

From: [Whitacre, Marina -FS](#)
To: [Whitacre, Marina -FS](#)
Subject: FW: [External Email]Mitkof Cabin location
Date: Monday, November 28, 2022 8:18:13 AM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)

Sent: Tuesday, November 22, 2022 5:13 PM
To: Houser, Victoria -FS <victoria.houser@usda.gov>
Cc: 'Sharon Hunter' <[REDACTED]>
Subject: [External Email]Mitkof Cabin location

Hello Tory,
Congratulations on Acting Ranger!

But more to the point, I wanted to give you some additional thoughts on a Mitkof Island cabin location. I was out the road birding a couple of days ago along Blind Slough and was thinking about the proposal to have a cabin in that area. As I mentioned before in our phone conversation, my understanding from several biologists in the past, is that the area from the Smicum Club and up to Crystal Creek is all critical winter habitat for waterfowl. There were several times that recreation development was proposed in that area and it was deemed more important to protect it for the wildlife. That management emphasis, in part, explains why there were closures to snowmobiles in that area, and why the proposal for a trail connecting Blind Rapids with Blind Slough Picnic Area was dropped.

If the District's emphasis is to provide a cabin that is accessible year around to everyone, then it seems to me that restricts the area of consideration to where roads are plowed by the State. If 12 month access is not a driving criteria, then other options may float to the top. Personally I prefer areas that are undeveloped, but I understand that on other Tongass Districts, road accessible cabins have been very popular.

For Blind Slough, I would suggest your planning team consider a site along the beaver ponds, just north of the Ohmer Creek trail floating bridge. I don't believe this area would have conflicts with overwintering waterfowl. It would provide access to winter recreation including ice skating, snow machining, and cross country skiing. It would also provide access to canoeing/kayaking in the summertime. It could provide hiking if a short (0.1 to 0.2 miles depending upon location) trail was included to access the existing Ohmer Creek Trail. The beaver pond area is not affected by tides, whereas the Smicum Club site is impacted by high tides which ruins ice conditions and can make it unsafe.

Below is a photo showing the area I am referring to.



Thank you for the opportunity to provide my ideas.
Brad Hunter