

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH INFORMATION MEMORANDUM****IM No. 24-219**

SUBJECT: AN ORDINANCE OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY APPROVING A REQUEST FROM AGRICULTURAL RIGHTS OWNERS, PAUL AND MARGARET COOK, AND BEN RAEVSKY, TO SUBDIVIDE A 320-ACRE FARM CONTAINING TWO PARCELS, INTO THREE (TWO 40± ACRE PARCELS AND ONE 240± ACRE PARCEL); TO CONSTRUCT ONE PERMANENT AND ONE TEMPORARY RESIDENCE FOR THE FARM FAMILIES; AND APPROVE AN UPDATED FARM PLAN WITH AN ADDITIONAL SUBUNIT FARM PLAN - TAX IDS 18N01E04A002 AND 18N01E04B001 (MSB008116).

**AGENDA OF: December 3, 2024****ASSEMBLY ACTION:**

Adopted without objection. 12/17/24 - EMW

**AGENDA ACTION REQUESTED:** Introduce and set for public hearing.

Route To	Signatures
Originator	<div>11/20/2024</div> <div>X Suzanne Reilly</div> <div>Signed by: Suzanne Reilly</div>
Land Mgt Manager	<div>11/20/2024</div> <div>X Joe Metzger</div> <div>Signed by: Joe Metzger</div>
Community Development Director	<div>11/20/2024</div> <div>X Michael Brown</div> <div>Signed by: Mike Brown</div>
Finance Director	<div>11/22/2024</div> <div>X Cheyenne Heindel</div> <div>Signed by: Cheyenne Heindel</div>
Borough Attorney	<div>11/22/2024</div> <div>X Nicholas Spiropoulos</div> <div>Signed by: Nicholas Spiropoulos</div>
Borough Manager	<div>11/22/2024</div> <div>X Michael Brown</div> <div>Signed by: Mike Brown</div>
Borough Clerk	<div>11/22/2024</div> <div>X Brenda J. Henry for</div> <div>Signed by: Brenda Henry</div>

**ATTACHMENT (S) :** Fiscal Note 24-03 FN  
Proposed Parcel Map (2pp)  
Ag Board Resolution 24-03 (2pp)  
Conditions & Restrictions (2pp)  
Cook Farm Plan Update (1p)  
Raevsky New/Subunit Farm Plan (3pp)  
Public Comments (2pp)  
Ordinance Serial No. 24-115 (3pp)

**SUMMARY:** This memorandum seeks the Borough Assembly's approval for non-code Ordinance Serial Number 24-115, initiated by an application from agricultural rights owners, Paul and Margaret Cook, and co-owner Ben Raevsky. The Borough holds the development rights to the subject parcels, which are designated "Agricultural" in perpetuity as per the covenants of the 1977 agricultural sale. Since the Borough owns the development rights, the agricultural rights owner must ask the Borough's permission to make changes to the land such as subdividing, constructing buildings, or modifying farm plans.

The request involves the following:

1. Subdividing a 320± acre farm into three parcels (from the current two).
2. Constructing one permanent and one temporary residence.
3. Updating the farm plan to include a new subunit.

The proposed amendment to the existing farm conservation plan aims to enhance the sustainability of the family elk farm operation (MSB# 008116) by:

- Progressing cooperative family farming by adding housing to improve their proximity and availability for farm duties.
- Enhance collaboration for farm development by bringing decision makers closer together.
- Reduce need to bring in outside help since family can work and manage the farm.
- Support the farming operation by providing an enclosed maintenance space in the garage of the permanent residence to work on farm equipment during the cold season.

**BACKGROUND:** The property was originally sold in the Borough's 1977 Agricultural Land Sale; whereby agricultural rights were conveyed by quitclaim deed and payments were secured by a note and deed of trust. The deed includes conditions and restrictions which require owners to obtain borough approval when they wish to make significant changes such as the contents of this request. The approval requirements continue even after the borough is paid off for the purchase of the agricultural rights. According to language in the deed the grantees rights are "subject to immediate termination and annulment upon breach of condition or restriction."

The parcels in the agricultural program were sold as single economic units for farming purposes and required that a farm plan

for the entire unit be approved. While the parcels encompass legal descriptions considered by borough platting code to be separate parcels of record, the adherence to the approved farm plan and restrictions (even on further conveyance) require the borough to review and approve changes and separation of the economic unit.

The original farm included a 40-acre portion of Section 3 which was split off in 1997, leaving approximately 320 acres remaining in the subject farm unit.

The original farm plans and early amendments were reviewed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) soil conservationist, the University of Alaska agricultural extension agent, and a borough-appointed agricultural land committee. The borough administration added its recommendation, and the borough assembly approved or denied the farm plan by resolution.

The timeframe for development in the 1977 program was set out in the approved farm plan. The original program brochure stated that applications had to contain "a realistic and balanced progressive development schedule showing substantial completion at the end of 10 years." Except for the requirement in the deed that adherence to the farm plan was mandatory (but could be amended), no required completion date was stated.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

The current request is three-fold:

- 1) Split the farm unit from two parcels to three, with the intention to convey one of the 40-acre parcels to a family member in the future;
- 2) Construct two family residences--a single-family home to be built on one of the new 40-acre parcels, and a temporary residence (a yurt) on the main homesite, both for family to live and work;
- 3) Approve the updated farm conservation plan for the two main farm parcels including a new subunit farm plan for the new 40-acre parcel.

The applicable provisions of the 1977 program for this request are:

1. Per Ordinance 86-78 Section 6 - Subdivisions:  
"Agricultural parcels may not be subdivided in a manner that requires additional homesites without prior approval

of the [Agricultural Advisory Board]. Only the parent parcel's original homesite is eligible for fee simple purchase; all other homesites shall remain in agricultural rights only status."

2. Ordinance 86-78 Section 7 - Homesites and Outbuildings:  
"A request to place more than one dwelling per homesite must be submitted in writing and be reviewed by the Agricultural Advisory Board and approved by the Borough Manager prior to construction. The request must include justification showing that the additional dwelling relates to the operation of the farm.
3. "Adherence to the farm use development plan submitted to (sic) the grantee and as approved by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough is mandatory. Such plan however, may be modified or amended upon written approval from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough."

The original purchase price for the farm was financed by the Borough and paid off many years ago. Currently there are no outstanding obligations to the Borough.

The current owners wish to update the existing farm plan for the main 280± acre farm unit (Parcels B & C). Co-owner Ben Raevsky provided a subunit farm plan for the new 40-acre parcel (Parcel A) which includes the new permanent residence if approved.

The farm currently focuses on elk production, including breeding, raising, hunting, and selling elk for meat, antlers, and other products. The most recent review of farm development uses 2024 aerial photography and indicates that approximately 75± acres (23%) of fields and corrals have been developed, 34± acres (11%) are in hay production, and 189± acres (59%) of forest are used for elk browsing, sustaining a herd of 85 elk. The farm also raises chickens and turkeys and grows vegetables for local farmers' markets. Proposed expansions include developing a horse boarding and training operation, addressing a local shortage. With the utility of the forested area, this operation has one of the highest farming utilizations in the Mat-Su Borough.

The layout of the proposed subdivision was selected to minimize cost for access to the existing driveway and utilities. Additionally, the construction of a temporary home (a yurt) on the primary homesite will use the existing driveway for access. The strategic development based on family farming aligns with the long-

term agricultural use of the land, ensuring the farm's growth and sustainability while adhering to the original conservation intent.

The proposed changes will have minimal impact on the amount of agricultural land available for use. The yurt will be placed on the current homesite, and the new home on the 40-acre parcel will be located outside of grazing lands. These changes are expected to improve agricultural practices and production, ensuring long-term viability and productivity of the farm.

The ability to designate up to a 5-acre homesite (which would be eligible for subdivision and fee simple purchase) will remain with the current homesite which would be situated on one of the 40-acre parcels (Parcel B) but remains part of the overall farm unit. The updated farm plans request the primary homesite exist on Parcel B, and the secondary homesite (up to two-acres) to be located on Parcel A.

The family envisions the ranch as a beacon of agricultural innovation and sustainability in Alaska. Through diligent stewardship and strategic planning, they aim to maximize the land's potential, diversify revenue streams, and safeguard natural resources for future generations.

Pursuant to Title 23 and the Land and Resource Management Division Policies and Procedures Manual, a 30-day public notice was mailed to all landowners within 600 feet of the subject property, the Fishhook Community Council, Mayor, Manager, Assembly Members, Agricultural Advisory Board Members, the Greater Palmer Chamber of Commerce, Road Service Area Board 16, Fire Service Area Board 132, and the Greater Palmer Fire Chief. Notices were posted at the Palmer Post Office, the Borough's website and advertised in the Frontiersman newspaper. The upper Susitna Soil & Water Conservation District was not notified as it is not currently active.

Comments received from the public notice and advertising are attached. Amber McDonough and Beverly Cutler both responded and are in support of the applicants' requests.

#### **AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD:**

On November 20, 2024, the Agriculture Advisory Board unanimously passed Resolution Serial No. 24-03 recommending the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly adopt Ordinance 24-115.

#### **RECOMMENDATION OF ADMINISTRATION:**

The Land and Resource Management Division has thoroughly


reviewed the applications, met with the owners at the ranch, and respectfully request that the Borough Assembly approve Ordinance Serial No. 24-115, allowing the subdivision and development as proposed.

## MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

## FISCAL NOTE

Agenda Date: December 3, 2024

SUBJECT: AN ORDINANCE OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY APPROVING A REQUEST FROM AGRICULTURAL RIGHTS OWNERS, PAUL AND MARGARET COOK, AND BEN RAEVSKY, TO SUBDIVIDE A 320-ACRE FARM CONTAINING TWO PARCELS, INTO THREE (TWO 40± ACRE PARCELS AND ONE 240± ACRE PARCEL); TO CONSTRUCT ONE PERMANENT AND ONE TEMPORARY RESIDENCE FOR THE FARM FAMILIES; AND APPROVE AN UPDATED FARM PLAN WITH AN ADDITIONAL SUBUNIT FARM PLAN 18N01E04A002 AND 18N01E04B001 (MSB008116).

FISCAL ACTION (TO BE COMPLETED BY FINANCE)	FISCAL IMPACT <b>YES</b> NO
AMOUNT REQUESTED *	FUNDING SOURCE Property Tax Revenue
FROM ACCOUNT #	PROJECT
TO ACCOUNT: xxx.xxx.xxx 3xx.xxx	PROJECT #
VERIFIED BY:  Recoverable Signature X Liesel Weiland Signed by: Liesel Weiland	

## EXPENDITURES/REVENUES:

(Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
Personnel Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land/Structures						
Grants, Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING						

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE			*			
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## FUNDING:

(Thousands of Dollars)

General Fund			*			
State/Federal Funds						
Other			*			
TOTAL			*			

## POSITIONS:

Full-Time						
Part-Time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary) \* Tax revenue based on valuation of new lots.

11/22/2024

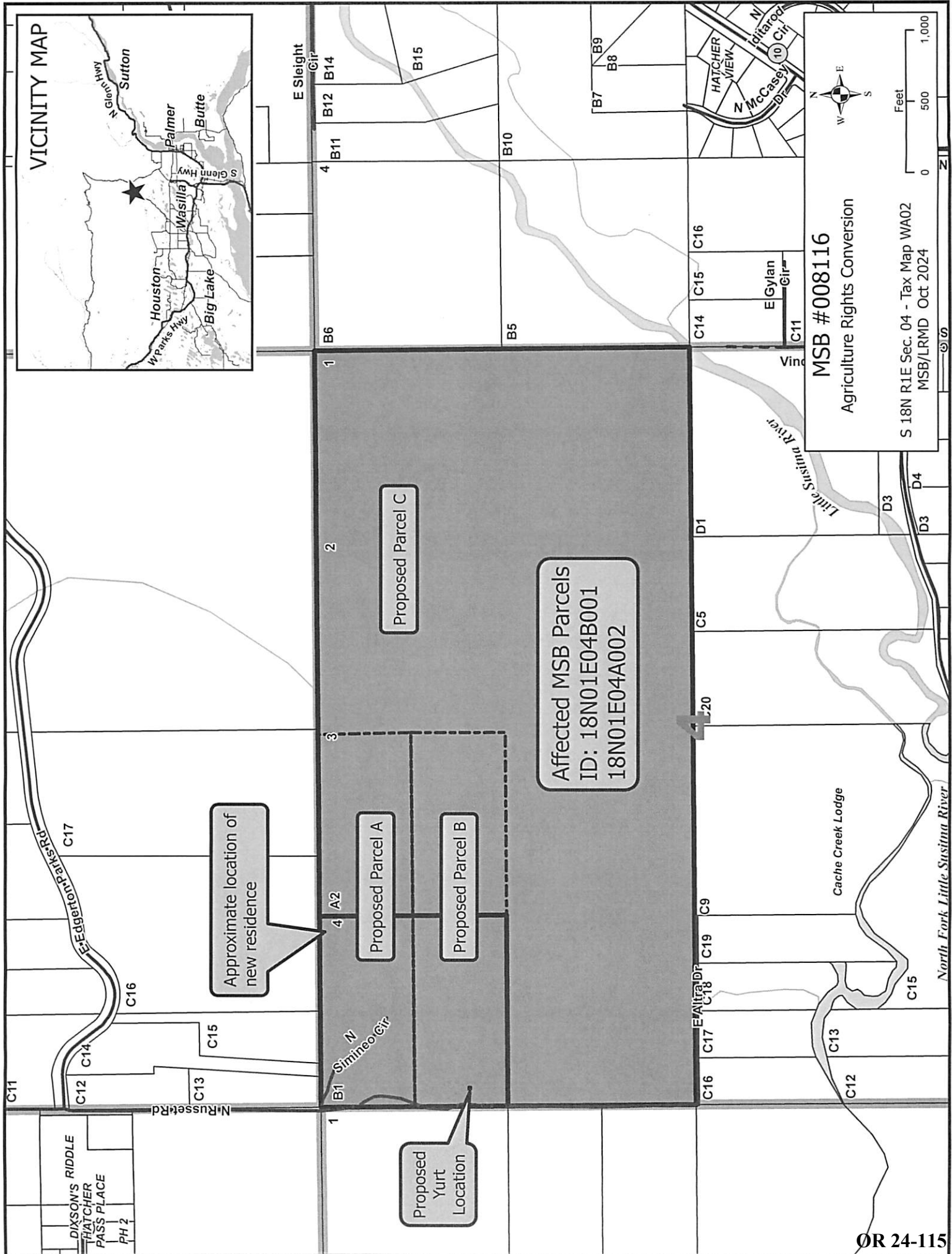
APPROVED BY:

X

C h e y e n n e H e i n d e l

S i g n e d b y : C h e y e n n e H e i n d e l





**MSB #008116**  
 Agriculture Rights Conversion

S 18N R1E Sec. 04 - Tax Map WA02  
 MSB/LRMD Oct 2024



**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH  
AGRICULTURE ADVISORY BOARD  
RESOLUTION NO. 24-03**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH (BOROUGH) AGRICULTURE ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDING THE BOROUGH ASSEMBLY ADOPT ORDINANCE SERIAL NO. 24-115 WHERE THE BOROUGH HOLDS DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS; SUBDIVIDING TWO AGRICULTURAL PARCELS (320 ACRES) INTO THREE; REVISING THE ORIGINAL FARM PLAN AND ADDING A NEW FARM PLAN; CONSTRUCTING A TEMPORARY STRUCTURE ON THE PRIMARY HOME SITE AND A NEW RESIDENCE ON ONE OF THE NEW 40-ACRE PARCELS - TAX IDS 18N01E04A002 AND 18N01E04B001 (MSB008116).

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WHEREAS, the Borough Agriculture Advisory Board was enacted by Matanuska-Susitna Borough Ordinance 15-050 to review issues specifically related to and affecting Borough agriculture lands, and advise the Assembly and Manager on such matters; and

WHEREAS, the Borough holds development rights in deeds for the 1977, 1981, 1982, and 1983 agricultural land sales programs and the subject property was originally sold in 1977; and

WHEREAS, 1977 agricultural covenants require Borough approval to re-plat or add structures; and

WHEREAS, agricultural covenants under former Title 13 from 1977, 1981, 1982, and 1983 allow the creation of new parcels no less than 40 acres; and

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Land and Resource Management Division received applications from Paul & Margaret Cook and Ben Raevsky to modify the farm property lines to create a new parcel (for a total of three parcels, two 40 acres and one 240 acres) in the land estate of Tax ID's 18N01E04A002 and

18N01E04B001; and

WHEREAS, the application includes a request to allow a temporary structure (a yurt) to be constructed on the main 5-acre homesite to house family members who will work the farm; and

WHEREAS, the application also includes a request to allow a new residence to be constructed on the new 40-acre parcel which will be occupied by additional family members who work the farm;


WHEREAS, updated farm plans are required by covenants and have been submitted by both Paul Cook for the main farm parcel and Ben Raevsky for the new 40-acre parcel;

WHEREAS, both farm plans have been reviewed and comply with the requirements of the agricultural covenants, and providing accommodations for additional workers will enhance the productivity and development of the family farm;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Agriculture Advisory Board recommends the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly hereby adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-XXX, to accept the new farm plans, re-plat, and construction of new residences for farm workers and family members.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Agricultural Advisory Board this 20th day of November 2024.

ATTEST:

  
Margie Cobb,  
Department Admin Specialist

  
LaMarr Anderson, Chairman

CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

The CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS hereinafter set out are to RUN WITH THE LAND, and shall be binding upon all parties and all persons owning that certain described property, or claiming under them, described as follows:

NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 3 and NW $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 4, Township 18 North, Range 1 East, Seward Meridian Alaska. Containing 360.00 acres, more or less.

Subject to the South 15' of the North 65', East 15' of the West 65' for utility easement. The East 50' and the South 50' of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 3 for road right-of-way.

If the initial grantee of such property or any of them, or their heirs or assigns, shall violate any of the conditions, covenants hereinafter set out, such violation shall automatically terminate the grantee's estate and persons taking thereunder.

1. Agricultural rights. The grantee's interest conveyed is to the surface of the land only for agricultural uses. Such interest includes the use of gravel and other road building material on the land for the use of constructing roads or other agricultural related improvements thereon.

2. Removal of timber. Standing timber on the demised land may be cut and used for agricultural related purposes on said land. All other cuttings shall first require written permission from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

3. Removal of minerals. There shall be no extraction, mining or removal of any hydrocarbon, mineral, or other valuable natural deposit from the land.

4. Alienation of property. The agricultural interest, the sole interest herein conveyed, may not be sold, leased, or conveyed, in whole or in part, without first obtaining written approval from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

5. Water. Subject to proper prior appropriation, all water found or located on the land may be used for agricultural purposes, subject only to existing law.

6. Farm Use Development Plan. Adherence to the Farm Use Development Plan submitted to the grantee and as approved by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough is mandatory. Such Plan, however, may be modified or amended upon written approval from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

7. Waste. No waste or destruction of the property shall be permitted, nor shall the land be used for any unlawful purposes.

8. Sanitation and pollution. All rules, regulations and ordinances as to sanitation and the restriction of pollution shall be complied with.

9. Laws and ordinances. All persons taking or holding any interest in that interest herein conveyed, shall take subject to all existing laws of the State of Alaska, ordinances of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and promulgations of any other proper governmental authority; and as such laws and ordinances may be amended from time to time.

96-010971

3000

PALMER REC. DISTRICT  
REQUESTED BY MSB

'96 JUL 25 PM 3 44 2.

77-006154  
9-RECORDED-FILED  
PALMER REC.  
DISTRICT

MAY 31 1 55 PM '77

REQUESTED BY \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH NO.  
BOX 8  
PALMER, ALASKA 99645

Northern Lights Elk Ranch

7-22-2024

**Yurt Approval Justification**

My wife and I have owned The Northern Lights Elk Ranch of Alaska for a little over three years now. We are transitioning to Alaska to be closer to family and to step into an active retirement in our new community. I have quickly learned that building a ranching business to financially sustain a family is quite the challenge. We have expanded the elk herd from 59 to 85. It takes 180 4x5 bales to get them through the winter. This summer we are raising 400 chickens and 100 turkey all to be sold locally. We have also started a flock of egg layers to supplement our sales at local farmers' markets. Add this large workload to the never-ending list of ranch projects such as keeping 7 miles of fence in repair, leveling uneven pastures, reworking neglected pasture biology and just modernizing the ranch in general and you realize it is much more than a one person job.

We hired my son as ranch manager soon after we bought the ranch. He is currently living with my wife and I to save on expenses but is now ready to move out of the ranch house and have his own place. His girl friend has a degree in equine science and they would like to use that background to further expand the ranch to include horse boarding and training which is in short supply in the area. The logical and most efficient location for them to reside is on the ranch. They would like to erect a yurt in the northwest corner of the ranch, close to the ranch house but far enough away for some privacy. The existing power lines are within 100' of this location saving on the electrical installation. This would also be close the vegetable gardens, hay barn and many ranch activities.

Our goal is to make the ranch a family ranch. We believe we are operating in a way that justifies the 1977 Agricultural Land Sale. With three generations currently in the area my wife and I plan on passing the property down to our children so it can truly be a generational operation supplying the value with livestock, eggs, produce and other agricultural services. We ask that you approve the site we have designated for a yurt so our son can have his own place on the ranch rather than look for a place off site.

Sincerely,

Paul Cook

The Northern Lights Elk Ranch of Alaska

**Introduction:** We are submitting this proposal to subdivide The Northern Lights Elk Ranch ("The Ranch") from its current two parcels into three parcels. The larger of the three lots will be approximately 240 acres and is used for pasture (haying and grazing). The two smaller parcels will consist of 40 acres and be situated to allow for 60 feet of road access, as required by MatSu Borough code. Note: Any of the areas in the proposed 40-acre parcels that are currently used for grazing will continue to be used for that purpose and will not be impacted by any building. The primary objective of this subdivision is to enable my family to build a home on The Ranch property, facilitating the integration of multi-generational family members into the working ranch in order to foster familial continuity within our farming operation.

**Purpose and Benefits:** The subdivision of The Ranch will serve multiple purposes, all aimed at enhancing the productivity and sustainability of our agricultural endeavors. By accommodating additional family members on the property, we anticipate a significant boost in labor resources, leading to increased efficiency and output. We plan to select our home site within the proposed 40acre parcel in a strategic location, outside of currently utilized grazing lands. This ensures that the land's agricultural productivity will not be compromised in any way.

**Preservation of Family Tradition:** At the heart of this proposal lies our unwavering commitment to perpetuating a rich tradition of family farming. By creating a conducive environment for multiple generations to live and work together on the ranch, we aim to establish a legacy of agricultural excellence. This familial continuity not only strengthens the bonds within our family unit but also ensures the seamless transition of knowledge and expertise from one generation to the next.

**Long-Term Vision:** Looking ahead, we envision a future where The Ranch serves as a beacon of agricultural innovation and sustainability in Alaska. Through diligent stewardship and strategic planning, we aspire to maximize the potential of our land while safeguarding its natural resources for future generations by using regenerative agricultural techniques. The presence of additional family members on the ranch will not only contribute to increased productivity but also pave the way for expanded agricultural operations and diversified revenue streams.

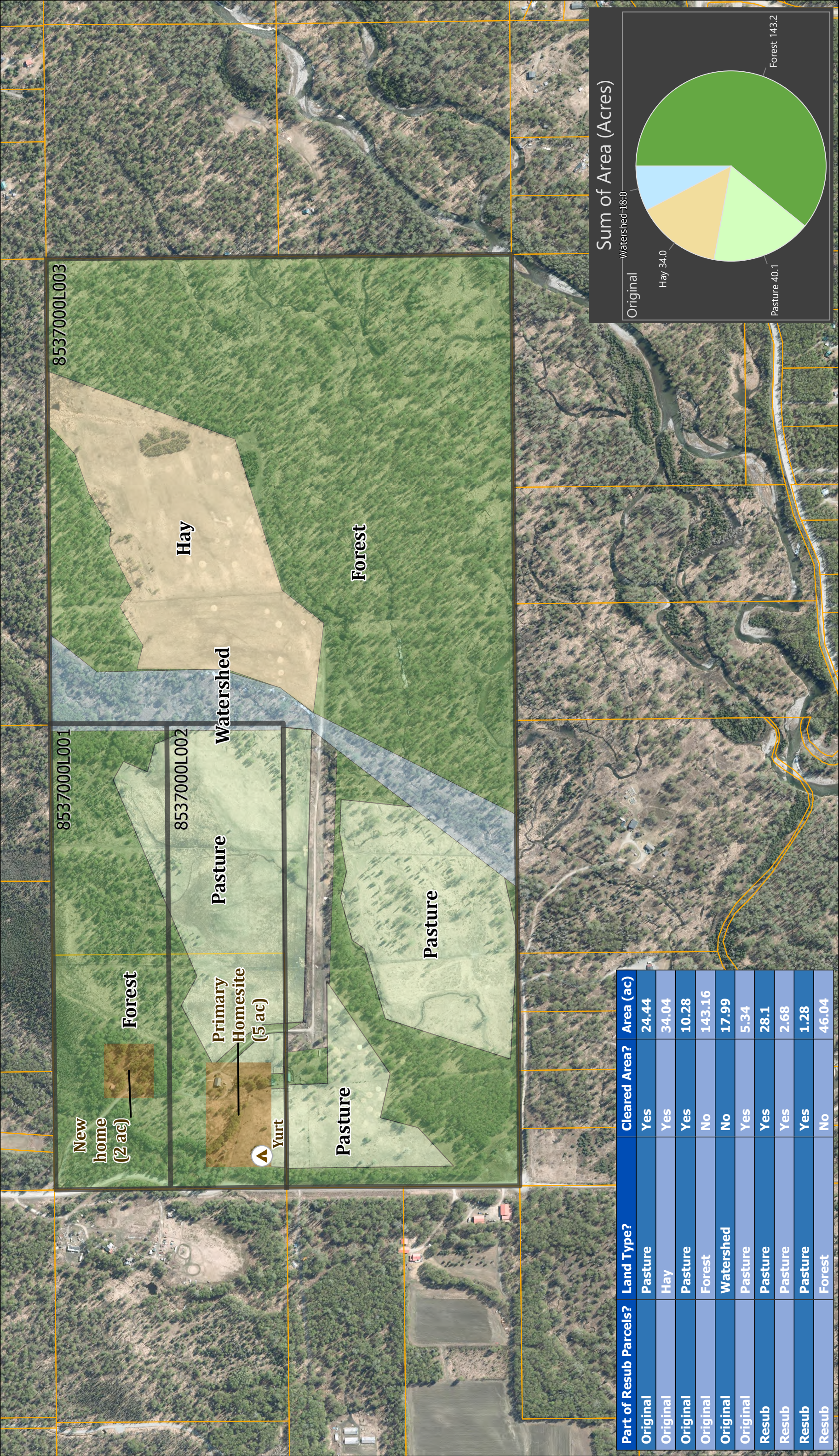
**Conclusion:** Subdivision of The Ranch represents a thoughtful and strategic approach to securing the future of our family farming enterprise. By prioritizing familial continuity, selecting the house site outside of grazing areas, and leveraging the collective labor of multiple family members, we are poised to establish a thriving agricultural legacy that will endure for generations to come. We are confident that this endeavor will not only enhance



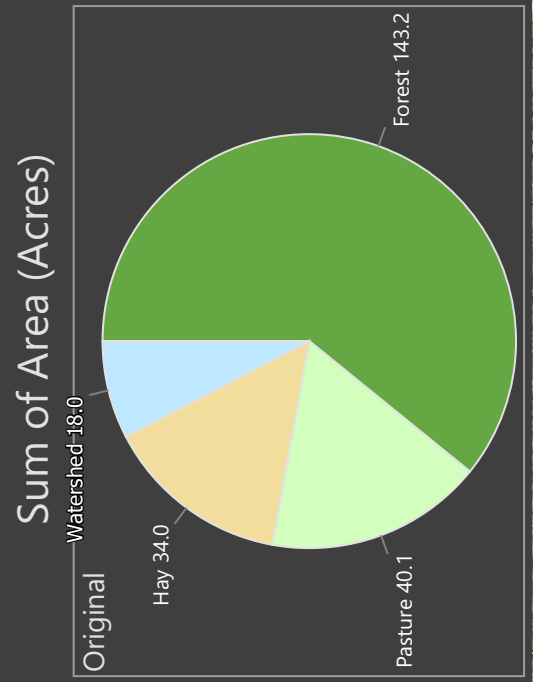


**the productivity of the farm but also contribute to the long-term sustainability of agricultural operations and food security in Alaska.**





Part of Resub Parcels?	Land Type?	Cleared Area?	Area (ac)
Original	Pasture	Yes	24.44
Original	Hay	Yes	34.04
Original	Pasture	Yes	10.28
Original	Forest	No	143.16
Original	Watershed	No	17.99
Original	Pasture	Yes	5.34
Resub	Pasture	Yes	28.1
Resub	Pasture	Yes	2.68
Resub	Pasture	Yes	1.28
Resub	Forest	No	46.04



# Northern Lights Elk Ranch

## Agricultural Land Use

Map Produced by MSB IT/GIS Division: 11/21/2024

- Legend
- Forest
  - Hay
  - Pasture
  - Watershed
  - Access
  - Building
  - Yurt

**\*\*New parcel accounts have been recorded and are shown, but are not yet available to view online**

This map is solely for informational purposes only. The Borough makes no express or implied warranties with respect to the character, function, or capabilities of the map or the suitability of the map for any particular purpose beyond those originally intended by the Borough. For information regarding the full disclaimer and policies related to acceptable uses of this map, please contact the Matanuska-Susitna Borough GIS Division at 907-861-7858.



## Suzanne Reilly

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**From:** Land Management  
**Sent:** Monday, November 4, 2024 10:31 AM  
**To:** Suzanne Reilly  
**Subject:** FW: Comment in Support of MSB008116 Northern Lights Elk Ranch / 18N01E04B001 & 18N01E04A002  
  
**Importance:** High

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**From:** amber.m.mcdonough@gmail.com <amber.m.mcdonough@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 2, 2024 2:34 PM  
**To:** Land Management <Land.Management@matsugov.us>  
**Subject:** Comment in Support of MSB008116 Northern Lights Elk Ranch / 18N01E04B001 & 18N01E04A002  
**Importance:** High

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]  
Greetings MSB Land & Resource Management,

As the eastern neighbor sharing ½ mile of fence line with the Northern Lights Elk Ranch, I am writing in support of MSB008116. The request from Paul Cook and Ben Raevsky to replat their Title 13 agricultural property to create 3 parcels will continue to meet the MSB Agricultural Board's 40-acre minimum size requirement. Allowing Mr. Cook and Mr. Raevsky to modify the existing farm plan associated with these parcels will allow them the maximum flexibility as they continuously improve the agricultural productivity and therein the financial viability of their land.

I also see no issue with the MSB granting them permission to construct a new residence on Parcel A, nor the additional residential structure on Parcel B, which already includes an older house within the original 5-acre homesite boundary. Mr. Cook and his son-in-law Mr. Raevsky are part of an growing family, one with a multi-generation interest in both livestock and farming to supply a variety of food products for Alaskans.

This is exactly the agricultural development that the MSB should promote to increase our local food security. I highly encourage you to approve their application without further delay.

Best regards,  
Amber McDonough, PE  
[amber.m.mcdonough@gmail.com](mailto:amber.m.mcdonough@gmail.com)  
(907) 570-8367

## Suzanne Reilly

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**From:** Joseph Metzger  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2024 8:47 PM  
**To:** Suzanne Reilly  
**Subject:** FW: Comment in Support of MSB008116 Northern Lights Elk Ranch / 18N01E04B001 & 18N01E04A002

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**From:** Beverly Cutler <bevcut@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2024 5:08 PM  
**To:** Land Management <Land.Management@matsugov.us>; Joseph Metzger <Joseph.Metzger@matsugov.us>  
**Cc:** Amber McDonough <amber.m.mcdonough@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Comment in Support of MSB008116 Northern Lights Elk Ranch / 18N01E04B001 & 18N01E04A002

[EXTERNAL EMAIL - CAUTION: Do not open unexpected attachments or links.]

Good afternoon. We may be a bit late in sending this comment, but please accept it before tomorrow night's Ag Board meeting if you can.

My husband, Mark Troutman, and I are Ag Rights owners from the '77 land sale. Our potato farm property abuts the property in question currently known as the Northern Lights Elk Ranch.

We echo all of Ms. McDonough's statements. As farming neighbors for several years now, we find the Cook and Raevsky families to be bona fide agricultural owners, acting in both the spirit and with the actual activities envisioned when the 1977 land sale occurred.

We too hope we have maintained this spirit and similar endeavor in agriculture. While we are not seeking to divide our property yet, and/or convert under the ordinance that allows such, we hope that MSB will grant us similar consideration when we approach you. It has been a privilege and honor to be part of MSB's agricultural heritage.

Beverly W. Cutler and Mark A. Troutman  
Little Susitna Farm  
8470 N. Russet Rd.  
Palmer, AK 99645

Sent from my iNanaPad

On Nov 2, 2024, at 6:33 PM, [amber.m.mcdonough@gmail.com](mailto:amber.m.mcdonough@gmail.com) wrote:

Greetings MSB Land & Resource Management,

As the eastern neighbor sharing ½ mile of fence line with the Northern Lights Elk Ranch, I am writing in support of MSB008116. The request from Paul Cook and Ben Raevsky to replat their Title 13 agricultural property to create 3 parcels will continue to meet the MSB Agricultural Board's 40-acre minimum size requirement. Allowing Mr. Cook and Mr. Raevsky to modify the existing farm plan associated with these parcels will allow them the maximum flexibility as they continuously improve the agricultural productivity and therein the financial viability of their land.

I also see no issue with the MSB granting them permission to construct a new residence on Parcel A, nor the additional residential structure on Parcel B, which already includes an older house within the original 5-acre homesite boundary. Mr. Cook and his son-in-law Mr. Raevsky are part of an growing family, one with a multi-generation interest in both livestock and farming to supply a variety of food products for Alaskans.

This is exactly the agricultural development that the MSB should promote to increase our local food security. I highly encourage you to approve their application without further delay.

Best regards,  
Amber McDonough, PE  
[amber.m.mcdonough@gmail.com](mailto:amber.m.mcdonough@gmail.com)  
(907) 570-8367