

Site Development Plan for Starrigavan Trailhead Construction Project

The Sitka Ranger District (SRD) of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) proposes obtaining an easement from the State of Alaska for an expanded trail system and parking area in the Starrigavan Valley to provide additional recreational opportunities. The proposed easement would encompass a new trailhead parking area, an off-highway vehicle (OHV) learning/training area, and a trail to connect the parking area and learning/training area. All three new features will be open to the public and free of charge.

Please find attached the following maps and diagrams for reference:

- Starrigavan Trailhead Construction (aerial map showing proposed actions)
- Land Description Verification
- Construction drawings

The new, expanded trailhead parking area will be created by expanding an existing pullout along Nelson Logging Road (see Proposed Action #2 on Starrigavan Trailhead Construction map). The final trailhead parking area will provide 15 parking spaces; the proposed easement area (270 feet by 95 feet) encompasses the final parking area, as well as space necessary for construction activities, drainage, and other appurtenances. The parking area will be constructed using heavy equipment and will include the placement of 95 cubic yards of aggregate fill. The final parking surface will be gravel.

The existing trailhead parking lot will be repurposed and expanded to create an OHV learning/practice area that will include one or more constructed features (e.g., berm or obstacle) (see Proposed Action #1 on Starrigavan Trailhead Construction map). The proposed easement area for the learning/practice area will be 275 feet by 215 feet. Heavy equipment will be used to build the learning/practice area, which will be unpaved.

The new parking lot and learning/practice area will be connected by an approximately 550-foot long bypass trail (see Proposed Action #3 on Starrigavan Trailhead Construction map). The trail will be constructed using heavy equipment to place 310 cubic yards of gravel. The proposed easement area for the OHV trail is 550 feet by 50 feet.

Please see the following information for additional project details:

Proposed Action #	Proposed Action on State Land	Length (ft)	Width (ft)	Area (Acres)*
1.	Expand and repurpose existing parking area into OHV learning/practice area.	275	215	1.36
2.	Expand existing pullout into a trailhead/parking area.	270	95	0.59
3.	Construct OHV trail that would connect areas in proposed actions 1 and 2.	550	50	0.63

- Legal description: Copper River Meridian, Township 55 South, Range 63 East, Sections 1 and 2. U.S. Survey 5530;
 - The City and Borough of Sitka (CBS) has a lease (AOL 101753) that encompasses the Tony Hrebar shooting range and existing Starrigavan Valley OHV parking area. The leased area overlaps proposed action 3. The following information about the lease was found in Alaska Mapper: LEASE DESCRIPTION -12/24/1985: ASLS 82-82 LOCATED WITHIN LOT 1, U.S. SURVEY NO. 5530, AND WITHIN UNSURVEYED SECTIONS 2 AND 11, TOWNSHIP 55 SOUTH, RANGE 63 EAST, COPPER RIVER MERIDIAN, CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 19.82 ACRES.
- Terrain/ground cover: The Starrigavan Creek valley bottom is fairly broad rising steeply to the ridgetops on either side of the valley. The project area was logged to roughly the 500-foot contour in the 1970's and is characterized by second growth timber consisting primarily of Western Hemlock, Sitka Spruce and Red Alder. Relatively few old growth trees remain. Understory plant communities include common SE Alaska species (e.g. Salmonberry, Rusty menziesia, Alaska blueberry, Red huckleberry, devil's club) various ferns and bryophytes. Forest soils within the area consists of organic material from decayed vegetation and plant litter underlain with volcanic ash. Soils near streams often have silts and sands in the upper horizons from flood flows, while soils along valley walls can have more coarse mineral material from past landslides or colluvial deposits.

Because the proposed parking and learning/practice areas are mostly expanding existing developed areas, vegetation clearing will be minimized. It is expected that 0.20 acres would need to be cleared. To construct improvements in the proposed actions, all vegetation and other organic material would be cleared down to mineral soil. The designed use (i.e., vehicle parking, OHV riding) would dictate the fill material placed to create the improvements' subbase, base, and surface courses. Stone and aggregate materials would be sourced from commercial sources off-site. Logs resulting from clearing activities may be used for puncheon to construct the OHV trail. Logs not used for construction activities would be made available to the public for free personal use firewood. All improvements will be designed to meet Forest Service construction standards to minimize future maintenance needs.

- Access: The Nelson Logging Road provides public access to the project area. The City and Borough of Sitka (CBS) holds a public easement (ADL 106242) for the Nelson Logging Road that would continue to provide access for to the expanded parking area, learning/training area, and connecting trail.

- Buildings and other structures: The proposed project does not include the construction of any buildings or other structures.
- Power Source: Construction of proposed improvements would use portable generators for any power needs. None of the improvements require a power source once constructed.
- Hazardous substances, waste types, waste sources, and disposal methods: No long-term storage or use of hazardous substances or waste will be associated with the proposed developments.

During construction, it is anticipated contractors will install a temporary diesel tank (up to 500 gallons) and establish a fueling area in the existing large parking area. Other hydrocarbons used during construction may include gasoline to operate power equipment and small power tools such as chainsaws. Greases, hydraulic fluids, and engine oils may also be present in the staging/work area during construction.

USFS Best Management Practices (BMPs) and contract language will require all contractors to provide adequately sized secondary containment devices and spill kits for all hazardous materials used and stored on the work site. BMPs will also require all equipment working on or within streams to use biobased hydraulic fluids. All hazardous materials will be removed at project completion.

- Water supply: Contract language will require contractor to import municipal water if needed for project improvements. The proposed actions may require water to aid in compaction of aggregate surfacing. No wastewater is expected to be generated from project activities.
- Parking areas and storage areas: The existing large parking area and existing pullout can be used for parking and staging during construction. While construction is ongoing, heavy equipment and supplies (e.g., aggregate, barrier rock, bridge components, culverts) would be stored in one of these areas, in addition to any fuel/oils described previously.

The project will result in an expanded parking area at the location of the existing pullout and a learning/practice area at the location of the existing parking lot. The OHV learning/practice area will be blocked off to highway vehicle traffic using a combination of barrier rock and removable bollards or a gate. No permanent storage is needed for the project.

- Number of people using the site: Construction is estimated to require approximately five (5) contractors. USFS personnel will administer the construction contract(s) and make frequent site visits during construction activities.

The new trailhead parking area is designed for approximately 15 vehicles with some pull-thru stalls for vehicle/trailer combos. Average group size for recreation visits is assumed to be 2.5 and it is estimated that 75 people will use the parking area on a busy day.

- Maintenance and operations: The USFS will be responsible for maintenance of all improvements. Annual maintenance tasks will be performed by USFS personnel and include litter pickup and disposal, graffiti removal on signs, and brushing/removal of any hazard trees. Infrequent maintenance (>5 year interval) requiring heavy equipment (e.g., grading of driving surfaces) would be conducted by contractors. Other infrequent maintenance items such as sign replacement would be performed as needed by USFS personnel.
- Closure/reclamation plan: The proposed improvements are intended to be permanent and continuously used by the public. No plan is included.