- Municipality of Skagway Corporate Boundary
- Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park
- Future Power Transmission Line (Approximate)
- Road
- Railroad
- Trail



MANAGEMENT AREA 1 (West Creek Bridge to “The Hump” - RESOURCE RESERVE)

1. Current Land Uses

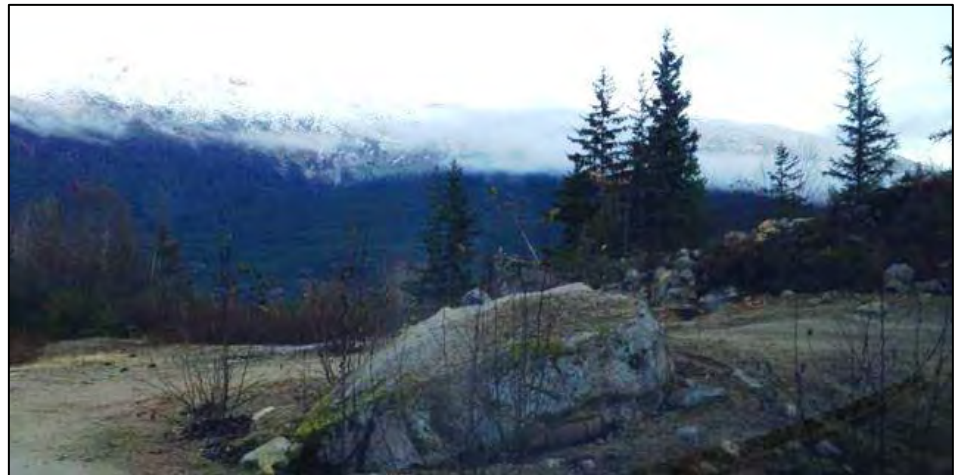
Management Area 1 (Figure 4) begins at the West Creek Bridge and extends west along the road to “The Hump,” which is a knob about 300 feet higher than surrounding land that is adjacent to and overlooking West Creek and “the canyon”. The primary land uses in this area are access, recreation, firewood gathering, camping, target shooting, and trapping.



Above: Looking Westward Down West Creek Road.

Below: Wide Spot in the Road Where Logging Trucks Turned Around in the Past.

The West Creek Road is a destination in and of itself; many people drive or walk it and camp or picnic along it just to “get away.” It enjoys all forms of motorized and non-motorized use and users year-round. There is active trapping just off the road in the winter.



Along the West Creek

Road are several spots with beautiful views of both the surrounding jagged 4,000 to 7,000-foot peaks and of some fast flowing sections West Creek with rapids in “The Canyon.”

The West Creek Bridge is the “entrance point” to the valley. People park cars both south and north of the bridge if they don’t want to drive farther. There is a weather station south of the bridge. On the north side of the bridge are sandy areas in both directions along West Creek with beautiful river views, where residents picnic, play Frisbee, dog walk, and enjoy similar activities along these flats.

The West Creek Road also leads to the Jay Frey Recreation Bridge, which provides access to Management Area 2 south of West Creek. About half a mile past the Recreation Bridge, along the West Creek Road, is the area informally used now for target practice that is often littered with shot up things and spent shells and bullets.

Almost all the current firewood harvest from the valley takes place in Management Area 1 off of approximately ten, 100 to 1,000 foot long “timber paths” that Skagway families and individuals have created over time. Management Area 1 is also where timber was commercially harvested in the past (Figure 3).

Spent Shells Litter Area by Spot Used for Target Practice, and the Target Practice Area



2. Future Land Management and Improvements

a. Road Maintenance

West Creek Road maintenance is currently random and irregular. The last big effort was in 2002-2003 when the Municipality installed about 20 culverts along West Creek Road, brushed-it, cleaned the ditches, fixed rough spots, and widened the last quarter-mile to The Hump. Skagway Public Works staff usually travels West Creek Road once a year to clean-up larger abandoned trash. Snow is not plowed in the winter.



Management Action: A more regular road maintenance program should be established by the Skagway Public Works department that includes scheduled road side brushing and culvert inspection every 5 years (due in 2009) and repair of rough spots and blading every 10 years (due in 2014). There is no intent to chip seal or pave. Winter maintenance is not recommended as snow machines, skis, and snowshoes provide appropriate access for current and desired future uses.

b. Signage

There is no informational signage in the area other than the sign on the Jay Frey Recreation Bridge prohibiting motorized use. Several opinion survey respondents asked for modest

signage that lists area rules for matters such as firewood gathering, trash, shooting, the level of fire danger, if trap lines are active, and some back-woods etiquette on trail-sharing.

Management Action: The area around West Creek Bridge is the entrance point to the valley. Install two low-key signage kiosks, one at the West Creek Bridge and the other at the Jay Frey Recreation Bridge. Signage will let people know the rules and thus set expectations and increase safety. Signage should alert people to Pack Your Trash Out or use trash cans (if installed), identify level of fire danger, be a place to indicate when traplines are active to protect people and dogs, state that a Municipality of Skagway annual Firewood/Timber Trail Permit must be obtained before any firewood in the area is gathered and that this most times must be from a Firewood/Timber Trail, set expectations about how non-motorized and motorized users share the area, cover bear safety and that area users are "Traveling at Own Risk," and provide some area history. Trails can be identified but trail maps are not particularly desired.

c. Toilets

The National Park Service (NPS) has vault toilets 1.5 miles south of the West Creek Bridge just off the Dyea Road near the NPS campground. After that point, there aren't any heading toward or in West Creek. A desire for restrooms was mentioned by 10 people (one-quarter of the respondents) in 2013 survey. Without facilities, "nature" is taking its course everywhere. However, there is also a general concern that too many improvements could increase the amount of people using the area and start to infringe upon local recreation, subsistence, etc.

Management Action: It doesn't seem like toilets are needed at the West Creek Bridge with some relatively close by; instead, on the signage kiosk could note that NPS toilets are available 1.5 miles to the south. However, a vault toilet would make sense at the Jay Frey Recreation Bridge about 1.5 miles up the West Creek Road as this spot is well used for picnics and camping near the target practice area and virtually all area users go by it. Paper products could be replenished weekly and the waste pumped or pulled out once per season at end of fall (and toilets locked over winter).

d. Litter and Garbage

The Municipality of Skagway has no garbage cans or collection at West Creek. There have been comments about area trash, but mostly related to the informal target area. However, in the summer trash pick-up is happening multiple times per week near West Creek and could here too. The Municipality of Skagway has approximately five bear proof garbage cans and a couple of food receptacles on Dyea Flats at its campground. They empty them once a week. It would be easy to locate another set at the West Creek Bridge and empty them at the same time. The NPS also has about 12 bear proof garbage cans and recycling cans on its grounds in area. Their maintenance custodians collect the garbage 3-4 x/week in summer and bring to town.

Management Action: Install bear-proof trash receptacles for garbage and recycling at West Creek Bridge and Jay Frey Recreation Bridge to keep the area cleaner and encourage recycling. To discourage vandalism, install signage thanking people for their community

spirit, commitment, and interest in working together to keep the area clear and encourage recycling. If a vault toilet is established at the Jay Frye Recreation Bridge, garbage and recycling cans should be installed at the same time. They would be emptied once per week when paper products for the toilet were replenished. Like the toilet, lock the garbage cans at the Recreation Bridge so they are not available for use in winter when maintenance is not possible.

e. Firewood Gathering/Timber Harvest & Related Trail-Building

Residents want to ensure firewood collection continues and is recognized as a primary use in the area. Better management is needed to ensure this is possible in the long term, that no one stumbles onto someone else's mess, to manage fire danger, to ensure a healthy forest, spread harvest activities out so that there isn't too much taken from one spot for aesthetic and forest health reasons, to better "piggy-back" firewood harvest and trail development, and to clarify borough code and rules for firewood harvest. There is no support for large scale clear cut timber harvesting.

Management Action: The 8-10 "firewood trails" shown on Figure 3 will be better managed to: (1) ensure the activities that have been occurring for years are actually legal, (2) make clear rules and allow equal access to this municipal-owned wood, and (3) to continue to provide firewood for residents.

Change Skagway Municipal Code 16.06.030 to clarify that permission is not needed to conduct dead and down wood or to harvest live wood when it is lying across a road or trail. Harvest of live wood is not allowed unless one signs and obtains an annual Skagway Firewood/Timber Trail Permit. This allows harvest of live wood as part of trail extension - at the harvester's own risk - from a designated Firewood/Timber Trail (Figure 4) or managed thinning area that is open to the public. The free or low cost Skagway Firewood/Timber Trail Permit must be obtained each calendar year before wood gathering or harvest starts from the Skagway Borough Offices. The permit will list general rules and best management practices that must be followed and agreed to (by signing the form). Rules for free harvest are that the wood must be for personal use, no more than 10 cords can be taken per year per person, and before a permit for the next year can be obtained, a short form must be completed about how much wood was taken and from where. The Municipality of Skagway will inspect progress at least annually on all trail-building/wood harvest sites.

The Municipality of Skagway should designate and flag four Firewood/Timber Trails as well flag an area and authorize wood collection of the "standing dead" trees on the south side of West Creek across from the old blast area.

Figure 4 shows four proposed Firewood/Timber Trails. For each trail and the standing dead area, the desired path should be flagged by the Municipality before any trail extension/wood removal is authorized, and, anyone who desires to collect wood would do so at their own risk only after signing and receiving a new, free or low cost, Skagway Firewood/Timber Trail Permit. The Permit will list best management practices that the individual must agree to follow by signing the permit. After the trails are completed, they will be attractive side trails off the main West Creek Road for walking, snowshoeing, and horseback riding.

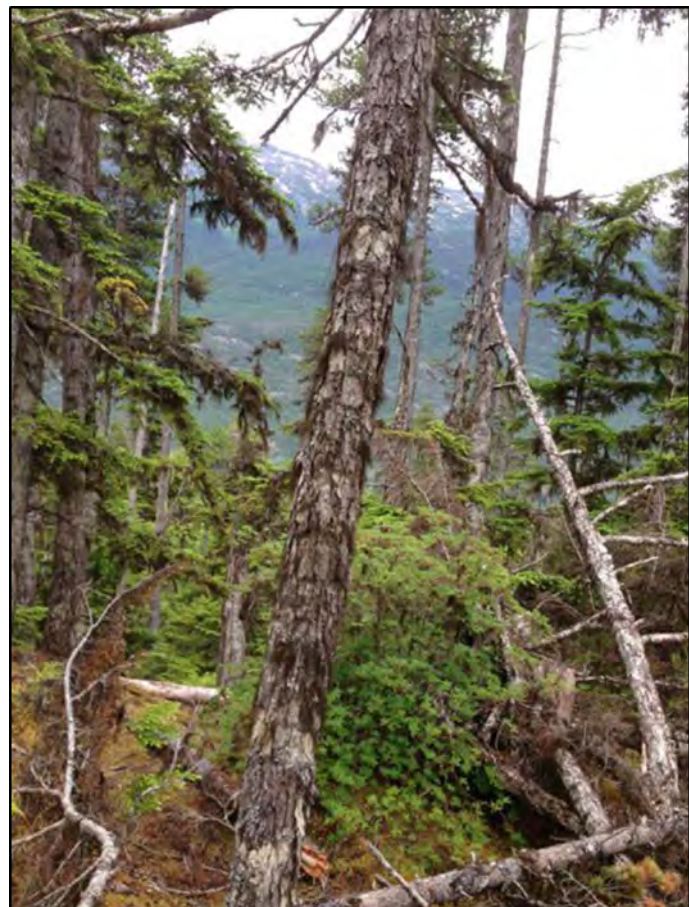
The first proposed Firewood/Timber Trail is south of the road between it and West Creek and has some larger spruce and hemlock that have never been harvested. An already established two-three foot wide firewood trail already exists here. This is one of the area's "family" trails that has been well taken care of and carefully harvested; however, it is on municipal property and should be open to all. The desired trail extension-Firewood/Timber Trail here should be flagged through to where the trail rejoins the West Creek Road (Figure 4).

In this area the wood is relatively dense and of high quality, if desired the Municipality could

A Firewood Gathering Trail and Trees South of West Creek Road



A Firewood Gathering Trail and Trees North of West Creek Road, Close to Past Commercial Timber Harvest Area. Nice Lookout Here from Top of Rise.



also offer a managed thinning opportunity. In many places the trees here are spaced two-three feet apart; a selective thinning program (where the trees to be thinned/removed are individually marked or the area is identified and rules clearly set) would result in tree spacing every 10 to 14 feet apart in areas, which promotes a healthy forest and diverse understory. Clear cutting would not be allowed. Both the trail extension and/or a managed thin would provide firewood and saw logs. The Municipality could consider either as an opportunity for competitive bid if it does not open it to the public.

When the trail building is done here, non-motorized use is recommended to allow short quiet secluded walk or horseback ride through some old growth for those that don't wish to go farther back the valley, cross to the south side, or only have a limited amount of time.

There are two proposed Firewood/Timber Trails off the north side of West Creek Road in areas where commercial timber harvest occurred in the past. Here too there are already well-developed firewood trails into areas that generally are brushy with thinner second growth hemlock, alders, and spruce. This wood is generally not good for saw logs but would be great for firewood. Following this and other north-side-of-the-road trails leads to areas that generally are not visible from the West Creek Road. Again, clear-cutting is not desired, nor would the wood here support this. Areas for trail extension should be flagged and connected to form short loops off the main road.

At the back of the first proposed firewood/timber trail on the north side of West Creek Road is a little rise that offers beautiful views of the mountains. The area should be cleaned and brushed as an adjunct to trail building so that when completed it is another spot off the main road available for recreation and enjoyment. A bench could be installed at the top of the rise. This area is close to where NPS land jogs into the West Creek area so care must occur when flagging trail extension and brushing areas to avoid NPS land.

Now that there is an adopted West Creek Master Plan with timber management direction, a Haines State forester could be a good source for professional technical assistance to identify and flag Firewood/Timber trails on the ground and develop a 'prescription' describing how firewood/live timber is to be gathered/harvested along the flagged line in order to create a 6-8 foot wide trail.

Another possibility is the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which has funding available to assist with developing forest stewardship plans that could provide professional forester assistance to flag trails and thinning areas on the ground. Funding is primarily for activities on private land but there are ways 'around' this as these forestry Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs), through the Environmental Quality

Incentives Program, have been used to help with programs on state land. The CAP must be developed by one of three Alaska NRCS-approved Technical Service Providers¹.

In addition to a forestry professional, since the final trails will be used for recreation it would be important to utilize a trails professional to look at the trail alignment to ensure that erosion and other longer term trail maintenance and environmental issues are considered when the Timber Trail routes are flagged.

f. Firearms, Hunting, and Trapping

Management Area 1 and 3 are both used for goat hunting and trapping of wolverine, mink and other critters. Trapping is allowed in the West Creek area. Current State of Alaska trapping regulations apply. Firearm use is allowed and hunting is enjoyed and legal in West Creek. Hunting is allowed as long as applicable Skagway, state and federal laws and regulations are followed. There is an area that many use for target practice near the end of the road. There has been an expression of concern about unregulated firearm use in this area and the trash and litter left behind.

Management Action: The Municipality of Skagway will more actively manage target practice in the area by (among other items) posting highly visible Target Practice Rules (such as no shooting from or across West Creek Road, no alcohol consumption and shooting), maintain a backdrop, and once road is rebrushed & rough spots fixed (2014) install garbage receptacles for user clean-up of spent shells and other litter. This management direction recognizes the fact that it would be difficult to stop people from using this area for target practice without a greater enforcement presence than is practical. A Municipality of Skagway Resolution should be adopted, "Establishing Rules for the West Creek Target Practice Area."

Require trappers to post a notice or tag of some type to alert the public and help protect dogs when trap lines are active on the (to be installed) signage-kiosk at the West Creek

Clayton Harris shows how tree-mounted traps work during the June 2013 field trip.



¹ Applications for FY 2016 funding are due in June 2015.

Bridge and the Recreation Bridge and on the road or trailhead near where trapping occurring.

g. Horse Riding

Horse riding is an historic and current activity in the area and is consistent with desired future use. Skagway municipal code now requires written permission is needed from manager to ride horses.

Management Action: Change Skagway municipal code so it is clear that non-commercial horse riding in West Creek is allowed and that written permission from manager is not needed. This would apply to the entire area including Management Areas 1,2 and 3.

h. Residential Development

This area is highly valued by residents for its recreational uses, remoteness, and firewood. Even Dyea has a lot of activity in the summer now. Regardless of what Skagway states, there will be demand for services here over time if people purchase land for privately owned cabins sites. Every road accessible area does not have to have residential land disposal.

Management Action: Maintain this area, including the “Gateway” to it just across West Creek Bridge, for what it is used and valued for – recreation and “as an escape valve”; do not let other uses encroach. Do not sell land for residential use; do not allow further residential development. Review this management action every 5-10 years to ensure it still reflects the Municipality of Skagway and community’s best interests.

i. Commercial Use

Commercial use of trails is currently prohibited in West Creek Valley.

Management Action: This prohibition should be maintained and expanded to include all tourism-related commercial use. Even Dyea is now busy in the summer; West Creek Valley is the one relatively accessible area close to the community that residents use to escape the crowds of summer and enjoy the tranquility of winter. This applies to Management Areas 1, 2 and 3.

MANAGEMENT AREA 2 (S. of West Creek and “The Hump”) - RECREATION/OPEN SPACE

1. Current Land Uses

Management Area 2 is on the south side of West Creek. Remote, non-motorized recreation, and open space define current uses. Management Area 2 is characterized by thick forest below about the 2,000-2,500 feet elevation and rugged mountain terrain above. Access to Management Area 2 is across the Jay Frye Recreation Bridge. Once across the Recreation Bridge, there is a 8-12 foot wide trail running about 1,000 feet west along West Creek. This is actually the path where the Recreation Bridge was originally pulled across West Creek and hauled into place, though the

path has been widened and cleaned up since the Recreation Bridge was installed in 2009. The path is relatively flat and wide though some spots are quite rocky or boggy.

Lost Lake, which is actually two small, connected lakes in a bench on the flanks of Parsons Peak (known locally as Face Mountain) is here. Tranquil waters, bog orchids, blueberries, and a little waterfall at the south end greet those who make it. It is hard to get to Lost Lake now as the current Lost Lake Trail, which starts off the Dyea Flats (Figure 3) and goes straight up, is in need of maintenance and requires one to be in very good physical shape. Beyond Lost Lake is a “goat path” trail to Face Mountain.

2. Future Land Management and Improvements

Other than three new trails identified in this section and repair of the existing Lost Lake Trail, the intent is to generally leave this area as is. Both Management Area 1 and 3 will have more intensive multi-use recreational activities; Management Area 2 will be managed to emphasize quieter enjoyment and activity. While this is the long-term intent, because “we play well together in Skagway”, there is no prohibition on motorized-access. Instead the steep topography and terrain here will reinforce this intent. The

Enjoying the View up West Creek Valley during a Hike from the Recreation Bridge to Lost Lake in Area of Proposed New Trail. Photo: David Van Horn



The new Lost Lake Trail will be designed and constructed for pedestrian access though, not for ATV or motorized use. Similar to Management Area 1, trail extension in two areas here is expected to occur in conjunction with the Municipality of Skagway’s new Firewood/Timber Trail extension system.

If there are problems related to motorized use in Management Area 2, the municipality may want to prohibit motorized access in this area in the future. Problems could be things such as excessive trail erosion, leaving deep muddy ruts & ripping up/tearing up the ground, or, if increased access to the West Creek area linked to hydro development increases the need for a part of the area to be dedicated to quiet escape.

a. New Trails

Management Action: The top desired improvement for the West Creek area (after “maintain trails we’ve got”) is to create a new trail to Lost Lake that leaves from the Jay Frye Recreation Bridge and “zigzags” or “sidehills” up the steep mountain to Lost Lake to improve access to this special spot. Other improvements mentioned for Lost Lake are to stock the lake with trout and build a municipally owned rental cabin and outhouse here, perhaps with a little rowboat. In addition to being the top improvement mentioned in surveys, a new easier to use trail to Lost Lake is shown on the Skagway Trails Plan, and Skagway Coastal Management Program plan (Map 3.11).

During summer of 2013, several residents hiked here to pioneer and flag a “best route,” which was “GPS’d” and is shown on Figure 4. The first part of the proposed new trail heads east along West Creek and offers some spectacular views of rapids in the creek, after that there is a lot of brush and trees side-hilling it up to about 1300 feet where it meets the existing Lost Lake trail. It may be possible to add additional zig-zags to reduce the gradient of the new Lost Lake trail compared to the route shown on Figure 4. When proceeding to layout the new trail it is important to use a professional for final trail alignment and design. This is critical to ensure that in the long term maintenance costs are minimized to the greatest extent possible. The NPS currently has a staff person in Skagway with this expertise and there are others as well. Topography limitations match up with an intent that the new Lost Lake Trail be designed and constructed for pedestrian access, not for ATV-type uses. There is an area of standing dead trees along this proposed new trail that is likely the result of past blasting and road building. Once this area is flagged, timber harvest of this standing dead area will be allowed as part of trail building if the individual obtains a Skagway Firewood /Timber Trail Permit. ATV use to pull out wood would be expected while this activity occurs.

Once across the Jay Frey Recreation Bridge there is a 1,400 foot trail running west to a West Creek overlook. This trail could be extended another 1,000-1,500 feet to end at a lookout above West Creek tributary (Figure 4). Because there is mature forest in here, this would be another area for a trail-building coupled with firewood gathering/timber harvest. In addition to carefully flagged design and layout of the desired trail, the timing of wood collection and how it was removed and hauled out from here would need attention so that the quieter activities desired on this side of the West Creek can occur with least interruption in a managed and predictable way.

The other trail improvement to accomplish over time in Management Area 2 would be a better trail from Lost Lake to Face Mountain.

One of the main summer helicopter routes is right over Lost Lake. The Municipality of Skagway should encourage pilots and companies to fly at a higher elevation farther west if possible before they turn west onto the West Creek heli-route.

MANAGEMENT AREA 3 (“The Hump” to Back West Creek Valley)- FUTURE GROWTH AREA

1. Current Land Uses

Management Area 3 is the area from “The Hump,” along West Creek valley to reach West Creek and Back Glaciers. It includes the West Creek valley, which is a flat, U-shaped glacially-carved valley about a 0.5-mile wide by 5-mile long perched between 700 and 1000 foot elevation. Here West Creek is a braided meandering river. Some of the valley floor is sandy and gravely stream-deposited material that is easy to walk through while other parts are muskegs and boggy. Depending on where you are lots of peat, mosses, and scrubby brush are obstacles, or sedges, grasses, and alder must be climbed over and around.

Management Area 3 also includes the debris flows and lower mountain slopes that surround the valley up to about the 1,500-foot elevation on both sides of West Creek. Parts of the back valet and mountain slopes here are state land (pink-colored areas on Figures 3 and 4).

The primary uses of Management Area 3 are motorized and non-motorized access and recreation to enjoy the wildness of the area, berry picking, and some mineral prospecting. One thing that sets this area apart from Area 2 is that both motorized and non-motorized recreation is common and encouraged here. The area also is used for trapping and for access to goat hunting. A primary designated helicopter route for (mostly, but not exclusively) summer flight-seeing is along West Creek and up the West Creek Glacier to access higher country. Mountain slopes here, particularly on the north side of West Creek are mapped winter and summer goat habitat.

View looking Eastward Down West Creek Valley the Lake at the Toe of West Creek Glacier, November 2013



At the end of the West Creek Road and after one has climbed over The Hump, a fairly well established trail that has been beat in over the years by users runs for about another 1.5 miles. After this, the trail fades out into muskegs.

Most users to this area arrive by foot, bike, or skis; cars and trucks can't make it over The Hump, so motorized access is – after some effort – by snow machine, ATV, or motorcycle. Winter recreationists work hard to get snow machines back here and then ride their sleds to enjoy the freedom and wild, raw country in this reach of the valley. Closer to West Creek and Back Glaciers the area becomes more glacially influenced and active. The still raw “crater” that the wind and water blew out when the West Creek lateral moraine burst open in 2002 is still evident.

2. Future Management and Improvements

a. New Trails

Residents have long talked about putting in a better trail to the West Creek Glacier along the north side of West Creek. This is shown in the Skagway Trails Plan, in the Skagway Coastal Management Program plan (Map 3.11), and is one of the top trail improvements desired for this area from community surveys. In the long term, the idea has been identified of eventually having a trail on both the north and south side of the valley to create a loop and double the distance.

Another desired trail improvement is to make it easier to get ATVs over “The Hump” where the road ends and trail begins. However, a caution or concern with this idea is that this access improvement could increase use to the back part of the valley causing it to potentially lose some of its remote character.

Management Action: Improve the trail along the north side of West Creek to the glacier. It would be important to build it higher in elevation than the possible hydro reservoir, which would be at about 780 feet. A new trail to Lost Lake is a higher priority, followed by this trail. Enhancing access over The Hump will open up the back valley to increased use, for this reason there is mixed opinion. A route that would bypass the climb over The Hump, though it still would be about a 200-foot elevation gain, is shown on Figure 4. This Plan recommends making this trail improvement, but designing it narrow enough, even with bollards if needed, to prevent car and truck access. This will facilitate motorized and non-motorized recreational users who are still “sweating or working at” their recreation and prevent “Sunday Drives” and RVs.

b. Possible West Creek Hydroelectric Facility

Management Area 3 would be directly impacted if a West Creek Hydroelectric Project is developed. As this Plan goes to print a feasibility study for that project and a power corridor between Skagway and Whitehorse, Yukon is beginning with State of Alaska and Yukon funding and full Municipality of Skagway cooperation. The Skagway 2020 Comprehensive Plan policies

10.25 to 10.27 encourage these investigations and feasible hydroelectric development. Resident concerns in support and in opposition are listed in the West Creek Master Plan (page 27).

Management Action: The issues to review and consider when making a decision on such a facility are beyond the scope of this planning effort. However, the West Creek Master Plan does (1) establish the reasons why Skagway values this area (which are for recreation, as a place to get away from summer tourism, and a place to collect firewood); (2) discusses how it currently is used; and (3) establishes desired future management. If a hydroelectric facility is built, project planners must carefully take the values, activities, and management intent established in this West Creek Master Plan into account and design the project to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts.

Figure 4 shows the concrete dam site that is being discussed currently and the inundation zone, which would be a reservoir lake roughly paralleling the 780-foot elevation. This would significantly change the nature of this area. A new 3-mile long by 0.5-mile wide lake, with depths from 0 to 100 feet would be created. It would cover the current trail after The Hump. The lake would freeze in the winter. Preliminary hydro concepts call for West Creek Road, from the West Creek Bridge, to be improved and a new half-mile road segment constructed from just before the current end of the road to the new dam (shown as a proposed trail improvement on Figure 4). This will:

- Increase use of the West Creek Road as access will be easier.
- Inundate about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of existing trail past The Hump to the muskeg meadows on north side of West Creek.
- Eliminate 3-miles of West Creek above the dam and turn it into a lake, inundating the valley floor, trees, and vegetation.
- Reduce area available for hiking and thus increase pressure on existing areas.
- Increase demand and pressure for recreational uses on south side of West Creek.
- Assuming recreational use is allowed; the lake would create a place for boating-canoeing-kayaking in summer and in the winter for ice skating, cross country skiing, and snow machining.

Skagway has a record of “marrying” hydroelectric development and recreation, exemplified by the Dewey Lakes hydroelectric and recreational system and assets. This is not limited to Skagway, and several other examples exist in Washington, Oregon, and other places². The British Columbia Stave Lake hydroelectric project in northcentral Fraser Valley is worth

² See for example:

http://www.oregonstateparks.org/index.cfm?do=parkPage.dsp_parkHistory&parkId=24
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/centraloregon/recreation/recarea/?recid=71990&actid=42>
http://www.bchydro.com/community/recreation_areas/stave_lake.html

reviewing because it is in an area similar to West Creek and the accompanying infrastructure to support recreational use is deliberately low-key (although Stave Lake is much larger than West Creek Lake would be). Facilities at Stave Lake include: 1) a boat launch with a concrete ramp to low water and floating docks, 2) beach and picnic area without drinking water, 3) a 6-unit Campground and Lodge facility that is available only to registered non-profit youth groups through reservations, and 4) fishing.

Stave Lake, part of a BC Hydro's hydroelectric project



If a West Creek Hydro Project is developed, some changes to the character of West Creek Valley cannot be avoided; others can be minimized or mitigated. Some ideas to help identify and mitigate losses and ensure recreational use of area, while protecting the ability to get away from summer crowds that West Creek is highly valued for, are:

1. Identify how noise will change where people hike and recreate.
2. Continue prohibition on commercial tourism in area.
3. Allow and encourage removal of timber for firewood and other purposes from within the lake inundation area, prior to inundation.
4. On the north side of the dam/lake, provide a space to park and stash gear; warming hut (winter); canoe and kayak launch (summer); vault toilet, and trash disposal.
5. Build a trail, designed for non-motorized and motorized users, along the north side of lake to the end of the lake. If desired, consider a system to alternate non-motorized and motorized use so that there can be known days of quiet along the lake for recreating, and days when motor/engine noise is expected.
6. Prohibit motorized use on south side of West Creek.

7. Provide funding for a part-time forester to inspect and manage firewood harvest on municipal land.
8. Fund installation of a community garden, in an appropriate location, near the West Creek Bridge area with a water storage /collection system.
9. Do not improve, or else camouflage any improvements, to West Creek Road near the West Creek Bridge. The goal is that casual users cannot tell that the road has been improved. The road should continue as a pioneering road with one traffic lane and places to pull-off for vehicles to pass. Communication for construction truck traffic can be via CB. Past The Hump long term access should not be for cars or trucks, if needed bollards that hydro workers have keys to remove when needed, could be installed.

RECOMMENDED NEW ZONING DISTRICT FOR WEST CREEK AREA

The area's current "holding" zoning district is Residential Conservation (RC). Because allowed and prohibited uses in the RC Zoning District do not align with the future management intent or actions described in the West Creek Master Plan, a new "Remote Recreation and Resources" Zoning District for the West Creek area is proposed and outlined on Table 1.

After adoption of the West Creek Master Plan, the new zoning district would need to be adopted and codified.

TABLE 1 – PROPOSED REMOTE RECREATION & RESOURCES ZONING DISTRICT (note must be adopted through separate process)

REMOTE RECREATION AND RESOURCES ZONING DISTRICT - This zoning district is intended to provide an area for remote recreation activities and resource use in the West Creek Valley.				
Principal Uses (always allowed, no land use permit needed)	Prohibited Uses	Conditional Uses (may be allowed by a Planning Commission CUP and review)	Dimensional Standards	Other
<p><u>Principal Uses</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Public parks and open space recreation. All non-motorized uses. Non-commercial vehicles, motorcycles, ATVs, snow machines as long as standard conditions listed in zoning ordinance at _____ are followed, and unless prohibited in specific areas in future. Hunting, fishing, trapping, or gathering activities that follow Skagway, Alaska, and federal regulations. Mineral prospecting that follow Skagway, Alaska, and federal regulations. Gathering and removal of dead and downed wood and live wood harvest in conjunction with trail building as long as Municipality of Skagway Firewood/Timber Trail permit has been obtained. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial activities other than those conditionally allowed or allowed. Commercial recreation, tours and activities. Leaving garbage, disposal, abandoning or dumping of objects. Shooting other than when hunting, in self-protection, or in the designated target practice area. Any use or structure not of a character indicated under permitted principal and accessory uses, or permitted by conditionals uses. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Electric generation facilities and transmission lines Communication facilities Not-for-profit, scientific or educational retreat center/lodge/cabins and related activities Residences on privately owned land Recreational cabins, small seasonal facilities, trail building Community gardens, agriculture use (community or private on leased land) Timber sales, thinning and related harvest activities Mineral exploration activity and mining operations Road Development Recreational cabins and small seasonal recreational facilities. Camping, campgrounds Other appropriate uses as determined by the planning commission pursuant to subsection B of Section 19.04.060. 	<p><u>Minimum Lot Requirements</u> n/a</p> <p><u>Minimum Building Setback Requirements.</u> n/a, unless required by the Intl Building Code, Tables 601 and 602.</p> <p><u>Maximum Lot Coverage by Buildings.</u> n/a</p> <p><u>Maximum Height of Buildings</u> n/a</p>	<p><u>Sanitary Treatment System.</u> Septic systems, leaching fields, or other private sewerage facilities may be permitted provided that the owner or developer submits plans stamped by an engineer licensed in Alaska, percolation and water table depth data suitable for analysis of the feasibility for on lot water and sewer systems to the MOS and the Alaska DEC. Project applicants/owners are responsible for ensuring that their project meets all federal and state septic systems, leaching fields, or other private sewerage facility requirements.</p> <p><u>Firewood Gathering or Timber Harvest</u> Obtain a Skagway Firewood/Timber Trails Permit annually, follow 16.06.030</p>

EndNotes

¹ Oren Kincaid and Harriet Pullen to [Charles S.] Flory [Regional Forester], October 29, 1932; John J. Chambers, etc. to Flory, October 29, 1932; both in "Dyea Road" file, in Box 1, Program Planning and Research Correspondence, 1894?-1958, RG 30 (Bureau of Public Roads/Alaska Road Commission), NARA ANC. From KGRNHP Post-Gold Rush Use of Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/klgo/adhi/chap2.htm

² Royal R. Pullen (Lead, S.D.) to ARC, March 22, 1934; Ike P. Taylor to Pullen, April 5, 1934; Taylor to J. Ludwig Frolander, February 15, 1935; all in "Dyea Road" file, NARA ANC. No funds, however, were granted for a pedestrian bridge to cross the Taiya. From KGRNHP Post-Gold Rush Use of Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/klgo/adhi/chap2.htm

³ W. C. Blanchard to Taylor, May 25, 1937; Taylor to Blanchard, June 28, 1937; both in "Dyea Road" file, NARA ANC. From KGRNHP Post-Gold Rush Use of Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/klgo/adhi/chap2.htm

⁴ Walter W. Sipprell to Taylor, January 30, 1940; Hawley Sterling (ARC) to Taylor, May 7, 1940 in "Dyea Road" file. From KGRNHP Post-Gold Rush Use of Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/klgo/adhi/chap2.htm

⁵ Taylor to Col. Atkins, May 11, 1940; Frolander to Sterling, May 31, 1940 (telegram); "Engineer's Estimate for Skagway Highway, Skagway-Dyea Section," August 20, 1940; Frolander to Taylor, December 2, 1940; G. H. Skinner to Gruening, June 20, 1941; all in "Dyea Road" file. Frolander, the local road foreman, told local residents that there were no funds available for new road construction. Gruening, therefore, convinced the ARC to build the road using maintenance funds. Carl Mulvihill to author, December 5, 1994. From KGRNHP Post-Gold Rush Use of Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/klgo/adhi/chap2.htm

⁶ Ruth Hampton to Taylor, April 19, 1941; Taylor to Frolander, April 19, 1941; both in "Dyea Road" file. From KGRNHP Post-Gold Rush Use of Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/klgo/adhi/chap2.htm

⁷ J. G. Shepard to Taylor, April 27, 1941; Taylor to Gruening, July 11, 1941, in "Dyea Road" file; Alaska Road Commission, Annual Report for 1941, 1942, and 1943, all on page 7; Carl Mulvihill to author, December 5, 1994. After 1941, no further word was heard about the proposed Dyea airport. From KGRNHP Post-Gold Rush Use of Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/klgo/adhi/chap2.htm

⁸ Frolander to Taylor, November 27, 1944, in "Dyea Road" file; Alaska Road Commission, Annual Report for 1944 through 1947, all on page 7. From KGRNHP Post-Gold Rush Use of Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/klgo/adhi/chap2.htm

⁹ Wesley W. Patterson, et. al., to ARC, September 30, 1946; Frolander to Taylor, November 3, 1946; both in "Dyea Road" file. From KGRNHP Post-Gold Rush Use of Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/klgo/adhi/chap2.htm

¹⁰ ARC, Annual Report for 1948, 8; Chuck and Helen Clark, interview with author, March 13, 1985; Frolander to Taylor, September 2, 1948; R. J. DeLaHunt to H. B. Schultz, September 29, 1952; both in "Dyea Road" file. From KGRNHP Post-Gold Rush Use of Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/klgo/adhi/chap2.htm

¹¹ Personal communications with Fred Hosford, 2013.

¹² See Skagway News: <http://skagway.com/skagway-history/>

¹³ The company constructed at least two pile bridges across the Taiya River and another over West Creek. Its first Taiya River Bridge was located just north of the mouth of West Creek, while a later bridge was located just north of the Patterson homestead. Both bridges were washed away, and today almost no trace remains of either one. As noted in Chapter 8, Hosford's West Creek Bridge was built by the state forest division and remained open until it was closed by the state in June 1988. It was rebuilt three years later, and it remains open to vehicular traffic. Ed Hanousek, Sr., who homesteaded on land north of West Creek, built a predecessor to Hosford's bridge 1000 feet east of it during the 1950s; it was ordered torn down shortly after Hosford's bridge was completed. Skagway News, July 8, 1988, 3. From KGRNHP Post-Gold Rush Use of Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/klgo/adhi/chap2.htm

¹⁴ Edward Hosford interview; Edward A. Hosford to Ike P. Taylor, October 23, 1948; Taylor to Hosford, October 26, 1948; John C. Fox to William J. Niemi, November 25, 1953; Niemi to Fox, July 19, 1954; all in "Dyea Road" file. From KGRNHP Post-Gold Rush Use of Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/klgo/adhi/chap2.htm

¹⁵ Personal communications with Fred Hosford, 2013

¹⁶ Personal communications with Fred Hosford, 2013

¹⁷ Lynn Canal News, April 26, 1979, 3; Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Haines-Skagway Area Land Use Plan, Volume III (Anchorage, the author, June 1979), 75-77. From KGRNHP Post-Gold Rush Use of Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/klgo/adhi/chap2.htm

¹⁸ Lynn Canal News, January 15, 1981, 2; April 23, 1981, 2; April 30, 1981, 1. Lynn Canal News, April 15, 1982, 4; April 29, 1982, 1. From KGRNHP Post-Gold Rush Use of Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/klgo/adhi/chap2.htm

¹⁹ Personal communications with Fred Hosford, 2013

²⁰ Yukon News, February 26, 2014

Appendix A – Summary: Management Direction and Recommended Actions

A summary of West Creek Master Plan topics, management direction, and recommended management actions needed to implement the plan is on the table on the next several pages.

Topics include:

- Alcohol Consumption
- Altering Waterbodies
- Camping
- Commercial Uses in Area
- Dogs
- Firearms and Hunting
- Horse Riding
- Litter, Garbage
- Monitoring & Enforcement
- Rental Cabin
- Residential Development
- Road Maintenance
- Signage
- Toilets
- Trail Development
- Trail Maintenance
- Trapping
- Zoning
- Firewood

SUMMARY OF TOPICS, MANAGEMENT INTENT, AND ACTIONS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT

TOPIC & BRIEF OVERVIEW (alphabetical order)	MANAGEMENT INTENT	MANAGEMENT ACTION NEEDED
<p>Alcohol Consumption Consumption of alcohol (by persons 21 or older) on municipal, state or federally owned land in West Creek is allowed. This is only prohibited in the downtown business district, per SMC 9.02.020.</p>	No change	No Change
<p>Altering Waterbodies West Creek is a catalogued anadromous fish stream to approximately ½ mile upstream from the West Creek Bridge (Figure 3). Any activity or project that is conducted below the ordinary high water mark of an anadromous stream requires a Fish Habitat Permit. A Fish Habitat Permit is required before any action is taken to: (a) construct a hydraulic project, or (b) use, divert, obstruct, pollute, or change the natural flow or bed of a specified river, lake, or stream, or (c) use wheeled, tracked, or excavating equipment or log-dragging equipment in the bed of a specified river, lake, or stream.</p>	No Change	No Change
<p>Camping Camping without a permit is allowed anywhere in the West Creek area. During plan preparation the idea of establishing a primitive campground near the Recreation Bridge was discussed, but there was not support for this as it would increase use beyond desired levels, and, there is a municipal and NPS campground relatively nearby in Dyea.</p>	No Change	No Change
<p>Commercial Recreation and Tourism Use including on Trails Commercial use of trails is currently prohibited in West Creek Valley and this prohibition should be maintained and expanded to include all tourism related commercial use. Even Dyea is now busy in the summer; West Creek Valley is the one relatively accessible area close to the community that residents use to escape the crowds of summer</p>	Continue the current prohibition on commercial use of trails. Expand to include other tourism related commercial uses.	Recommended code deletions are striketrough . Recommended code additions in [BRACKETS AND CAPS]

TOPIC & BRIEF OVERVIEW (alphabetical order)	MANAGEMENT INTENT	MANAGEMENT ACTION NEEDED
and enjoy the tranquility of winter.		SMC 5.20.020. Commercial [TOURISM] use[S] of [MUNICIPAL LAND IN THE WEST CREEK AREA INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE] Lost Lake Trail [SYSTEM] and the West Creek [ROAD AND] Trail from [THE WEST CREEK BRIDGE] to the slide back valley is prohibited. However, Interpretive programs offered by local, state, or federal land management agencies, non-profit [EDUCATIONAL] youth organizations, training sponsored by or subscribed to by local emergency response agencies or recreational events with a permit shall be exempted from this section.
<p>Dogs Dogs must be under control by voice command in the West Creek area, per SMC 6.04.020 C. Violation of this results in impoundment by the police per SMC 6.04.030. People must pick up their dog’s poop on West Creek Road, per SMC 6.02.010: “It is unlawful for any person recreating with a dog on municipal sidewalks, trails and in parks to not remove fecal matter left by the dog. Fines for failure to remove animal waste shall be established by resolution of the borough assembly.”</p>	No Change	No Change
<p>Firearms and Hunting Firearm use is allowed and hunting is enjoyed and legal in West Creek. Hunting is allowed as long as applicable Skagway, State and</p>	More active municipal management of target practice area near end of	Recommended code deletions are striketrough. Recommended code additions in

TOPIC & BRIEF OVERVIEW (alphabetical order)	MANAGEMENT INTENT	MANAGEMENT ACTION NEEDED
<p>federal laws and regulations are followed. There is an informal target practice area near the end of West Creek Road on municipal land.</p>	<p>West Creek Road is needed for safety and to keep the area clean. Do this by 1) posting Target Practice Rules (no shooting from or across the road, no alcohol consumption and shooting, and similar), 2) Maintain a backdrop, 3) Once road is rebrushed & rough spots fixed (2014), install garbage cans, request clean-up of spent shells and litter, and empty garbage cans regularly.</p>	<p>[BRACKETS AND CAPS]</p> <p><u>Adopt an Assembly Resolution, “Establishing Rules for the West Creek Target Practice Area”</u></p> <p>SMC 9.02.010. Use of Firearms. “...It is unlawful to discharge any firearm within the Taiya River floodplain south of the confluence of West Creek and the Taiya River, except that shotguns may be used on the Dyea tide flats; [AND FIREARM USE <u>IN THE IN-REMOTE RECREATION AND RESOURCES ZONING DISTRICT (or: off of West Creek Road and trails) IS ALLOWED FOR HUNTING, OR SELF-PROTECTION, AND IN THE TARGET PRACTICE AREA ONLY,</u>] such use must further conform to all...”</p>
<p>Firewood - see end of table</p>		
<p>Horse Riding Horse riding is an historic and current activity in the area and is consistent with desired future use. Skagway municipal code now requires written permission is needed from manager to ride horses.</p>	<p>Change Skagway municipal code so it is clear that non-commercial horse riding in West Creek is allowed, and that written permission from manager is not needed.</p>	<p>Recommended code deletions are striketrough.</p> <p>Recommended code additions in [BRACKETS AND CAPS]</p> <p>SMC 5.04.010 D: It is unlawful for any person to ride, lead or otherwise</p>

TOPIC & BRIEF OVERVIEW (alphabetical order)	MANAGEMENT INTENT	MANAGEMENT ACTION NEEDED
		<p>permit any livestock to go upon any municipally-owned property or any pedestrian lane or sidewalk without written permission of the borough manager or his designee,[EXCEPT IN THE REMOTE RECREATION AND RESOURCES ZONING DISTRICT (or: the West Creek Area) WHERE NON-COMMERCIAL HORSE-BACK RIDING IS ALLOWED WITHOUT PERMISSION.] This subsection does not prohibit the use of public streets, roads or alleys by horses under the control of competent persons or the use of said public streets, roads or alleys by animal-drawn vehicles.</p>
<p>Litter, Garbage The Municipality of Skagway has no garbage cans or collection at West Creek. There have been comments about area trash, but mostly related to the informal target area. However, in the summer trash pick-up is happening multiple times a week near West Creek and could here too. The Municipality of Skagway has approximately 5 bear proof garbage cans and a couple of food receptacles on Dyea Flats at its campground. They empty them once a week. It would be easy to locate another set at the West Creek Bridge and empty them at the same time. The NPS has about 12 bear proof garbage cans and recycling cans on its grounds in area. Their maintenance custodians collect the garbage 3-4 x/week in summer and bring to town.</p>	<p>Install bear-proof trash receptacles for garbage and recycling at West Creek Bridge, Jay Frey Recreation Bridge, and target practice area, to keep the area cleaner and encourage recycling. Lock in winter when maintenance is not possible. To foster community-spirit and discourage vandalism, install signage thanking people for their community spirit and commitment and interest in</p>	<p>Allocate budget to purchase receptacles and install (trash/recyclables). In the summer, public works will empty once/week. See if any volunteers or clubs may be interested in helping.</p>

TOPIC & BRIEF OVERVIEW (alphabetical order)	MANAGEMENT INTENT	MANAGEMENT ACTION NEEDED
	working together to keep the area clear and encourage recycling.	
<p>Monitoring & Enforcement Random, in response to reports.</p>	If needed in future to reduce vandalism, protect municipal assets, promote adherence to local rules, and reduce monitoring costs, install strategically placed (solar powered?) camouflaged security cams. Not watched in real time retrieve recording only if needed to investigate vandalism.	Install in future if warranted.
<p>Rental Cabin There are no municipal rental cabins for recreational use in the area, as there are at Dewey Lakes. Combined with easier access from a new Lost Lake trail, this would make Lost Lake an overnight destination and a popular hike/family experience.</p> <p>One other suggested cabin site was above The Hump at the west end of municipal land in West Creek valley.</p>	After the new Lost Lake Trail from the Recreation Bridge is built, surveys and interviews demonstrated interest and support for building a Skagway-owned rental cabin at Lost Lake, an outhouse, and a small rowboat.	Skagway Development Corporation could assist with grant-writing for capital and installation costs. The Skagway Recreation Center would rent and manage it as they do now for Dewey Lakes cabins. Funding needed for seasonal helicopter supported maintenance. Cabin kits that State Parks is using in Juneau are from Icy Straits Lumber (Hoonah) and about \$35,000 each. Like other cabin installations in Skagway, this would be accomplished by a combination of volunteers, municipal staff, and paid carpenters.

TOPIC & BRIEF OVERVIEW (alphabetical order)	MANAGEMENT INTENT	MANAGEMENT ACTION NEEDED
<p>Residential Development This area is highly valued by residents for its recreational uses, remoteness, and firewood. Even Dyea has a lot of activity in the summer now. Regardless of what Skagway states, there will be demands for services here over time if people purchase land for privately owned cabins sites. Every road accessible area does not have to have residential land disposal.</p>	<p>Maintain this area, including the “Gateway” to it just across West Creek Bridge, for what it is used and valued for, do not let other uses encroach. Do not sell land for residential use; do not allow further residential development. Revisit policy every 5-10 years to ensure still in Skagway’s best interest.</p>	<p>In this area’s new Remote Recreation and Resources Zoning District, residences on private land are proposed as a conditional use except for current grandfathered homes/private property which are allowed. Alternatively, could make a prohibited use and revise code in future if Skagway changes this policy and disposes of land in area.</p>
<p>Road Maintenance West Creek Road maintenance is random and irregular. The last big effort was in 2002-2003 when the Municipality installed about 20 culverts along West Creek Road, brushed-it, cleaned the ditches and fixed rough spots, and widened the last ¼ mile to The Hump. Skagway public works staff usually travels West Creek Road once a year to clean-up larger abandoned trash. Snow is not plowed in the winter.</p>	<p>Public Works staff to maintain West Creek Road. Program to brush roadside and inspect culverts every 5 years (due in 2009) and to repair rough spots every 10 years (due in 2014). This is now possible with the new grader and brushing equipment Skagway purchased in 2014. No intent to chip seal or pave. No change to winter maintenance, additional effort not warranted.</p>	<p>Allocate public works time staff time and budget to meet maintenance schedule.</p>
<p>Signage There is no informational signage at the West Creek Bridge or in the area other than the sign on the Jay Frey Recreation Bridge prohibiting motorized use. Several respondents to the opinion surveys asked for modest signage that lists area rules for matters such as firewood gathering, trash, shooting, the level of fire danger, if trap lines are</p>	<p>Install two low-key signage kiosks, one at the West Creek Bridge and the other at the Jay Frey Recreation Bridge. Trails can be identified but trail maps not desired. Signage should</p>	<p>Allocate funding, identify desired signage elements, contract for product, install.</p>

TOPIC & BRIEF OVERVIEW (alphabetical order)	MANAGEMENT INTENT	MANAGEMENT ACTION NEEDED
active, and some back-woods etiquette on trail-sharing.	alert people to Pack Your Trash Out or use trash cans (if installed), identify level of fire danger, be a place to indicate when traplines are active to protect people and dogs, state that a Municipality of Skagway annual Firewood/Timber Trail Permit must be obtained before any firewood in the area is gathered and that this most times must be from a Firewood/Timber Trail, set expectations about how non-motorized and motorized users share the area, cover bear safety and that area users are "Traveling at Own Risk," and provide some area history. Trails can be identified but trail maps are not particularly desired.	
<p>Toilets The NPS has vault toilets 1.5 miles south of the West Creek Bridge just off the Dyea Road near the NPS campground. After this point, there aren't any heading toward or in West Creek. A desire for restrooms was mentioned by 10 people (one-quarter of the respondents) in 2013 survey; it was 2nd top desired infrastructure improvement. Without facilities, "nature" is taking its course</p>	It doesn't seem like toilets are needed at the West Creek Bridge with some relatively close by; instead, on the signage kiosk could note that NPS toilets are available 1.5 miles to the south. However, a	Identify capital and maintenance cost, determine which department will maintain, and if reasonable, install. Paper goods could be resupplied when trash receptacles are emptied weekly in the summer.

TOPIC & BRIEF OVERVIEW (alphabetical order)	MANAGEMENT INTENT	MANAGEMENT ACTION NEEDED
<p>everywhere. However, there is also a general concern that too many improvements could increase the amount of people using the area and start to infringe upon local recreation, subsistence, etc.</p>	<p>vault toilet would make sense at the Jay Frey Recreation Bridge about 1.5 miles up the West Creek Road as this spot is well used for picnics and camping near the target practice area and virtually all area users go by it. Paper products could be replenished weekly and the waste pumped or pulled out once per season at end of fall (and toilets locked over winter).</p>	
<p>Trail Development Using trails for non-motorized and motorized activities and access is a primary historical, current, and desired future use in West Creek. Residents observe that the number of hikers in West Creek Valley has increased over the last 5 years.</p>	<p>Prioritized new trail development is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trail building in conjunction with firewood harvest/tree thinning in Management Area 1 and 2 (per West Creek Plan Figure 4 and as flagged in the field and marked on a map available at Skagway Borough Offices) 2. New trail from Recreation Bridge that “zigzags” or “side-hills” up to Lost Lake. Near top it would join to 	<p>Allocate summer trail crew time, funding, grant-writing etc. to accomplish.</p> <p>For new Lost Lake Trail: Consider teaming with SAGA and others. Develop budget and pursue funding for design and construction of 2 within one year; finish trail within 3 years.</p> <p>For Firewood/Timber Trails: Request assistance or contract with Haines State Forestry to accomplish 1 as quickly as possible (or apply for forestry CAPs grant).</p>

TOPIC & BRIEF OVERVIEW (alphabetical order)	MANAGEMENT INTENT	MANAGEMENT ACTION NEEDED
	<p>trail from Dyea Road to create a loop for those physically able to do the current trail.</p> <p>3. New trail from near the end of West Creek Road to “The Hump,” and safety improvements where trail is close to Canyon overlook/edge. Not to be open for car/truck use.</p> <p>4. Trail along north side of West Creek to West Creek/Back Glacier (above 780 ft elevation), eventually connecting to a new south side trail and loop.</p> <p>5. Lost Lake to Face Mountain trail route delineation and upgrade.</p>	<p>For all trail construction it is important to have a professional do a trail design, help determine alignment, and cost. A lot of variables come into play and proper alignment and initial construction is critical to ensure that the long term costs are minimized to the greatest extent possible. A well-designed and constructed trail can reduce annual maintenance costs.</p>
<p>Trail Maintenance Using trails for non-motorized and motorized activities and access is a primary historical, current, and desired future use in West Creek. A trail maintenance schedule and program is needed to allow these activities to continue safely into the future. There has been no municipal maintenance on West Creek area trails since the Recreation Bridge was hauled across the creek and installed in its current location in 2009. In 2013, in recognition of the popularity of hiking,</p>	<p>In order to fulfill a main purpose of the West Creek Master Plan and enhance recreation and hiking opportunities, maintain current trails so past time and financial investments not wasted.</p>	<p>Add this area onto regular rotating work schedule of Skagway Parks and Recreation Trails crew.</p> <p>Maintain funding for trail maintenance.</p> <p>Seek grants to accomplish special</p>

TOPIC & BRIEF OVERVIEW (alphabetical order)	MANAGEMENT INTENT	MANAGEMENT ACTION NEEDED
<p>Skagway funded a Trail Crew Leader (1st year for this position), and he and one of other seasonal groundskeepers (on rotating basis) do trail maintenance in summer, including repairing bridges, correcting trail erosion, trail brushing etc. Work to date has focused primarily on Dewey Lakes system.</p>	<p>Put West Creek area trails, including current Dyea Road to Lost Lake, on Municipality of Skagway trail maintenance list (like Dewey Lakes) so that West Creek area trails get on a schedule for regular maintenance and are included in grant-writing efforts for these purposes.</p>	<p>maintenance needs/projects.</p>
<p>Trapping The area is used for goat hunting and trapping of wolverine, mink and other critters. Trapping is allowed in the West Creek area. Current State of Alaska trapping regulations apply.</p>	<p>Recommendation: Ensure the right to legally trap is protected in the West Creek area. Require that trappers post a notice to alert the public and help protect dogs when trap lines are active on the (to be installed) signage-kiosk at the Recreation Bridge and on the road or trailhead near where trapping occurring.</p>	<p>Skagway now reviewing adoption of a trapping code. If adopted, include or be compatible with this management guideline for West Creek.</p> <p>SMC Chapter 9.04 Trapping. Trapping is allowed in the West Creek area. When a trap line is in active use in the West Creek area, a legible warning sign properly set and height adjusted (i.e. for snow level or other natural barriers) shall be posted in two areas: at the sign kiosk at the Jay Frey Recreation Bridge and at the trailhead or by the road near where the trapping is occurring. The signs shall be clearly visible on a weather-resistant surface and with numbers and letters, at least</p>

TOPIC & BRIEF OVERVIEW (alphabetical order)	MANAGEMENT INTENT	MANAGEMENT ACTION NEEDED
		one-inch high, in a bright color that contrasts with the color of the sign. Each trapper holding the trapper license is responsible for the placement and maintenance of proper signage.
<p>Zoning Zoning is now Residential Conservation; many uses don't make sense for West Creek. SMC 19.04.020A 3): Any land newly included within the corporate boundaries of the city subsequent to the adoption of the ordinance codified in this chapter shall be automatically classified in the RC district until otherwise classified by amendment.</p>	Adopt new Remote Recreation and Resources Zoning District for West Creek area.	Adopt new Remote Recreation and Resources Zoning District. See Table 1 in Plan.

Firewood

Topic & Brief Overview

There is strong support for continued ability to collect firewood from West Creek Valley, and there is support for modest management. The current situation and rules aren't working; many wood gatherers are technically breaking the law. Need to identify reasonable rules, make them clear, and enforce them. The "laissez- faire" situation is working now, but barely.

SMC 16.06.030 Skagway Municipal Code

A. The borough manager or his designee may authorize the sale or disposal of resources on municipal land, including materials and structures, dead and down or diseased timber for such fees and under such terms and conditions as he determines are appropriate. Materials and structures may be sold or disposed of only if the borough manager determines that there is little commercial value for the material or structure and the disposal is incidental to or consistent with a planned use of the property.

B. The borough assembly may, by resolution in each specific case, authorize the borough manager to grant permits to applicants for the purpose of removing earth, stone, gravel, timber or other resource from such lands, in which event the payment due the municipality under

the permit shall be based on fair market value of the materials removed, and the borough assembly's resolution hereunder shall constitute the written permission required under Section 16.02.160 R.

The Skagway Municipal Code language is unclear.

- If the borough manager “may” authorize it, must one always ask to authorize the disposal of dead and down or diseased timber (apparently no one does)? If not, when must one ask?
- Apparently, no one has ever asked permission from manager. There are certain areas where people cut. Managers have always given a kind of open ended yes that people are allowed to cut dead and down or diseased timber in these areas. There is currently no authorization or permit form.
- Are there guidelines for what “terms and conditions” the manager may consider? What are the appropriate terms and conditions for resource disposal?
- Does the assembly have to authorize, by resolution, the borough manager to grant permits to remove timber?
- Is the cutting of all trees that aren't dead and down or diseased illegal? YES

Rules on State Land

1. Dead or down trees can be cut without a permit on DNR managed general state land (not true for state park land, or ADFG or AMHT managed state land).
2. Harvest of live trees is not allowed without a permit.
3. A permit is required for commercial or personal harvest of live trees for 3-10 cords per year from designated state land.
4. There is no designated state land for these purposes in Skagway.
5. There is no requirement that the state must identify and designate land for these purposes in a community or area. However, the state tries to meet requests from the community and the needs of the forest products industry.

Rules on Federal BLM Land

1. The BLM issues free use permits for firewood, fencing, building, or for other domestic purposes.

Rules on Federal KGRNHP Land

1. Dead and downed wood can be gathered from inside Park boundaries and used within designated fire rings.
2. No dead or downed wood can be removed from Park.
3. No standing dead, or live, wood may be gathered or harvested in the Park.

Rules on Federal USFS Land

1. Personal Use Firewood may not be sold or bartered for personal gain. Individuals may cut and remove up to 25 cords of dead wood per year.
2. Free Use Timber - Alaska residents requesting to remove Free Use timber/saw logs from the National Forest are required to provide an application and receive authorization for this use at the local Ranger District office. 36 CFR 223.10 allows bona fide settlers, miners, residents, and prospectors for materials in Alaska to take green or dried timber from the National Forests in Alaska for personal use, but not for sale, free of charge. The amount of material granted to any one person in 1 year shall not exceed 10,000 board feet of saw timber and 25 cords of wood, or an equivalent volume in other forms. Persons obtaining materials shall, on demand, forward to the supervisor a statement of the quantity taken and the location from which it was removed.

Management Action

Change Skagway Municipal Code 16.06.030 to:

- a) Clarify that permission is not needed to conduct dead and down wood or to harvest live wood when it is lying across a road or trail.
- b) Harvest of live wood is not allowed unless one signs and obtains an annual Skagway Firewood/Timber Trail Permit. This allows harvest of live wood as part of trail extension - at the harvester's own risk - from a designated Firewood/Timber Trail (Figure 4) or managed thinning area that is open to the public. The free or low cost Skagway Firewood/Timber Trail Permit must be obtained each calendar year before wood gathering or harvest starts from the Skagway Borough Offices. The permit will list general rules and best management practices that must be followed and agreed to (by signing the form).
- c) Rules for free harvest are that the wood must be for personal use, no more than 10 cords can be taken per year per person, and before a permit for the next year can be obtained, a short form must be completed about how much wood was taken and from where.
- d) The Municipality of Skagway will inspect progress at least annually on all trail-building/wood harvest sites.

Recommended code deletions are ~~striketrough~~.

Recommended code additions in [BRACKETS AND CAPS]

SMC 16.06.030 Skagway Municipal Code

A. The borough manager or his designee may authorize the sale or disposal of resources on municipal land, including materials and structures, dead and down or diseased timber for such fees and under such terms and conditions as he determines are appropriate.

Materials and structures may be sold or disposed of only if the borough manager determines that there is little commercial value for the material or structure and the disposal is incidental to or consistent with a planned use of the property.

B. The borough assembly may, by resolution in each specific case, authorize the borough manager to grant permits to applicants for the purpose of removing earth, stone, gravel, timber or other resource from such lands, in which event the payment due the municipality under the permit shall be based on fair market value of the materials removed, and the borough assembly's resolution hereunder shall constitute the written permission required under Section 16.02.160 R.

[C. WEST CREEK AREA TIMBER RULES.

1. COLLECTION OF UP TO 10 CORDS PER YEAR OF DEAD AND DOWNED WOOD FROM THE WEST CREEK AREA IS ALLOWED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE BOROUGH MANAGER OR HIS DESIGNEE.
2. CUTTING AND COLLECTION OF LIVE TREES, AT THE CUTTER'S OWN RISK AND LIABILITY, IS ONLY ALLOWED IF:
 - a. AN ANNUAL FIREWOOD/TIMBER TRAIL PERMIT IS OBTAINED FROM THE MUNICIPALITY,
 - b. IF THE TREE IS IN AN AREA THAT SKAGWAY BOROUGH HAS DESIGNATED AND FLAGGED FOR TRAIL BUILDING/TIMBER HARVEST IN WEST CREEK,
 - c. IF THE WOOD GATHERER AGREES TO ADHERE TO THE MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTION/BEST PRACTICES RULES LISTED ON THE PERMIT, AND
 - d. AGREES TO REPORT ANNUALLY HOW MUCH WAS COLLECTED/HARVESTED AND FROM WHERE .

A MAP OF THESE PLACES IS AVAILABLE AT THE WINDOW COUNTER AT THE BOROUGH OFFICE.

GIRDLING OF TREES ANYWHERE IN WEST CREEK IS PROHIBITED.]

5 steps to putting a management of firewood and live timber harvest program into place

1. Change SMC 16.06.030 to add a new clause [C] on West Creek Timber Rules (suggested language in West Creek Master Plan).
2. Flag and GPS-map the desired Firewood/Timber Trails. The approximate location of four Firewood/Timber Trails (dark brown lines) are shown on in Figure 4. All would extend existing trails being used for timber harvest and walking/hiking.
3. Create a "Prescription" for each trail that specifies how dead and downed and live wood is to be removed along the flagged line.
4. Put these trails on a map attached to the (new) Municipality of Skagway Firewood/Timber Trail Permit, which anyone wishing to gather firewood must obtain. The permit will set out the rules, the prescription, best management practices, and clearly state that gathering/harvest is at the harvester/gatherer's own risk, that the municipality is not liable.
5. Create the Permit (an interim permit was just created)