

To Whom It May Concern:

This cover letter is offered to the Planning Staff of the MatSu Borough to join letters provided by the Willow Trails Committee and Vern Halter.

Willow, through its leadership group, WACO, has not had the opportunity to respond officially. We plan to bring the topic to our next scheduled meeting April 7. However, I would anticipate a request from the Community for protection of the parcels identified in Mr. Halter's document. This action would be consistent with the Willow Trails Plan, adopted unanimously by our Community over a year ago.

As we have previously informed borough staff, and as facilitated by borough staff, Willow is deep in the work of developing a comprehensive plan. We respectfully request that your process pause until our Community can finish this work.

Sentiments expressed by Mr. Halter are mirrored in many Community members. Our lands have been assaulted with demands to harm existing uses from a number of sources: state DNR via Southeast Susitna Plan draft revisions; state DNR via Fish Creek Management Plan draft updates; the EIS process by the STB regarding the possibility of a rail spur through our community; potential gas drilling on state lands in southern Willow; ML&P proposing to increase in size, create a second utility core or widen the existing utility corridor to accommodate a second electric line; and MatSu Borough with this Forest Management Plan. The total impact is important to address. There does not seem to be anyone besides those of us in Willow who are protecting existing uses, and existing income from recreation and tourism. We implore the borough to acknowledge and assist in addressing the total impact of all these proposed changes.

I personally tried to come from work in Anchorage to the open house in Willow. I arrived as quickly as I could (left work early) and saw the borough staff driving out. Not only did I leave work early but I had to turn right back around and return to Anchorage as part of my work obligation. Three hours of driving and staff had gone. Your process for gathering input needs a serious review and revision.

We will provide you the results of our Community's deliberations about this Forest Management Plan after our meeting on April 7.

Linda Oxley
Chair