

Copper River Boat Launch Facilities Improvements**FY2021 Request:****\$140,000****Reference No:****62863****AP/AL:** Appropriation**Project Type:** Parks / Recreation**Category:** Transportation**Location:** Chitina**House District:** Eielson/Denali/Upper
Yukon/Border (HD 6)**Impact House District:** Eielson/Denali/Upper
Yukon/Border (HD 6)**Contact:** Dave Rutz**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2020 - 06/30/2025 **Contact Phone:** (907)267-2150**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

This project establishes a match appropriation to meet the Federal Lands Access Projects (FLAP) grant award the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities has received. This allows the department to improve/enhance parking issues on the McCarthy Road Boat Access site near the McCarthy Bridge and inside the Wrangell-St.Elias National Park and Preserve. This access site is an important entry point for users to both the Glennallen subsistence fishery and the Chitina dipnet fishery on the Copper River. Trespassing and parking issues have been contentious for a number of years at this access point and have required a number of multi-agency meetings to resolve.

Funding:	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	Total
1024 Fish/Game	\$140,000						\$140,000
Total:	\$140,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$140,000

☐ State Match Required
 ☒ One-Time Project
 ☐ Phased - new
 ☐ Phased - underway
 ☐ On-Going
 0% = Minimum State Match % Required
 ☐ Amendment
 ☐ Mental Health Bill

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
Totals:	0	0

Prior Funding History / Additional Information:**Project Description/Justification:**

The Copper River boat launch and campground near Chitina is the only public boat launch and camping facility in the area. The access road, boat launch, beach, camping, and parking areas have not had an improvement project since being established.

The boat launch and campground provides access to many riverine activities available to visitors to the Wrangell - St. Elias National Park and Preserve, such as floating and boating trips. It also provides access to state and federal subsistence and personal-use fisheries that are very popular with area residents and statewide. The campground serves hikers and campers traveling the Edgerton Highway/McCarthy Road.

Boats are used for accessing the personal-use fishery downstream and the subsistence fishery

upstream. The character of the launch area changes constantly due to fluctuations in water levels. When accessing the river, it is common knowledge to get in and get out, because space is very limited.

The access road is very narrow, making travel difficult when two vehicles towing boats pass each other. Improvements to the access road will provide a safer connection to the launch site.

Campers and trucks with trailers park along the beach area and on adjacent private lands. The private lands that border the river are privately held by the Chitina Native Corporation and the Ahtna Native Corporation. The potential of trespassers on private native lands is an important issue facing these landowners.

Limited parking and camping in these areas limit access and increase the potential of land conflicts. The fact that this fishery is located a long distance from either Anchorage or Fairbanks means that overnight camping is necessary for many users. Designated camping and parking areas are needed to ensure visitors are provided public access to the Copper River and remain on public use lands. Providing parking and camping areas will ease the overcrowding on the McCarthy Road, the boat launch access road, the boat launch, and the beach area.

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