

**Update on Pittman-Robertson funding  
opportunities and grant application for  
potential cabin development**



# City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor Hunter and Assembly Members

**From:** Keith Brady, Municipal Administrator

**Date:** August 23, 2018

**Subject:** Pittman Robertson Cabin Development Assembly Direction

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### Executive Summary

After I received direction from the Assembly to explore cabin development cost and location, I met with staff, asked for an agenda item on the Parks and Recreation Commission, and started a conversation with the local USFS. The Parks and Recreation Commission formed a subcommittee to review possible locations and were very diligent in my request for input from them. I asked the P&R Commission to give me a prioritized list of 3 to 5 locations for boat access and car/hike access. Below are their recommendations. Only one is on CBS Property, the others we would have to negotiate if that is the will of the Assembly.

#### Off island locations / boating

Gagarin Island – CBS Property  
Neva Point – USFS Property (there is already a shelter in the area)  
Leesoffskaia Bay – USFS Property

#### Drive / hike / pack-in

SMC Campground / Blue Lake Campground – USFS Property  
Thimbleberry Lake – University of Alaska Property  
Mosquito Cove – State of Alaska Property

Another thought would be a cabin that caters to weddings and larger groups/family events. This could potentially assist with revenue to fund the maintenance program.

### Fiscal Note

Things that we looked at:

- A fully contracted cabin construction under prevailing wages would be approximately \$150k (that is what White Sulphur Cabin cost)
- Remote access to trails, moorage, decks, and cabin \$350k for Lake Eva Cabin

- Tom Young Cabin \$63k for the cabin kit (everything else donated and volunteers for all construction)
- Current cost for a cabin kit approx. \$70k (need to add foundation, furniture, plumbing, stove, etc.)

We should plan for \$100k to \$150k per cabin depending on the location and amenities wanted. If we had major volunteerism perhaps one could be built in an easy accessible area for \$70k (price of the kit only). Hike in locations would be much more expensive unless someone donates a helicopter or a ton of labor. Such locations would probably quickly reach over \$350k much like Lake Eva.

Construction is typically 30-days of work with a 5-man crew, not cheap at prevailing wages.

### **Details**

The following is the explanation from the P&R Commission on the reasoning for the prioritization and locations of the cabins. For all of these locations the sub-committee thought about water, fuel/wood, beach access, the appeal of the location, and the ability to maintain it.

Focusing first on the off-island locations, we wanted to come up with locations that are protected enough to ideally install a mooring buoy. If you look at a chart showing Gagarin Island, ideally, we would want a cabin on the West side of the island facing Kruzof Island. A mooring buoy would be on the Eastern side of the island, between the much smaller islands to the East and Gagarin Island, with a five-minute walk to the other side of the cabin location. This location is close enough to town, with an easier boat ride (comparably to the sometimes rough ride to Goddard), but far enough away that renters can stay here and explore the area or enjoy the view. Renters would easily be able to stay on Gagarin Island yet go farther North to go hunting.

A lot of the same aspects apply to Neva Point. It is further away from town but would be a more ideal location to hunt from. The bay right inside Neva Point should be protected enough for a mooring buoy. The subcommittee did agree upon Neva Point but with the hesitation because Allen Point Cabin is close by and the three-sided shelter further up Neva Straight.

Leesoffskaia Bay is last on the list due to its location and the common knowledge that it is a 'party beach'. This brings the high risk of vandalism. But at the same time, it is quite protected and would be used year-round since it is just far enough away from town, but not too far (example: Goddard).

The aspect of maintaining these locations are all contingent on funding and man power due to their off-island locations. It would be ideal if the off-island cabin is similar to the Tom Young Cabin in the sense that they too are equipped with a diesel stove instead wood. The subcommittee felt that a wood stove cabin could possibly encourage renters to use available trees near-by, which depreciates the visual appeal.

The drive/hike/pack-in locations were much harder to narrow down as there are many great and suitable locations within town and on the road system that would be nice to have a cabin. The ability to maintain these locations becomes exponentially easier due to being on the road system.

Having an actual cabin at the SMC Campground would be very nice to those who camp there and hike in the area. The cabin could ideally be situated a little out of the campground, on either East or West side of the campground but situated along the river. Renters would have all the same recreational aspects available to those who also tent camp in the area. Camping here in the winter time could be complicated due to snow and possible avalanche, cutting off the road access.

Thimbleberry Lake is a great location for a cabin to be located at the end/back side of the lake. Hikers would still be able to use the trail and not bother those at the cabin as they use the trail to Heart Lake. It is a protected lake which opens the renters to recreating on the lake as well as hiking in the area. This location is not contingent on weather since the hike-in is short and much closer to the main road system.

Mosquito Cove was the last location the subcommittee approved but it would take a much longer distance to pack-in gear as well as wood/fuel. This location could also be problematic with the Katlian Bay road project. But a cabin could be situated at the end of the beach or even around the point a little, hopefully far enough from the trail head so hikers don't intrude on campers but still have respectable access to the trail and beach.