

News about the
BLM's Campbell Tract
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The Campbell Tract Leaf

Urban airstrip

QUESTION: When is it safe to hike, bike or walk the family dog on Campbell Tract Airstrip?

ANSWER: It isn't, and soon it will be illegal as well.

In recent years, the number of recreationists who venture onto the airstrip, heliport, ramp and taxiway at Campbell Tract has increased. Meanwhile, BLM dispatchers logged nearly 200 flights at the airstrip and heliport over the last two field seasons alone. These two facts make many people uneasy.

Our BLM managers, law enforcement rangers and outdoor recreation specialists have asked for voluntary cooperation from recreational visitors to the Campbell Tract. However, unauthorized recreational use of the airstrip continues to pose a safety hazard, despite our best efforts. Fourteen signs clearly mark the runway and heliport as "Active" and closed to pedestrian use ("Authorized Personnel Only"). Recreation users frequently ignore the signs and enter the airstrip to walk, jog, hike, cross country ski, mountain bike, walk dogs, or ride horses.

We've attempted to reduce recreational use of the aviation areas in a number of ways, with limited success. So the BLM is now taking steps to formally close the aviation areas under 43 CFR 8364.1. This regulation allows the BLM to close or restrict the use of designated public lands to protect public safety, and impose penalties for those who fail to comply.

What this means is the next time you or someone you know take an evening stroll down Campbell Tract Airstrip, you may encounter a uniformed BLM law enforcement ranger with citation pad. If this

sounds a little overzealous, there are actually some very good reasons for this course of action.

The facts

The Campbell Tract airstrip and heliport are used for federal operations. Most are non-emergency uses by BLM or other agencies, such as aviation training and certification or transporting equipment to field assignments. In 2004 and 2005 BLM dispatchers logged a total of 186 flights at Campbell Tract.

While most flights occur on weekdays, fieldwork schedules take advantage of long summer days and short field seasons. Aircraft may arrive or depart the airstrip or heliport virtually any time of day, any day of the week.

Unplanned landings also occur on the runway throughout the year when pilots encounter mechanical failure or fuel problems (the airstrip is closed to general aviation use by the public, but may be used for emergency landings).

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security) sponsors a Disaster Medical Assistance Team in Alaska. The Alaska DMAT stores equipment at the Campbell Tract for swift deployment during disasters.

And lastly, should a large wildfire occur on the hillside, the airstrip could serve as a staging area for getting critical supplies, equipment and personnel on the ground to protect homes and property, and would likely serve as a coordination and logistics center during the event.

The bottom line

Recreation is not a compatible use of an active airstrip and heliport, and subjects the recreationist, pilot and aircraft to unnecessary risk. So the BLM is taking steps to close Campbell Tract aviation areas to all unauthorized use, including recreational use.

Please enjoy the other 12 miles of maintained recreational trails the Campbell Tract offers and steer clear of aviation areas at all times. You can also help by encouraging your friends, neighbors and fellow trail enthusiasts to do the same.

By working together, we can provide a quality and safe recreational experience for those who visit the Campbell Tract. And you can avoid a citation and instead use those dollars for something more fun—like new running shoes or cross-country skis.



BLM warehouse personnel load a jet fuel tank into a Skyvan at Campbell Tract Airstrip. The fuel and supplies were bound for Bering Glacier field camp.





Meet Jeff Duhrsen

New Anchorage Field Office Law Enforcement Ranger Jeff Duhrsen is the friendly face you may have seen in uniform recently on Campbell Tract roads and trails. Duhrsen came to the BLM from the Palmer office of Alaska State Troopers earlier this year. He holds an MBA from Rice University in Houston, Texas.

Ranger Duhrsen provides resource protection for Campbell Tract and other lands managed by the Anchorage Field Office in south-central Alaska. He is a pilot and enjoys Alaska's outdoors, both at Campbell Tract and beyond.

Bear alert

We've had the usual frequency of black bear sightings near Campbell Creek this year, but we're seeing something else that concerns us more.

Recently on two separate occasions, a brown bear repeatedly charged trail users. No attacks or maulings have occurred on Campbell Tract, but there is always potential for such an occurrence when solitary trail users venture near salmon streams with active bear populations like Campbell Creek.

BLM reminds trail users to practice good bear sense when using the Campbell Tract trail system and adjacent Far North Bicentennial Park. Watch for bright red "Danger" signs in areas with reported threats to human safety, and steer clear of those areas. **Jogging or moving quietly down a creekside trail is especially unwise at dawn and dusk. Exercise extreme caution near streams during salmon runs, and buddy up if possible when you hit the trail.**

For more safety tips, visit www.wildlife.alaska.gov.



A tip 'o the hat

More than 200 National Trails Day volunteers helped with trail projects at Campbell Tract and Far North Bicentennial Park on June 3. Volunteers planted 450 spruce and alder seedlings, helped compact 500 feet of trail, and completed a number of other trail projects.

After a morning of trail work, volunteers and visitors watched BLM Alaska Fire Service smokejumpers complete practice jumps at Campbell Tract Airstrip. After the jumps, visitors talked with the smokejumpers about wildland fire and the smokejumper program.

Each year the BLM Anchorage Field Office, Anchorage Parks and Recreation, and REI team up to host National Trails Day projects on Campbell Tract and adjacent Municipal parklands.

Mark your calendar

September 30 is National Public Lands Day and the 10th anniversary celebration of the opening of the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center.

The BLM invites you to join us for outdoor volunteer projects on the Campbell Tract that morning.

Registration is at 8:30 a.m. and volunteer projects run from 9 a.m. until noon. Please wear boots and bring work gloves. BLM will provide tools, equipment and lunch for all volunteers.

Then spend the afternoon at the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center as we "Celebrate Ten Years of Science Education." This fun and free family-friendly open house event features educational games, rehabilitated birds from the Bird Treatment and Learning Center, live music, and the science center's annual poster!

For information about these and other events at the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center, call 267-1247.



The Campbell Tract Leaf is published quarterly to provide news about the 730-acre BLM Campbell Tract, located adjacent to Far North Bicentennial Park in Anchorage, Alaska.



Bureau of Land Management
Anchorage Field Office
6881 Abbott Loop Road
Anchorage, AK 99507

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