

Shotgun Cove Road Extension Mile 2.0 to 4.5

Conceptual Recreation Plan

I. Introduction

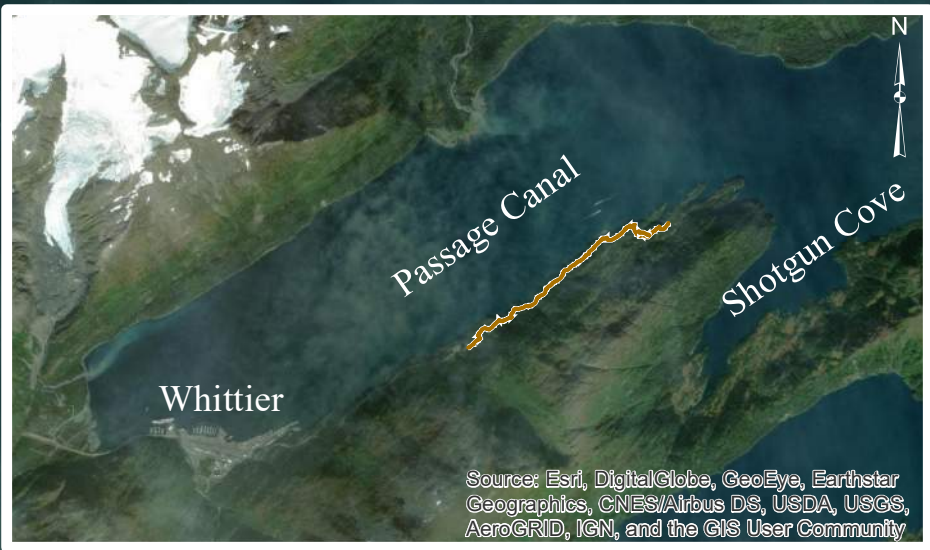
The City of Whittier (City) has contracted with CRW Engineering Group, LLC to provide professional services to prepare a Design Study Report for the Shotgun Cove Road Extension from its current constructed location near Second Salmon Run (Mile 2.0), to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (U.S. Forest Service) land at Trinity Point (Mile 4.5). The land along the project corridor, and further east to Shotgun Cove, was transferred from the State of Alaska to the City in 1994, under the stipulation that the City would provide access and prepare adjacent lands for public sale. The City applied for funding from the Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) for permitting, design, and construction. The FLAP application identified two main objectives for this project: 1) increase resource access, including access to Forest Service land, state-owned uplands, and coastal waters; and 2) improve regional transportation systems, such as providing alternative entry points for non-motorized water craft to access Passage Canal outside the existing harbor. The conceptual recreation plan is based on excerpts from the Environmental Assessment.

II. Existing Uses

The project area is surrounded by opportunities for outdoor recreation. Whittier provides one of a few access points to deep water fisheries, hunting lands for deer and bear, and camping. Residents and visitors use the marine waters adjacent to the project area for commercial, sport, and subsistence fishing and the land for hunting. Other popular summer recreation activities in and around the project area include hiking, berry picking, and kayaking, and winter recreation includes snowshoeing, skiing, and snow machining.

The existing Shotgun Cove Road and Emerald Cove Trail provide access to recreation activities. Emerald Cove Trail begins at the existing end of Shotgun Cove Road, follows the coastline with a maintained dirt track through forest and muskeg, dwindling to a barely-discernable cut in the underbrush prior to reaching Emerald Bay (see Figure 1). The trail is located on land owned by the City, was built by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, and is maintained by the City.

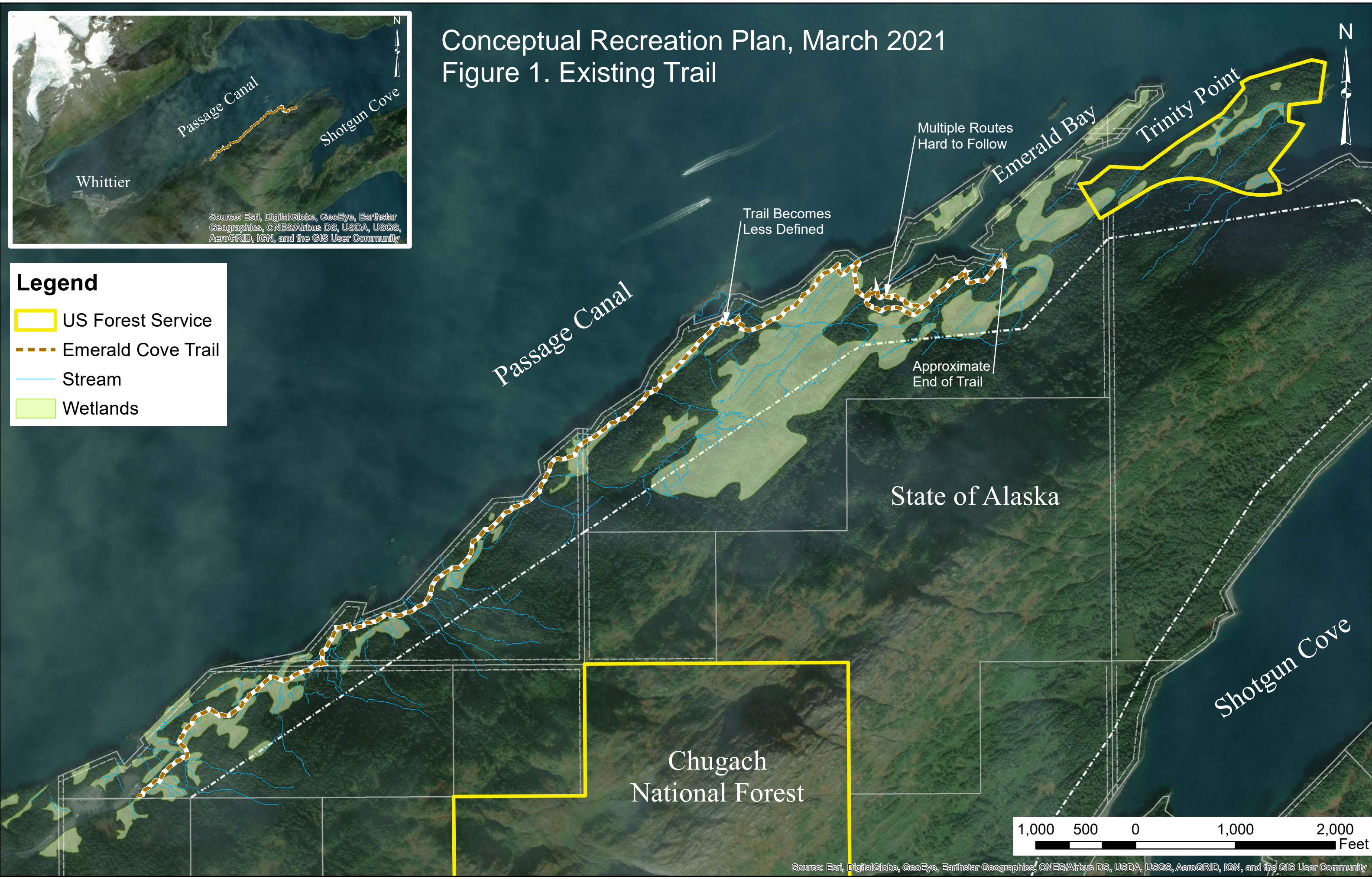
The City and ADNR, the officials with jurisdiction (OWJ) over the Emerald Cove Trail, have dissolved their 1997 agreement under which the trail was created and maintained. Further, the City has determined that the trail is not a significant recreation resource. As a result of this dissolution and determination by the OWJ, FHWA has concluded that the trail is not subject to protection under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966.



Conceptual Recreation Plan, March 2021
Figure 1. Existing Trail

Legend

- US Forest Service
- Emerald Cove Trail
- Stream
- Wetlands



Impact of New Road Construction

During some periods of the construction phase, access to recreation activities within and adjacent to the project area would be limited, and the Emerald Cove Trail and trailhead would be inaccessible.

The Proposed Action (see Figure 2) would permanently impact the trail at several points and convert some portions to roadway. Approximately 0.6 miles of the trail will be permanently removed with the placement of the road; a larger portion of the trail would be segmented by the roadway and abandoned in place. Short segments of the trail would remain to access City lands in the project area. Loss of this recreation resource would be mitigated by allowing vehicle access to public lands along the corridor and construction of new trail segments (see Mitigation Measures section below). The existing recreation experience would be altered, but walkers, bicyclers, and skiers (in the winter) would not be excluded from using the roadway to travel on and to access public lands including National Forest System (NFS) lands at Trinity Point.

With the potential future addition of private parcels along the roadway alignment, some existing areas used for recreation would no longer be accessible. However, the Proposed Action would increase recreation opportunities in the area by adding features such as parking areas and viewpoints, and would spur development of many easily-accessible points of entry for recreational activity including trailheads and beach access. The Proposed Action would also provide access to federal lands previously only accessible by boat or backcountry hikers and better access to state lands above (south of) the roadway.

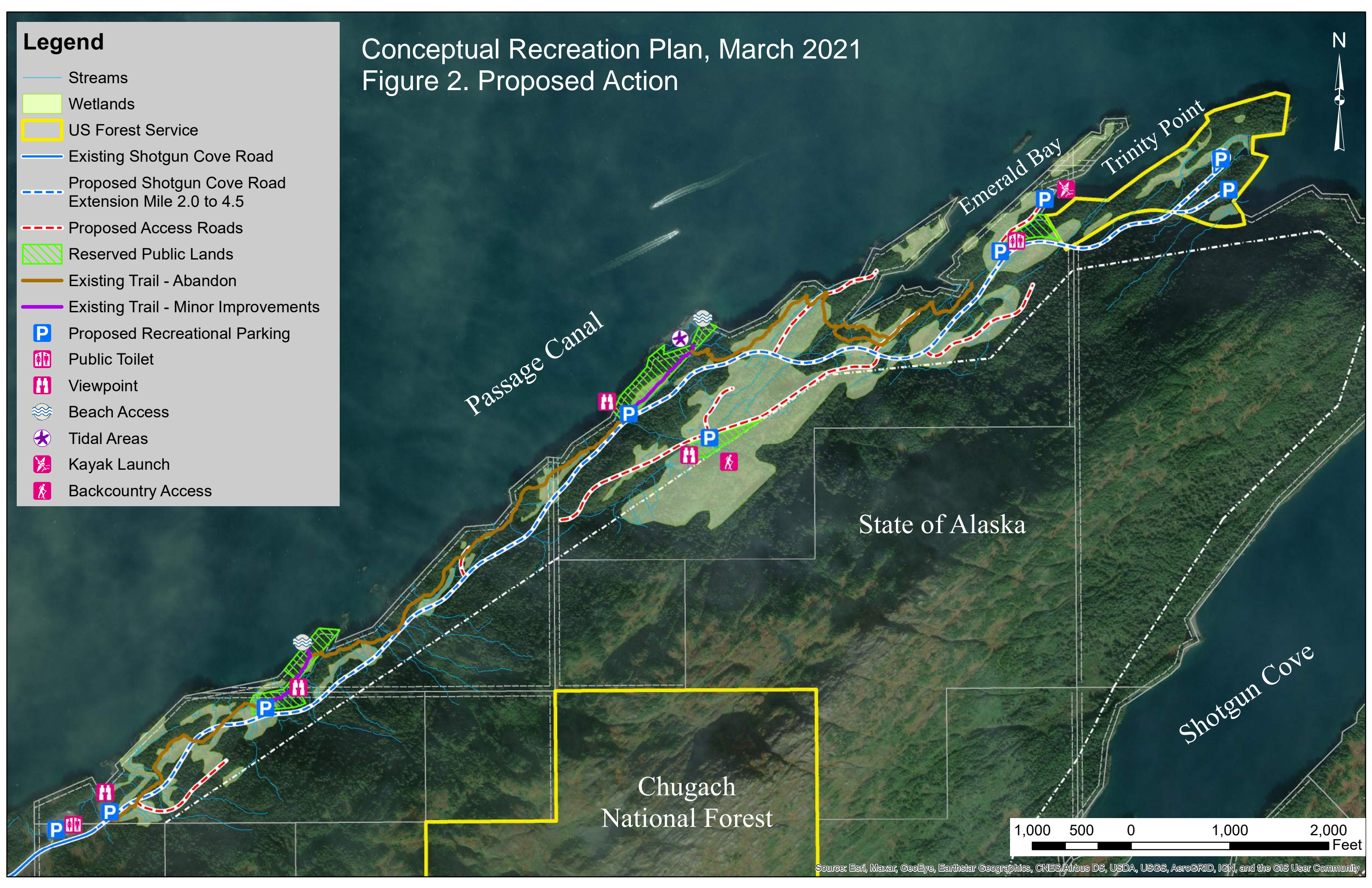
Recreation use of Trinity Point will increase with construction of the Proposed Action. It is unlikely to exceed the desired level of social encounters for the designated Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (encountering more than 15 other visitor groups per day) for most of the summer season; many groups would use the road terminus as a launching area for kayaking to destinations within Prince William Sound beyond Passage Canal and not remaining on Trinity Point.

Launching from Trinity Point would bring kayakers a day closer to farther-flung destinations in Prince William Sound, such as the Nellie Juan-College Fiord Wilderness Study Area, increasing visitation and human impacts to these remote NFS lands. For some recreationists, easier access to more remote areas would be welcome. For others, easier access could diminish their desired experience and lower the opportunity for solitude by leading to increased social encounters in these remote areas.

Conceptual Recreation Plan, March 2021

Figure 2. Proposed Action

- Legend**
- Streams
 - Wetlands
 - US Forest Service
 - Existing Shotgun Cove Road
 - Proposed Shotgun Cove Road Extension Mile 2.0 to 4.5
 - Proposed Access Roads
 - Reserved Public Lands
 - Existing Trail - Abandon
 - Existing Trail - Minor Improvements
 - P Proposed Recreational Parking
 - Public Toilet
 - Viewpoint
 - Beach Access
 - Tidal Areas
 - Kayak Launch
 - Backcountry Access



Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

III. Mitigation Measures

To mitigate for impacts to recreation resources in the project area, the following measures would be implemented along with the Proposed Action.

- Approximately 13 acres of land will be reserved along the corridor for public recreation access (see Figures 3a - d). Ownership of these lands would be retained by the City. Acreage and boundary of said lands will be defined following construction of the road extension and platting of adjacent land, and are subject to change.

Section	Area	Acreage	Description
17	1a	±2.0	Bounded by future ROW to the south, streams to the east and west, and section line to the north.
8	1b	±2.8	Bounded by section line to the south, stream to the east, and shoreline to the north and west.
9	2	±5.4	Bounded by future ROW and streams to the south and east, and shoreline to the north and west.
9	3	±1.8	Bounded by State land to the south, stream to the west, and future ROW to the north.
9	4	±1.8	Bounded by future ROW to the south and west, Forest Service land to the east, and shoreline to the north.

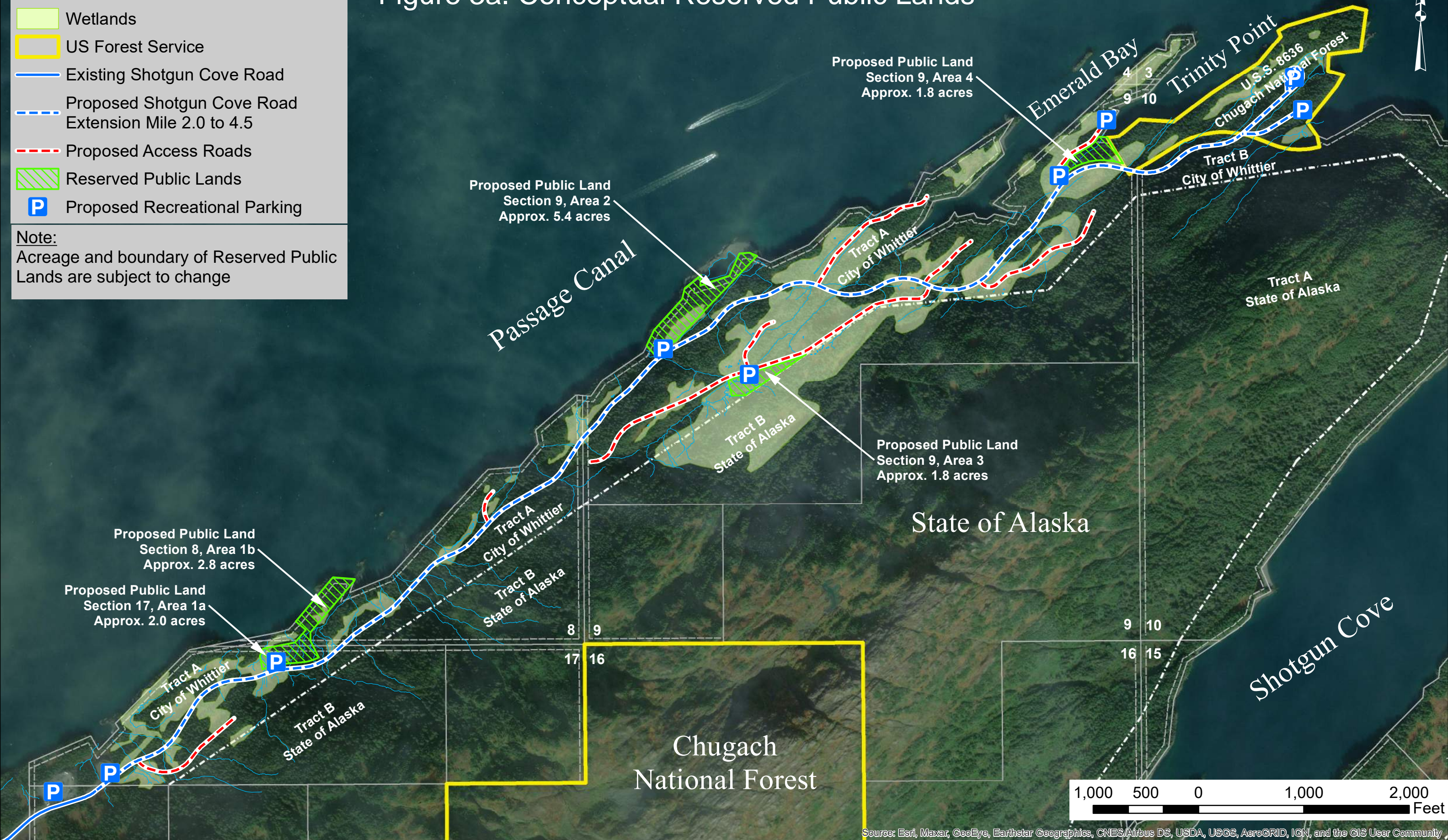
- Nine new parking lots will be constructed along the roadway and access roads as part of the Proposed Action. These parking lots will be constructed as construction of the roadway progresses from mile 2.0 to 4.5, with parking lots closer to mile 4.5 potentially not scheduled to be constructed until the last year of construction.
- To mitigate for the loss of Emerald Cove Trail, at a few of these parking lots there are segments of the existing trail that will remain and undergo minor improvements (and at one parking lot a new trail segment will be constructed) which could lead to recreational resources or to shoreline access. While the portions of Emerald Cove Trail to be left in place would not be widened or realigned, minor improvements will include:
 - removing deteriorated or deficient puncheons and rebar;
 - hardening the trail surface with gravel base or surface course, wood retainers, and/or puncheons;
 - installing short-span (less than 10 feet) wood structures across small drainages;
 - pruning of branches impeding on the trail; and
 - removing old bridges in these sections.
- New wayfinding signs will be installed to direct travelers to Trinity Point, Emerald Cove, viewpoints, parking areas, beach access, hiking, and picnic areas.

Conceptual Recreation Plan, March 2021
Figure 3a. Conceptual Reserved Public Lands

Legend

- Streams
- Wetlands
- US Forest Service
- Existing Shotgun Cove Road
- Proposed Shotgun Cove Road Extension Mile 2.0 to 4.5
- Proposed Access Roads
- Reserved Public Lands
- Proposed Recreational Parking

Note:
Acreage and boundary of Reserved Public Lands are subject to change



Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Conceptual Recreation Plan, March 2021

Figure 3b. Conceptual Reserved Public Lands

Legend


- Streams
- Wetlands
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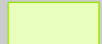
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Conceptual Recreation Plan, March 2021
Figure 3c. Conceptual Reserved Public Lands


Legend


 Streams


 Wetlands


 US Forest Service

 Existing Shotgun Cove Road

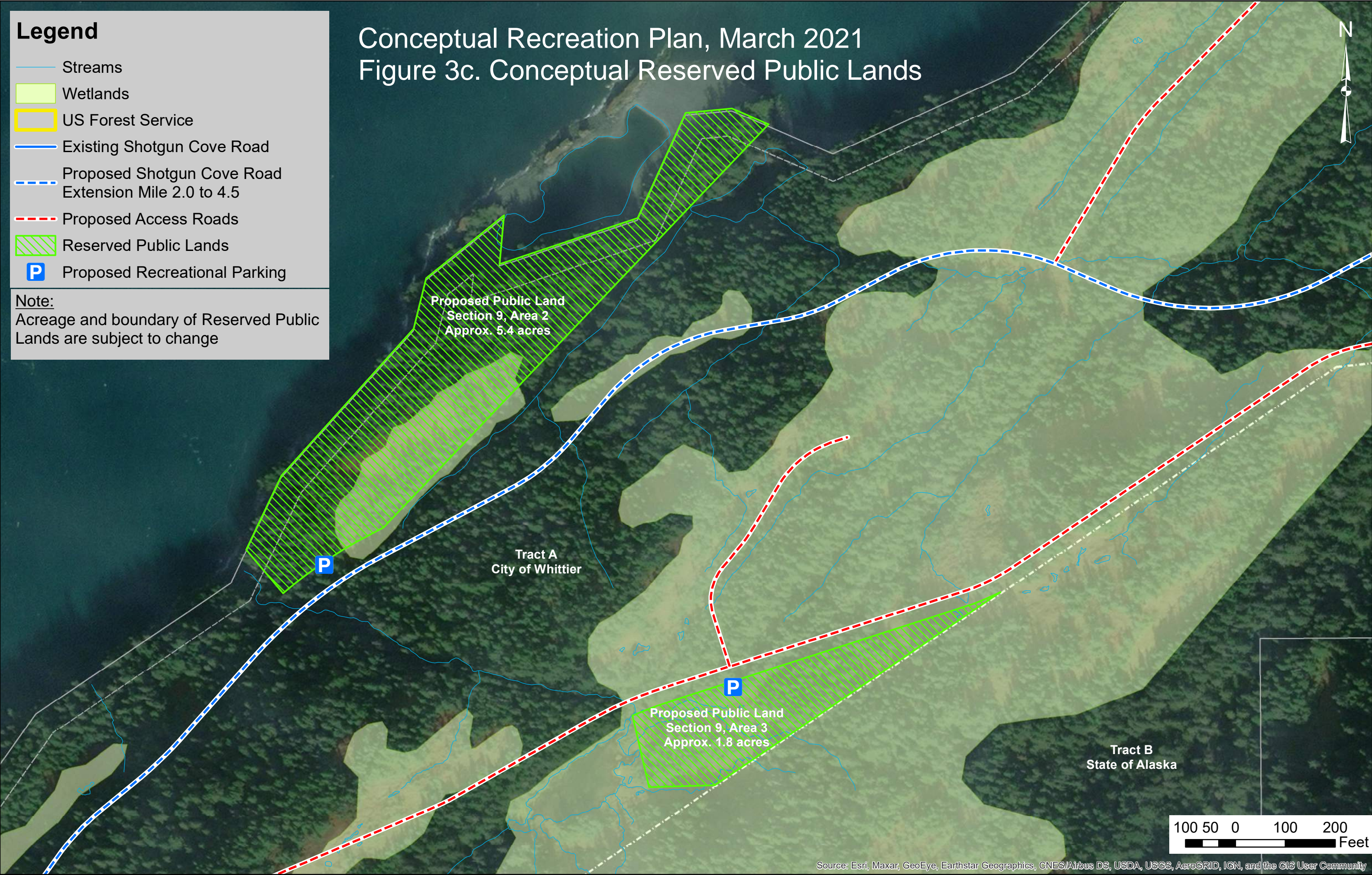
 Proposed Shotgun Cove Road Extension Mile 2.0 to 4.5

 Proposed Access Roads

 Reserved Public Lands

 Proposed Recreational Parking


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



Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community


Conceptual Recreation Plan, March 2021
Figure 3d. Conceptual Reserved Public Lands


Legend


 Streams


 Wetlands


 US Forest Service

 Existing Shotgun Cove Road

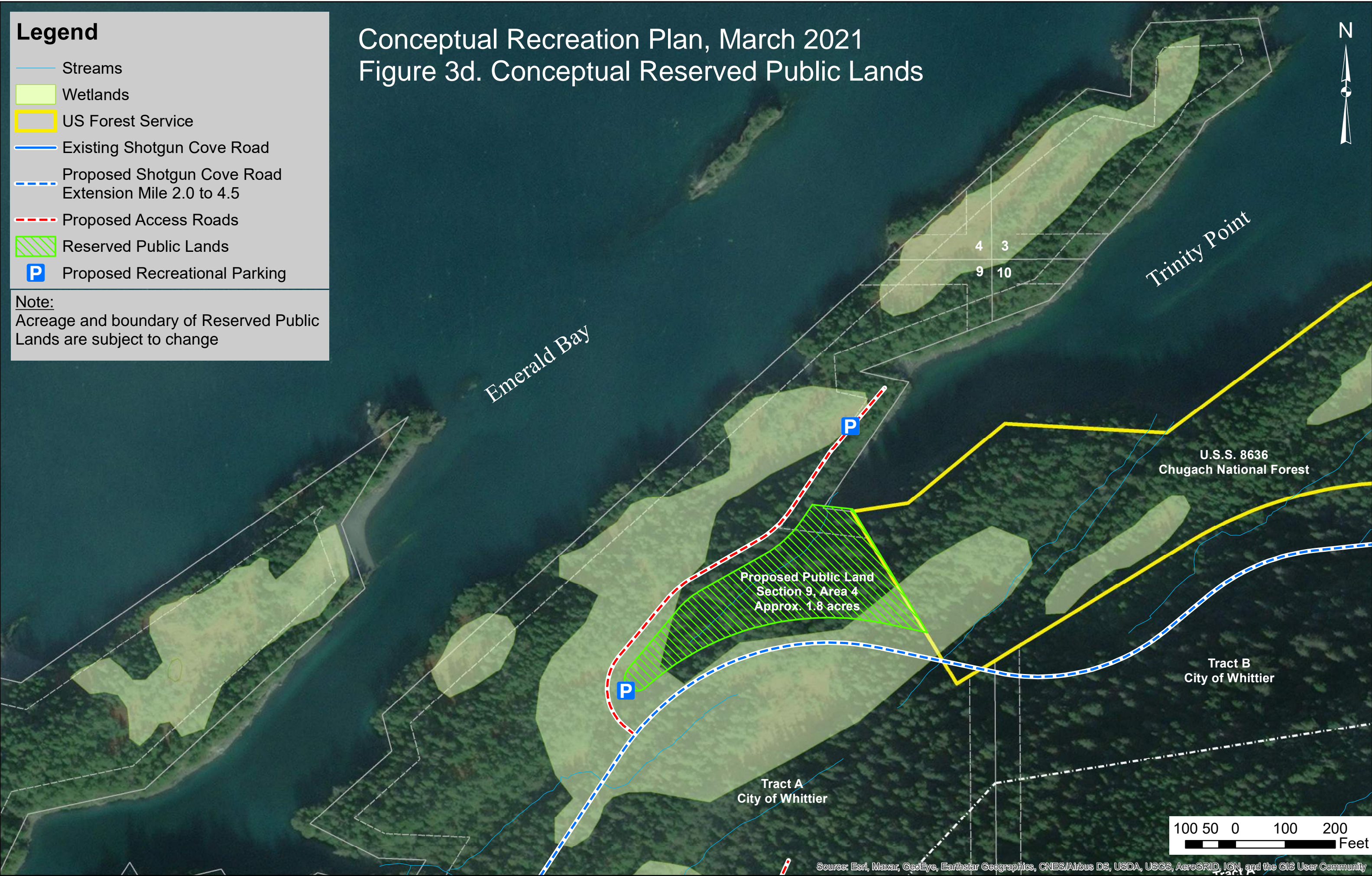
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