

## **Last Chance To Save Public Beaches**

By Eric Muench

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Sunday PM

We are coming very close to losing over one and one quarter miles of our high value public recreational beaches to private developments. Coast Guard Beach, South Point Higgins Beach, Whipple Creek beach and Mountain Point boat launch and beach are properties that were always public land but were given to the Alaska Mental Health Trust in a terrible mis-calculation by the State to settle a lawsuit. The Trust manages their land for maximum revenue and that means eventually all of these sites will be leased or sold off and the public will be kicked out. Coast Guard Beach is being planned for subdivision now.

Ketchikan Beaches Association has put an agenda item on the March 5 Borough Assembly meeting at which the Borough will consider getting involved to find ways to compensate the Trust for the value of their lands while keeping them public. The Borough manager does not want to deal with the issue. It would be easier for the Assembly to just pass. The public needs to make our Assembly members realize how important this is.

There is an [ad on the Sitnews' front page](#) that will direct you to an online petition to the Assembly. Also write, call and email them. The more personal the better. And you can speak at the meeting at 5:30 Monday evening. You don't have to know everything about the issue to tell them you are concerned. If there is no action taken on Monday there probably never will be.

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About: "I am a long term resident of Ketchikan who is tired of seeing valuable public interest lands taken over by special interest groups"