

November 21, 2022

Ray Born
Petersburg District Ranger
USDA Forest Service
Petersburg Ranger District
PO Box 1328
Petersburg, Alaska 99833

Hello Mr. Born,

Per the October 27, 2022 Petersburg Pilot official notice for the New Cabins Projects I submit these timely comments on the Petersburg Ranger District's New Cabins proposal.

Specifically, please remove the Blind Slough Cabin site (2nd turnoff from Blind River Rapids) from further consideration as a new Tongass cabin site. Other more appropriate sites were suggested by the public as disclosed in the Reading room for the project.

I agree with the three comments submitted on the now closed web portal (<https://usfs.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=b1693ca13b0d4e4cb5fa87b3825c2a17>) and expand on a few of those concerns below:

- The site is too close to town and the Mitkof highway;
- The site is already fully utilized by local residents and development would displace existing use;
- The site is NOT overrun by tourists as are other developed sites along that stretch of roadway;
- The site is open to hunting and development could create conflicts with that existing use;
- There are current developments at the Swan Observatory, Blind River Rapids, and picnic area/hatchery along this approximate 2-3 mile stretch. Can't there be one stretch along that length of the Slough that is NOT developed any manner? The term "Loved to Death" comes to mind.
- Development at this site, as well as at the nearby first turnout, are the only semi-remote stretches remaining along that stretch that families can easily access.
- My family, including grandkids have used that area for decades. Indeed, the "big flat rock" peninsula is perfect picnicking and for shallow water swimming for little ones. A nearby cabin would displace current users;

- It is unspoken etiquette that if a car is at either of these two sites, that it is already occupied and potential 2nd users generally move on to elsewhere. Local residents “get” how special solitary use of the area is.
- The area is an essential stopover/resting/nesting/breeding area for various waterfowl and shorebirds—and including other wildlife including moose, Sitka black-tailed deer, AA wolves, Black (and Brown) bear, and other small mammals. I have recorded several avian species there including raptors, owls, ducks, shorebirds including peeps like Least, Western, Solitary and Spotted sandpipers, Dowitchers, Yellowlegs, Sandhill Cranes and Trumpeter Swans (which appeared to be using this area to avoid human presence farther upstream near the main hatchery/picnic area) to name but a few. Increased human presence could disrupt these essential avian uses.

Finally, avoidance of this site for cabin development will demonstrate your sensitivity to the multigenerational ties and deep connection to the lands and waters of Alaska and the Tongass National Forest and the critical resources that sustain all Petersburg/Kupreanof Area resident's way of life.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rebecca Knight
Petersburg, Alaska