

February 11, 2021
UA Lands – February 2021 Update

The University of Alaska Land Management team hopes everyone reading this is healthy and well.

Before we update you on the Haines timber project, we wanted to express our sadness about the tragic passing of Jenae Larson and David Simmons. We've been in touch with a few of you but we wanted to acknowledge the strength of the community coming together. Please know we continue to send encouraging thoughts to all of you, especially those who are still displaced.

Timber project update

Although the timber industry in Alaska has been relatively stable despite the pandemic, some new factors may affect the industry in Southeast along with the Haines timber project. First, as with any new presidential administration, there can be changes in federal policy for resource development which could certainly impact the timber industry as a whole. We will also continue to monitor tariffs between China and the U.S. and how they may be affected by the new Biden administration.

In addition, Sealaska, a big player in the timber industry in Southeast, has announced plans to transition out of logging by the end of this year. As these plans were just released in the last few weeks, it is still unclear how this may affect other timber projects in the region.

As we conduct our analysis to understand the impact of all of these factors, the buyer remains committed to the project with the belief that conditions will turn positive in the future.

Ripinski Trail Easement

Haines Borough Assembly recently passed a resolution to support the Alaska Division of Forestry's partnership with Haines Huts to apply for a Recreational Trails Program grant to acquire easements through Mental Health Trust and University lands for the Ripinski Trail. The Land Management Team is currently working with the Division of Forestry and Haines Huts on the next steps for acquiring the public easement. We know this has been an important ask of the community and we are pleased to collaborate on this effort, especially with greater need for hiking during the ongoing pandemic.

The end result is that we are in a time of flux. As always, we will communicate with you as soon as we have new information. Our plan was to meet with you in person last year, and of course, with the pandemic, we are all on hold. Right now, our plan is to visit with you as soon as it is safe. By summertime, we will gather with you whether in person, or through a Zoom gathering.

As always, please reach out with any questions at UALandHaines@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Kirsten Henning
Liaison for the UA Land Management Office