

A Stories Map for Copper River Country

By Clair Scribner

Press Release - Copper Valley Development Association - Efforts to develop a new and exciting map that highlights the uniqueness of our region are underway. The Copper River Country Stories Map will be an artistically rendered map designed to provide a much-needed guide for the region's growing visitor population and for area residents, too. This map will not only share the more typical information like where trails and other such public amenities are, but it will do something that hasn't been done before - it will present some of the amazing stories about the region and will be the region's chance to share with visitors what makes Copper River Country so special and worthy of great care.

The initial product will be a map of the region that can be downloaded from the internet and/or distributed at various tourism locations throughout the Copper River Country. Content to be incorporated in the map includes, but is not limited to, public trail and river access and easements, public and private land boundaries, public water sources, restroom and waste disposal facilities and sources for appropriate land use/harvest permits. The creative vision of the map includes interpretive text (stories) reflecting the texture of the region's personalities and special places - Copper River Country's rich Native culture and its storied history of hunting, mining, homesteading and farming. Long term aspirations for the project include an audio tour to accompany the map and enhance visitor's experiences as they explore Copper River Country. "This will be a great resource for tourism and non-tourism businesses - a free map encompassing the entire region, to include some of our fantastic stories," stated Katrina Church-Chmielowski. "What a great opportunity to share a little about what makes the Copper River Country so special to all of us."

Visitors to Copper River Country will be the target audience for this project, but residents, too, will find value in this map. Using the regional branding developed during the initial Developing Alaska's Rural Tourism project, Copper River Country is defined to be along Richardson Highway from Tonsina to Paxson; the Glenn Highway from Eureka to Mentasta, including Nabesna on the Nabesna Road; and the Edgerton Highway and McCarthy Road from Willow Creek to Kennicott. Five partners have already committed to bringing the map to fruition, and they need public input about specifically what to

include on the map. In addition to a videoconference meeting held in some communities in early January, a public meeting is scheduled for 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 21 at the Copper Valley Development Association office in Tazlina at mile 111 Richardson Highway. Plan to attend, provide your input and bring examples of maps you think are great. A full day workshop from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. will be held on January 22 with partners and other individuals committed to the map project. 21

The purpose of the workshop is to develop action plans, assign work to project partners and begin work on the map. The public is also welcome to attend an open house on January 22 from 12 - 1 p.m.; refreshments will be served at the American Legion Hall. Please join us and share your ideas for this exciting map project.

For more information, go to www.coppervalley.org, leave a message at 259-5004, or attend the January 21 public meeting.

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