



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Alaska Region
Tongass National Forest
Sitka Ranger District

204 Siginaka Way
Sitka, AK 99835
Phone: (907) 747-6671
Fax: (907) 747-4253

File Code: 1950-1/2350

Date: April 14, 2009

Gary White
Sawmill Cove Industrial Park
329 Harbor Dr., Suite 212
Sitka, AK 99835

Dear Mr. White:

Sitka Ranger District of the Tongass National Forest is proposing to replace a 100 foot bridge on Beaver Lake Trail and build a trail reroute about 3365 feet long. The trail is used by both local residents and guided hikers. During the months of May through July of 2005, 4699 people, averaging 51 per day, hiked this trail. Over the years, the trail has been extended and upgraded, but the first one mile segment of the trail is in need of relocation to eliminate steep switchbacks, decayed boardwalk, and structures that present winter hazards. Beaver Lake Trail begins at Sawmill Creek Campground approximately five miles east of Sitka and ends at Beaver Lake.

Bridge Replacement

This proposal includes removing the existing bridge at the beginning of the trail and replacing it with an 85 foot single span steel structure. The new bridge will be built upstream of the existing site about 50 feet where the stream channel narrows. The existing bridge was constructed in 1989 in cooperation with the Alaska Pulp Corporation using boom logs for the stringers and cribbing. It is in poor condition. Girders show advanced section loss and the deck is in poor condition with advanced section loss. The new bridge will be four feet wide with approaches that allow access with wheelchairs and equipment for maintenance of the penstock by City employees. An accessible picnic site will be developed on the trail side of the bridge.

Trail Relocation

The trail will be relocated from the 5th switchback and tie back into the existing trail below the 9th switchback to reduce the grade climbing up to Beaver Lake from the campground. Two benches will be installed along the route at viewpoints overlooking the valley.

Once at the top of the slope, boardwalk would be removed and replaced primarily with gravel trail tread. Gravel construction eliminates hazards related to boardwalk during icy and snowy condition. New boardwalk with non-skid surfacing would be installed only over the wettest soils that are unsuitable for aggregate.

See the attached map for project location details.



These proposed activities fall within a category of actions established by the Chief of the Forest Service, which normally do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment and, therefore, may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment. This category of actions is identified in Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 30, Section 31.2 (1), "Construction and reconstruction of trails".

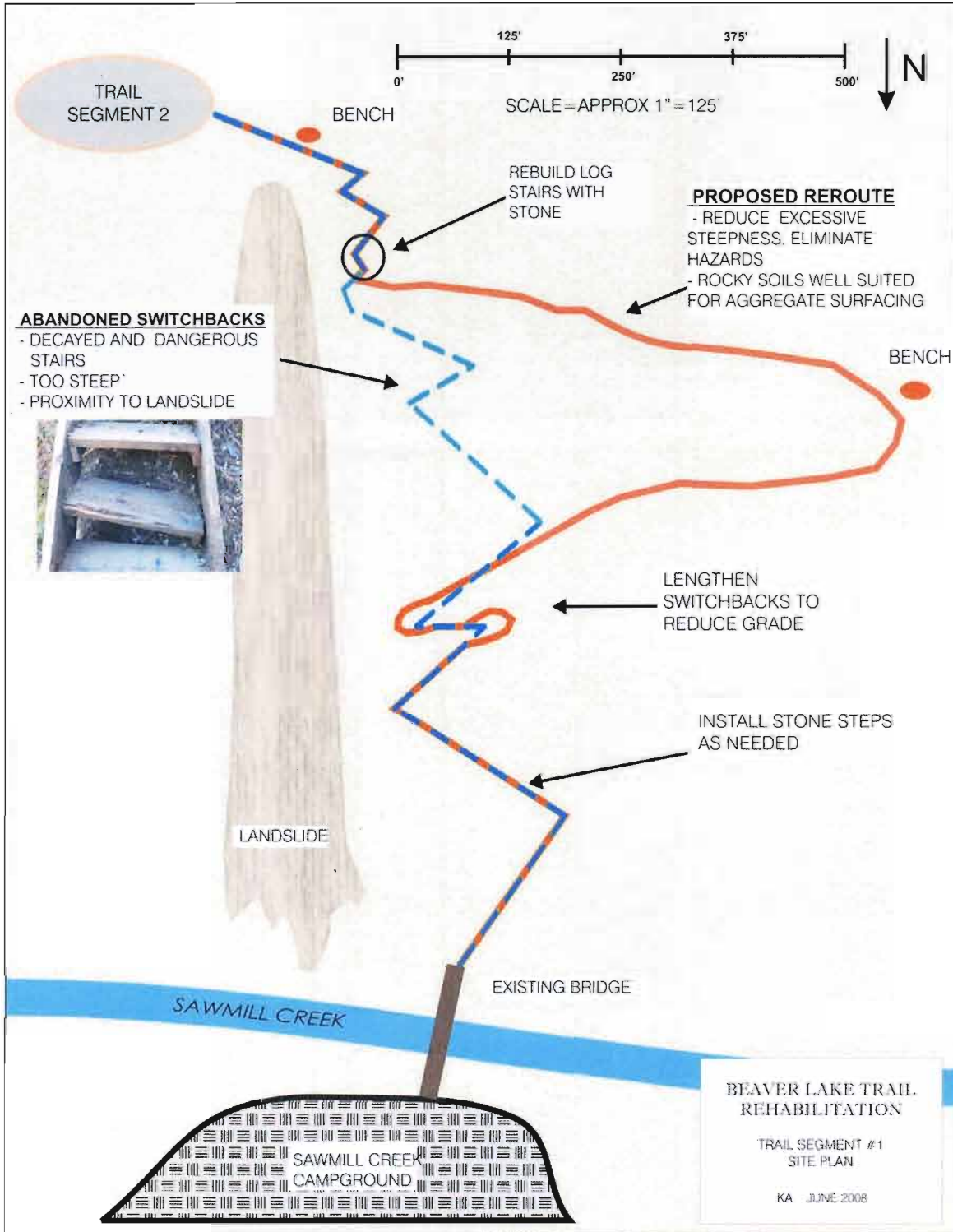
No extraordinary circumstances exist which would result in additional impacts. No irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are anticipated.

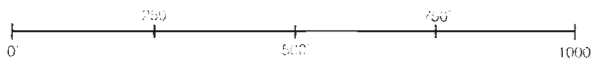
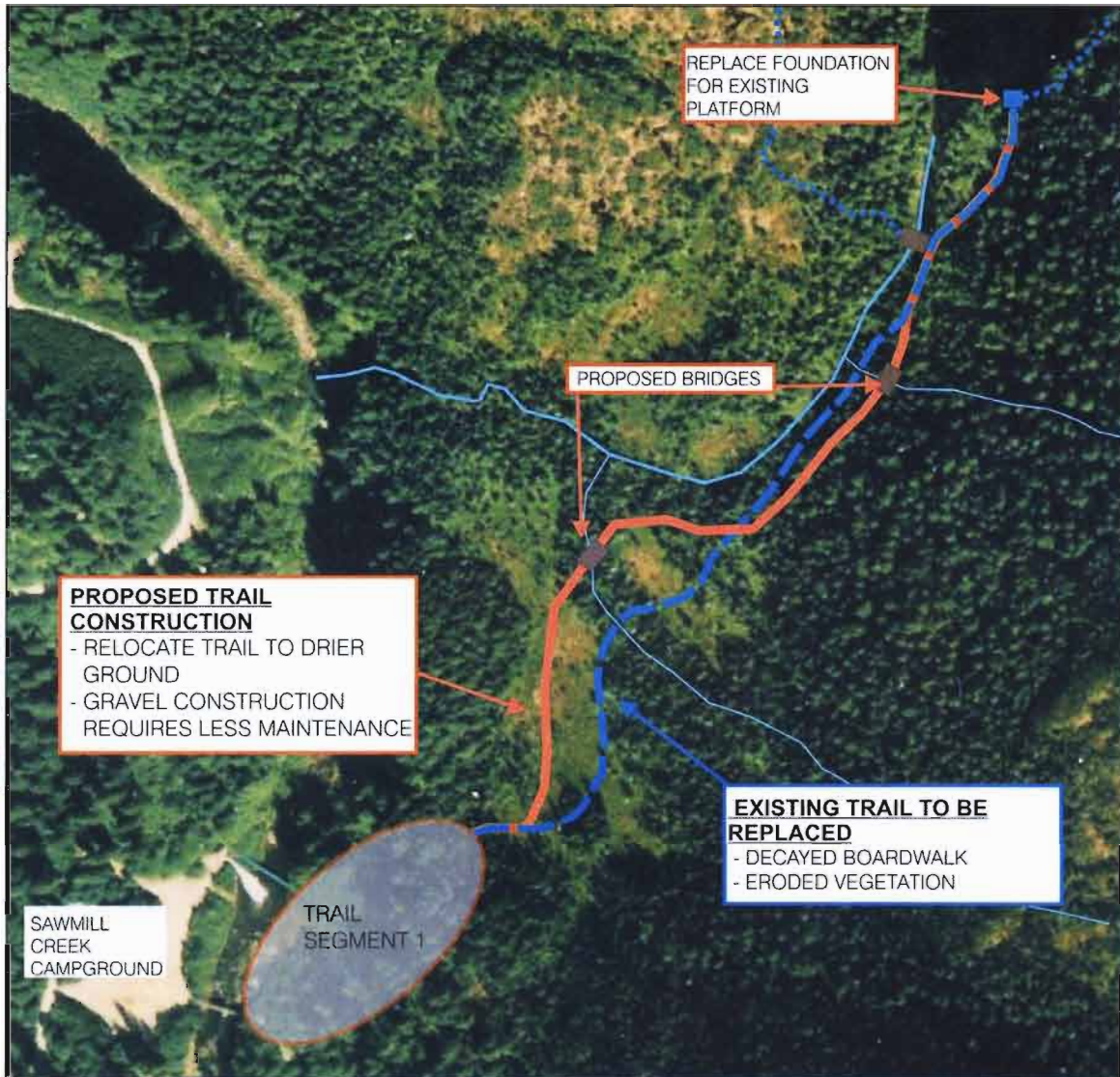
The purpose of this letter is to provide an opportunity to comment regarding our proposed actions prior to my decision, which will be documented in a Decision Memo. Please send your comments no later than April 30, 2009. Questions and comments are to be made to Annemarie LaPalme, at alapalme@fs.fed.us or you can mail them to USDA Forest Service, Sitka Ranger District, 204 Siginaka Way, Sitka, AK, 99835 or call her at 747-4209.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carol A. Goularte".

CAROL A. GOULARTE
District Ranger





SCALE = APPROX 1" = 250'



BEAVER LAKE TRAIL REHABILITATION

TRAIL SEGMENT #2
SITE PLAN

KA JUNE 2008