

Resolution
of the
Scenic Foothills Community Council
Regarding
JBER Recreation Areas closures

Background:

The Bulldog trail and areas 429 and 424 have been closed to recreational users increasingly in the last few years. Since April 2019, iSportsman users report that these areas have not been open to recreational use at all. This closure has kept hikers and bikers from a valued east side recreational asset, including access to the Domes. The Domes is our area's nearest mountain access.

Residents of Anchorage and neighbors abutting JBER land have appreciated this beautiful area for biking, hiking, berry picking, and dog walking. With special permits, civilians can even hunt and wood gather in this area. This land has cultural significance to many of us, with its rich history of Dena'ina inhabitants and early homesteaders. The Mayor's Midnight Sun Marathon has traversed this Bulldog road for 50 years. Knoya Ridge Run is an annual Alaska mountain race that begins in area 429 and continues through 430. In fact, the JBER recreation area map indicates the 424, 429, 430, and Bulldog areas are designated as "Recreation Areas open to all registered users." These recreation areas were established by the 2004 Sikes Act and Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan.

JBER public relations mission states: The purpose of community engagement is to run active community relations programs to enhance morale, public trust, and support and to demonstrate that the JBER is a community partner and a responsible steward of National resources.

We understand the closures to Bulldog, 424 and 429 are in response to increased trespassing in these areas. We believe that the lack of compliance with the iSportsman sign-in process may stem from conflicting signage. The closest access point at Klutina and the N. Gasline Trail has signage that mentions RAP (Recreational Access passes), which are no longer in use. Further, it directs users to go to the gate to sign in. This is no longer the process. The next two fence openings to JBER property, just to the south, say nothing and the following one says "Unauthorized vehicles prohibited". Finally, the opening closest to North Bivouac mentions the iSportsman pass. Confusingly, the footbridge over North Fork Campbell Creek, just down the trail from this sign, has a "live fire" sign. That there is always live fire occurring is not accurate and, again, conflicts with the iSportsman sign less than a quarter of mile up at Stuckagain boundary. None of these access points indicate to the user the recreational area they are entering.

Resolution:

Whereas, the community recognizes the fundamental need of the military to have a secure and safe area clear of civilians when training exercises occur.

Whereas, the community is bordered by JBER and has a vested interest in continuing a good relationship with JBER.

Whereas, the community recognizes that some visitors to the area have not complied with sign-in procedures through iSportsman.

Whereas, signage in the area is inconsistent and unclear.

Whereas, the community recognizes JBER staff have not opened Bulldog road, 424 and 429 to civilian use during non-training days. Furthermore, the new bridge constructed over North Fork Campbell Creek has been welded shut.

Whereas, the community recognizes these closures do not reflect the JBER mission of community partnership and the intent of the Sikes Act.

Hereby be it resolved:

Areas 424, 429, 430 and the Bulldog road and foot bridge over North Fork Campbell Creek be open to civilians during non-training days to those signed in to iSportsman.

We suggest and will assist in the following efforts:

JBER should create information boards on existing kiosks near the North Fork Campbell Creek footbridge, Klutina street, and where the Gasline meets the Tank trail. These boards should have a map of the area clearly identifying which area of JBER the user is entering. iSportsman information should also be on these kiosks, as well as JBER contact information.

JBER should remove inconsistent signage and replace with iSportsman information.

JBER should meet with community representatives to identify areas needing signage corrections or additional information.

JBER should create an informational flyer about the JBER recreational access, via iSportsman.

JBER or community volunteers should meet with user groups such as SingleTrack Advocates, Alaska Hike Search, Alaska Mountain Runners, Arctic Orienteering and local hiking and running groups, and flyers with iSportsman information should be posted at all local bicycle and outdoor shops.

Scenic Foothills community members will volunteer periodically to provide information at nearby neighborhood access points, to educate dog walkers and trail users we see in the area.

JBER could join us in the area of Klutina and the Gasline and the parking area at the top of Basher to outreach with neighbors on the dangers of entering the area during training.

JBER community council outreach should continue, but information should go to all community councils as this problem with trespassing is not limited to our area.

JBER should consider rezoning the southeast section 429 to become part of 430, which would include greater availability and access to the footbridge over Campbell Creek and the Dome trail.

JBER should team with community members to create the proposed Muldoon (north/south) Perimeter trail along the JBER/ neighborhood interface. An alternative means for pedestrians and bikers to travel north/south could reduce trespassing.

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ADOPTED this 5th day of September, 2019.

President:  Date: 9/5/19

VOTE: 20 IN FAVOR 0 OPPOSED