



WETLAND MITIGATION AND BANKING

Matanuska-Susitna Borough PROJECT FACTS

Project Scope

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough has been granted 355,210 acres of land from the State of Alaska as part of our Municipal Land Entitlement. The Borough uses the land for a variety of purposes, ranging from selling land to increase the tax base, preserving land for parks, trails, and open space, and reserving land for public facilities such as schools, fire and ambulance stations and community centers.

Under Borough law, land owned by the Borough is to be included in an inventory, which is developed by a public planning process. This inventory is periodically reviewed to see if its use may need to be changed. These steps include improving our overall management by classifying each parcel, based first on any physical limitations or characteristics, and second on public needs and input.

One type of land under Borough ownership is wetland areas. Although some areas may be considered wetland, they can still be used for public recreation activities such as snow machining and dog mushing during the winter months. Some other areas, because of adjacent soils, may be suitable for agricultural uses.

The more sensitive wetland areas have been given a new classification designation – “Wetland Bank Lands.” These areas will be used for wetlands mitigation by placing them in a bank so other less sensitive wetland areas can be developed. The benefits are two-fold; the bank will protect and preserve the area and at the same time this “banked” land will offer land owners and developers an opportunity to purchase banked wetlands, which will remain undeveloped. In exchange, the land owner will be able to avoid lengthy and costly mitigation requirements.

Benefits

- “Wetland Bank Lands” are ecologically valuable lands that protect and support fish and wildlife habitat, and water recharge and filtering areas important for human uses
- Provide a source of revenue (fair market value) for the Borough
- Streamlines the wetland mitigation process for landowners and developers in the

Borough, which in turn will allow development to continue in other less sensitive areas

- Provides outdoor educational opportunities for understanding the role of wetlands in the environment
- Provides natural green belts and open space, while at the same time providing other types of passive activities to occur, such as snow machining and dog mushing.

Private Property

- The “Wetland Bank Lands” classification ONLY applies to land owned by the Mat-Su Borough – it DOES NOT APPLY TO PRIVATE LAND or other public land
- Some private property will be able to be developed that otherwise could not be by using the mitigation measures provided by the Wetlands Land Bank
- These classifications will NOT have a negative monetary effect on surrounding land values. The land, however, will provide a buffer or greenbelt that could increase adjacent property extrinsic values

Status

- The bank and its operation has been established in Borough code (23.05.075)
- The mitigation bank received approval from U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency April 2009. The Borough entered into a conservation easement grant with Great Land Trust September 2009. The banking credits for the Big Lake South, Fish Creek project have been authorized by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers for release to sale.
- You can visit the Su-Knik Mitigation Bank of South Central Alaska web page at www.su-knikmitigationbank.com for additional information about wetland banking, or contact information for credit availability.

Contact Information

For more information about “Wetland Bank Lands,” visit our Website at www.matsugov.us. Contact us at: LMB@matsugov.us or by telephone at (907) 745-9869; by mail at MSB, Community Development Department, 350 E. Dahlia Ave., Palmer, AK 99645.