

DESK PACKET

(MATERIALS SUBMITTED AFTER MEETING PACKET PUBLICATION)

E. NEW BUSINESS

2. Forest Trails Subdivision

Quinton, Madeleine

From: Planning Dept,
Sent: Friday, April 21, 2023 10:17 AM
To: Piagentini, Vincent; Quinton, Madeleine; Hindman, Julie
Subject: FW: <EXTERNAL-SENDER>Comments Forest Trails Subdivision: KPB File 2023-038
Attachments: 2023_04_21_CCB_Forest_Trails_Prelim_Plat_Comments_KPB_Submitted.pdf

From: Joel Cooper <joel@kachemaklandtrust.org>
Sent: Friday, April 21, 2023 10:11 AM
To: Planning Dept, <planning@kpb.us>
Subject: <EXTERNAL-SENDER>Comments Forest Trails Subdivision: KPB File 2023-038

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Dear Madeleine,

Please find attached comments for the Forest Trails Subdivision: KPB File 2023-038 from Kachemak Heritage Land Trust. I plan to attend the April 24th Plat Committee meeting virtually to be available to answer any questions.

Regards,

Joel Cooper
Stewardship Director/IT Specialist
Kachemak Heritage Land Trust
315 Klondike Ave.
Homer, AK 99603
(907) 235-5263 (Main Office)
(907) 235-5331 (Direct Line)
joel@kachemaklandtrust.org



Conserving the natural heritage of the Kenai Peninsula for future generations



April 21, 2023

Kenai Peninsula Borough Planning Department
Attn: Madeleine Quainton
144 N. Binkley Street
Soldotna, Alaska 99669
Via Email: planning@kpb.us

Re: Forest Trails Subdivision: KPB File 2023-038

Dear Plat Committee Members,

I am commenting on behalf of Kachemak Heritage Land Trust (KHLT) as an adjacent landowner to Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) parcel number 17903021, the parcel subject to the Forest Trails Subdivision: KPB File 2023-038. KHLT owns the Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park containing six parcels totaling 28.67 acres depicted in Figure 1 below. The northwestern boundary of KPB parcel # 17903056 is adjacent to the proposed Forest Trails Subdivision.

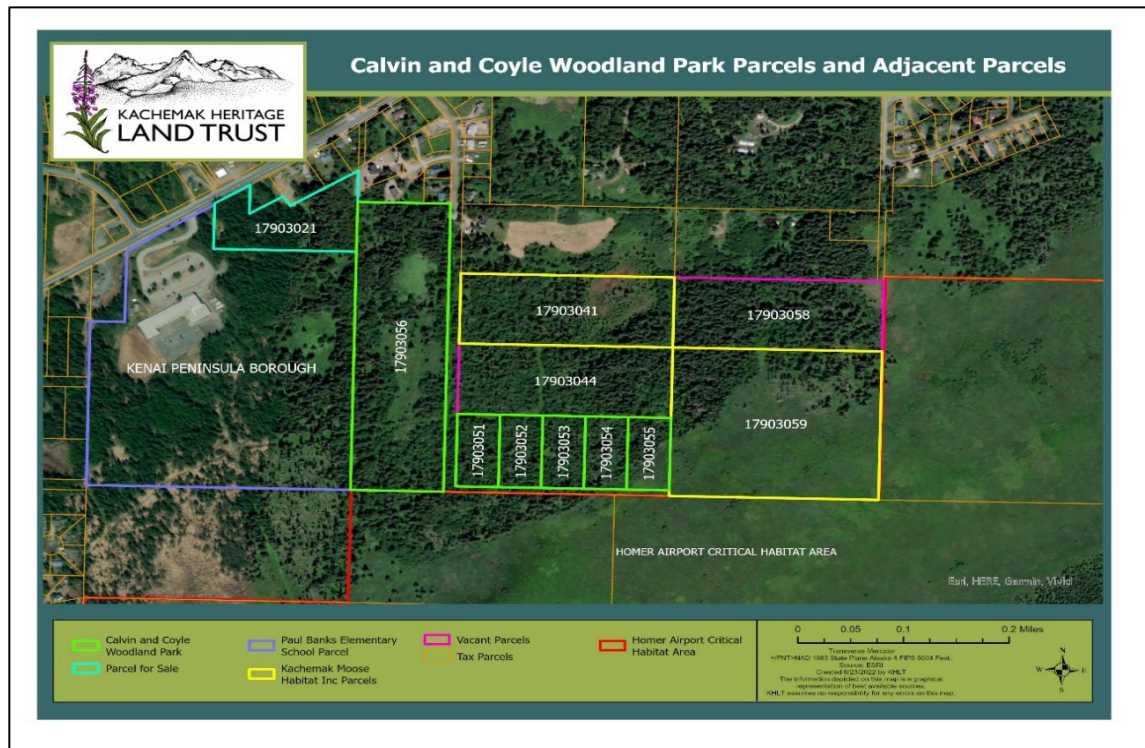


Figure 1: Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park and Adjacent Parcels

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KHLT's primary goal for the Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park is to manage the land to benefit wildlife habitat and for public benefit. This includes preserving the surface resources, vegetative cover, wetland, hydrologic and other water quality values of the property in its natural condition. KHLT protects the natural resource values of the property in perpetuity by prohibiting any use of the property, including over-use, that conflicts with these inherent conservation values.

KHLT manages the 1.5 mile out and back trail with a lollipop loop on the southern part of the property (see Figure 2). KHLT works with the Kenai Peninsula School District to manage the trail (see Figure 2) on their parcel and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) who manages the adjacent Homer Airport Critical Habitat Area (HACHA).

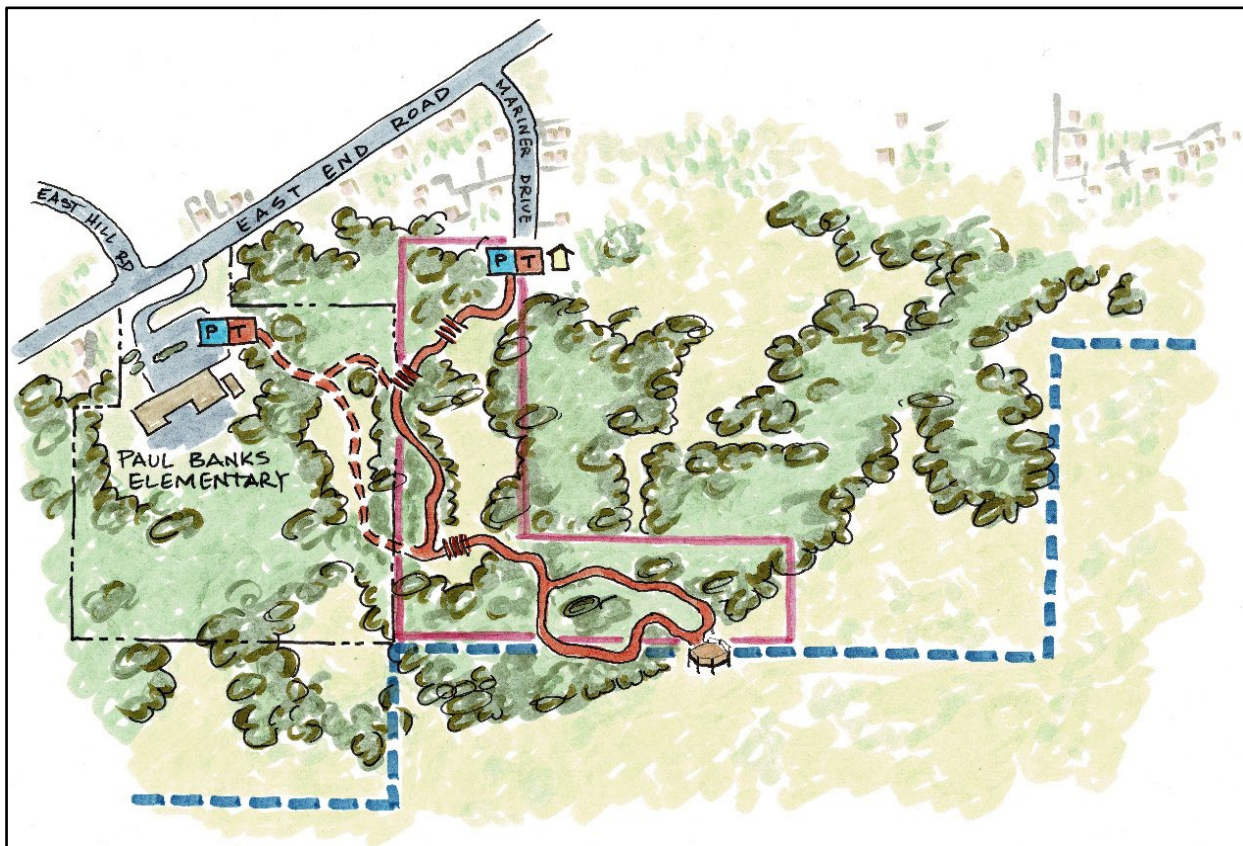


Figure 2: Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park Trail System and Adjacent Paul Banks Elementary Trail System

KHLT is bound to a North American Wetlands Conservation Act ("NAWCA") Grant Agreement which includes ensuring the long-term conservation of the property in accordance with the Grant Agreement and obtaining the consent of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) prior to the conveyance of any property interests. The Notice of Grant Agreement (Document # 200-002304-0, Recording Dist: 309-Homer) was recorded on 5/26/2006 and addresses the requirements of this agreement.

As a representative of KHLT, I provided written comments dated 1/31/2023 to the City of Homer Planning Commission and commented in person at the 2/1/2023 and 2/15/2023 City of Homer Planning Commission meetings. These comments are included in your packet as City PC Minutes.

After the City of Homer March 15 Planning Commission meeting, KHLT's Land and Easement Committee met on March 28, 2023 and discussed the Forest Trails Subdivision Plat based on City of Homer Planning Commission meeting minutes and my discussions with City of Homer staff. KHLT's Committee recommended that KHLT staff provide comments to the KPB Plat Committee that a pedestrian access easement be granted to the east of the creek (Cantrell Creek) running from the road (Cantrell Creek Road) ROW south to the southern border of the subject parcel for Plat KPB 2023-038. The proposed easement would allow for a future connector trail to the existing trail system depicted in Figure 2 to best protect the conservation values of KHLT's Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park by mitigating unauthorized trail development along the western border of its KPB parcel # 17903056 (see Figure 1).

KHLT's experience managing our lands next to these type of developments is that unauthorized trail development will take place unless there is a designated trail nearby. Even though Plat KPB 2023-038 grants a 10-foot pedestrian easement between Lots 3 and 4 that provides future trail access to the Paul Banks Elementary Trailhead (see Figure 2 and 3), KHLT's land management experience tells us that people will take shortcuts to KHLT's Trailhead on Mariner Drive or will take a random shortcut to the trail unless there is an alternate designated access. Users will do this because the prominent feature that they are seeking is the viewing platform overlooking the Homer Airport Critical Habitat Area.

I spoke with City of Homer staff to let them know of KHLT's additional comments prior to submitting these comments to the KPB Plat Committee. City staff recommended that KHLT's proposed pedestrian access easement fall outside of the granted drainage easement. It was agreed that the proposed pedestrian access easement would abut the eastern boundary of the drainage easement and be 10-feet wide. City staff considered our conversations as duly notifying the City of Homer of KHLT's comments to the KPB Plat Committee.

Based on the information provided above, KHLT recommends the KPB Plat Committee include the following for Plat KPB 2023-038.

A 10-foot wide pedestrian access easement to the east of the granted drainage easement running south from the road (Cantrell Creek Road) ROW to the southern border of the subject parcel (as highlighted in red in Figure 3 below) be granted for Plat KPB 2023-038. The pedestrian access easement would abut the eastern boundary of the drainage easement and not be included in the drainage easement.




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Granting this 10-foot pedestrian access easement would provide a mechanism for KHLT to continue to work with the landowners of the Forest Trails subdivision, Paul Banks Elementary School, the KPB School District, and the COH to improve trail connectivity and accessibility to schools, the greater community and continue to provide local recreational opportunities as recommended in the Homer Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. KHLT will work, as time and funding present themselves, with Paul Banks Elementary School and the KPB School District and others to construct a connector trail from the southern boundary of the Forest Trails Subdivision parcel (# 17903021) to the second bridge on KHLT's Calvin & Coyle Woodland Park Trail (see Figure 2).

KHLT appreciates the opportunity to comment. I plan to attend the April 24, 2023 KPB Plat Committee meeting virtually and would be happy to answer any questions at that time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joel Cooper", is positioned above the typed name.

Joel Cooper,
Stewardship Director