

# MEMORANDUM



**PARKS & RECREATION**  
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**DATE:** August 2, 2018  
**TO:** Assembly Finance Committee  
**FROM:** George Schaaf, Parks & Recreation Director  
**SUBJECT:** Acquisition and Maintenance of Private Cemeteries in Douglas

## **Introduction**

Former Juneau Mayor Merrill Sanford has proposed donating the Eagles' Cemetery in Douglas to the City & Borough of Juneau. In addition to the Eagles' Cemetery, Mr. Sanford asked the Lands Committee to consider acquiring seven other cemeteries in Douglas that are privately owned or whose owners are unknown (Catholic Cemetery, Russian Orthodox Cemetery, Masons Cemetery, Native Cemetery, Asian Cemetery, Servian Cemetery, and the "City" Cemetery).

This memo provides information regarding the estimated cost to maintain these cemeteries if they are acquired by CBJ. These cost estimates assume a low level of maintenance and do not include costs associated with future burials.

The Assembly Lands Committee referred this issue to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission for its regular meeting on August 7, 2018. The Parks & Recreation Department does not have a recommendation regarding the acquisition of the cemeteries, but recommends that the Assembly provide an increment of \$35,000 and 0.40 FTE to assume future maintenance.

## **Background**

The CBJ owns the parcel containing the Odd Fellows Cemetery, and the Parks & Recreation Department clears brush on a monthly basis. After construction at Gastineau Elementary School disturbed human remains in 2012, the city manager's office directed the Department to provide weekly maintenance of the Douglas Indian Cemetery, which is owned by the Ross Estate.

The other cemeteries in Douglas receive varying amounts of maintenance. Of the eight cemeteries under consideration, only the Eagles' Cemetery and Catholic Cemetery receive regular maintenance from volunteers. The other cemeteries are overgrown with dense vegetation, including berries, alder, spruce, and hemlock.

Owner	Cemetery	Area (ft <sup>2</sup> )
Unknown	Servian Cemetery "City" Cemetery	35,393
Merrill Sanford, Trustee	Eagles Cemetery	5,230
Corp of Catholic Bishops of Juneau	Asian Cemetery Native Cemetery Catholic Cemetery Russian Orthodox Cemetery	46,928
Ross Estate	Masons Cemetery	18,885
Total		106,436 (2.44 acres)

### **Maintenance Costs**

Maintenance costs depend on the level of service provided. It would be very costly to restore most of these properties to a high standard, such as the Eagles' Cemetery. Most of the graves are sunken and unmarked, making it difficult to establish and maintain grass. A private contractor would need to clear brush in most of the cemeteries, as the Parks & Recreation Department does not have the staff capacity for this work.

The following estimate reflects one-time contract costs to clear the cemeteries and increased staff to provide a minimal level of maintenance. This level of service includes keeping the area clear of brush and saplings, but does not include turf or gravesite restoration and maintenance. Attachment "A" contains examples of different service levels for cemeteries in Juneau.

Since 2013, the Parks & Recreation Department has assumed responsibility for a significant amount of additional landscaping, including Statter Harbor, Mendenhall Valley Public Library, Dimond Park Aquatic Center, and Mayor Overstreet Park. This additional workload has made it difficult to maintain existing facilities and parks.

Cemetery	Initial Clearing (Contractor)	Labor (FTE)	Labor Costs (FY19)
Servian Cemetery "City" Cemetery	\$5,000	0.10 FTE	\$6,480
Eagles' Cemetery	\$0	0.07 FTE	\$1,440
Asian Cemetery Native Cemetery Catholic Cemetery Russian Orthodox Cemetery	\$3,000	0.14 FTE	\$9,360
Masons Cemetery	\$2,000	0.09 FTE	\$2,880
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<b>0.40 FTE</b>	<b>\$25,981</b>

Incrementally acquiring these properties without a corresponding increase in staff would steadily erode the Department's ability to maintain other parks and facilities. It is not practical to hire an employee to work 41 hours per year (0.02 FTE), for example, so an additional 0.40 FTE position is necessary to maintain these cemeteries without reducing service levels elsewhere.

**Conclusion**

Based on the information available, the Parks & Recreation Department can maintain the Douglas Cemeteries with additional resources, including contract costs for initial clearing and an increase in staff of 0.40 FTE for ongoing maintenance.

The Department is unable to absorb this additional work with existing resources, without reducing service levels elsewhere.

## Attachment A – Examples of Maintenance

**High**

*Eagles' Cemetery*



**Medium**

*Douglas Indian Cemetery*



**Minimal**

*Odd Fellows Cemetery*







8/1/2018

TO: PRAC Members

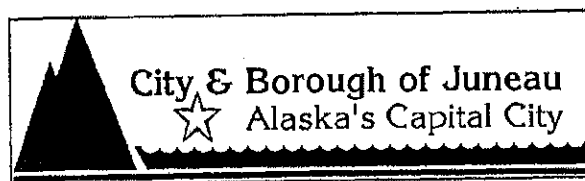
FROM: Mary Kay Pusich

I have included some of the correspondence from our Douglas Advisory Board over the years to CBJ regarding the Historic Douglas Cemeteries. I have also included the first few pages of the report of the survey and inventory of the Historic Cemeteries in Douglas, Alaska. This 1995 report can be found in its entirety on the CBJ website.

Former Mayor Sanford has a file of correspondence with the City going back to 1983 and efforts made to resolve the maintenance and upkeep of these historic cemeteries. It is our hope that the time is now.

Thank you for your consideration.

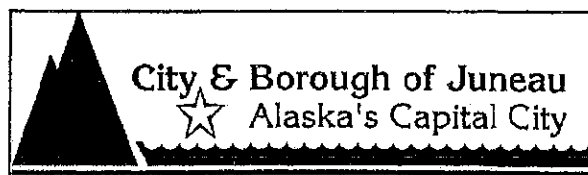
*Report of the Survey and Inventory of the*  
**HISTORIC CEMETERIES**  
*in*  
**DOUGLAS ALASKA**



*September 1995*

**REPORT**  
of the  
**SURVEY AND INVENTORY**  
of  
**HISTORIC CEMETERIES**  
in  
**DOUGLAS, ALASKA**

Prepared By  
**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**



With  
**Willette Janes, Historical Researcher**  
and  
**Renee Hughes, Photographer**

**September 1995**



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Survey and Inventory of Historic Cemeteries in Douglas, Alaska was produced by the CBJ Community Development Department, and community volunteers, with the support of the Juneau Historic Commission and the Juneau Historic Resources Advisory Committee.

### **Juneau Historic Commission (CBJ Assembly)**

Dennis Egan, Mayor  
Al Clough  
Tom Garrett  
Rosemary Hagevig  
Ralph Kibby  
John MacKinnon  
Cathy Engstrom Munoz  
Dwight Perkins  
Rod Swope

### **Historic Resources Advisory Committee**

David Stone, Chairperson  
Charles Carlson  
Mark Choate  
Gerald Clark  
Kathryn Cohen  
Travis Miller  
Marie Olson

### **Community Development Department**

Murray Walsh, Director  
Gary Gillette, Historic Preservation Planner  
Jeanette St. George, Cartographer

### **Volunteers**

Willette Janes, Historical Researcher  
Renee Hughes, Photographer

The research for this report has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, and through the assistance of the Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Department of Natural Resources. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior or the Department of Natural Resources.

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*Cover photograph: Memorial Marker for Chief Aanalahaash (Anna-Cla-Ash), 1985  
CBJ Collection  
Photograph by Diane Brady*

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## FOREWORD

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In July of 1994 the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) Community Development Department (CDD) embarked on an ambitious project to survey the historic cemeteries in Douglas, Alaska located within the City and Borough of Juneau. The following report documents this research effort and presents a look at the significance of these cemeteries and the community as a whole. When the project began it was believed there were only three cemeteries in Douglas; the Catholic Cemetery, Eagles Cemetery, and Douglas Indian Cemetery. Once research got under way it proved that there are actually ten separate recognized cemeteries in Douglas; the Catholic, Eagles, Douglas Indian, Masons, Odd Fellows, City, Servian, Asian, Native, and Russian Orthodox.

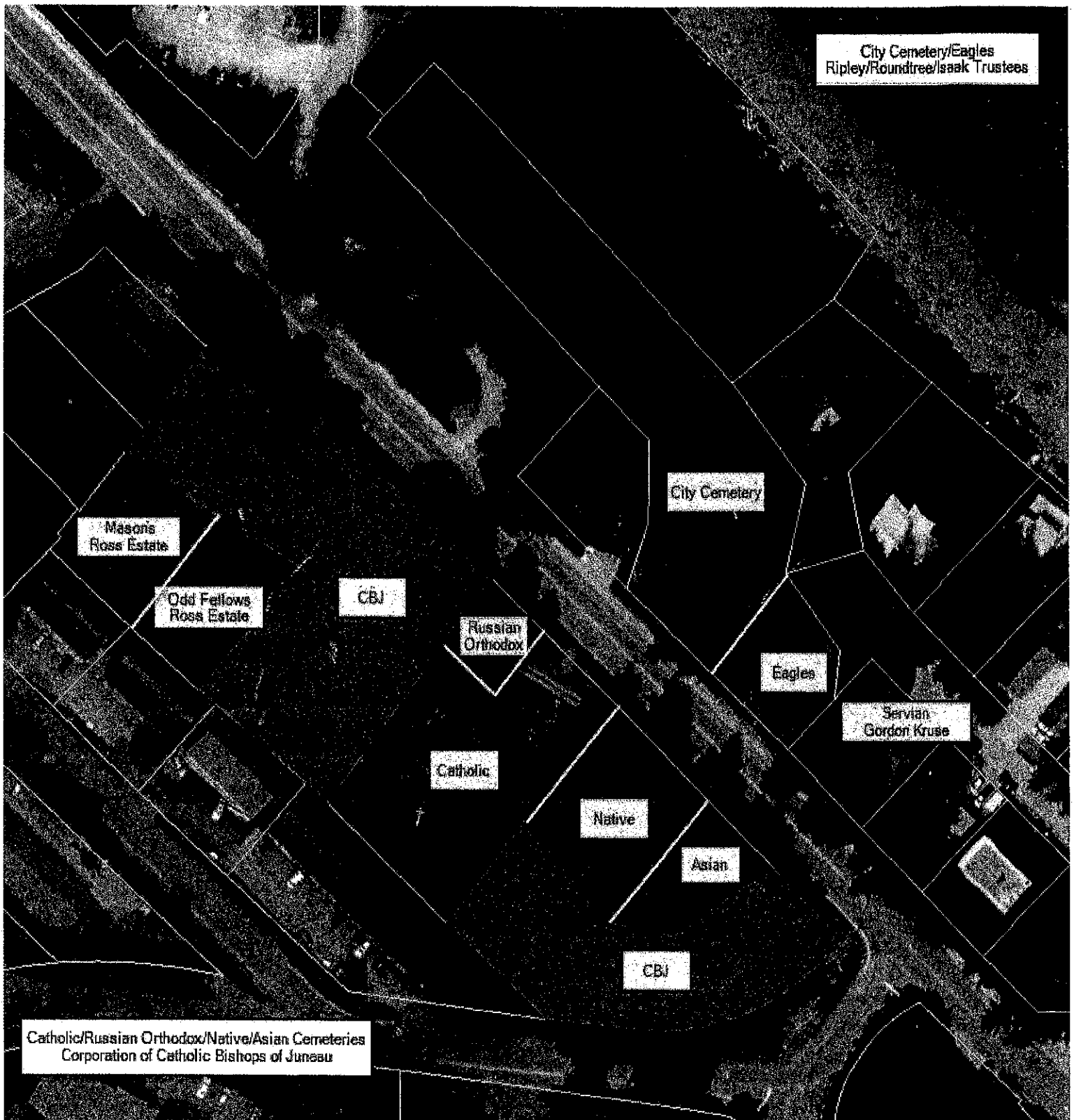
Research of the burial records indicated 514 burial sites within nine of the cemeteries. The field survey found 157 grave markers in these cemeteries. No burial records were available for the Douglas Indian Cemetery but 12 markers were found. Each cemetery was surveyed, inventoried, and researched for historical significance and physical condition. It is believed that the cemeteries are historically significant and retain the integrity to be considered eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

The historic cemeteries offer information which helps to better define the historic community of Douglas, Alaska. Although only a few are regularly maintained they all render the opportunity to yield information about the individuals, the community, and the religious practices of the people of their period.

Historic preservation is an important ingredient in the process of community development. It helps with the understanding of influences in the growth and development of a region and the local community. It tells the tale of the struggle of our predecessors as they strived for development and modernization in this Southeast region of Alaska. It helps decision makers plan for the future with an understanding of the past. The importance of informing people of their community's heritage cannot be understated. The City and Borough of Juneau's commitment to historic preservation is contained in Policy 53 of the Comprehensive Plan which states; "It is the policy of the CBJ to identify and protect historic and archaeological resources." It is with this goal that the Community Development Department has pursued the Survey and Inventory of the Historic Cemeteries in Douglas, Alaska.

Gary Gillette  
Historic Preservation Planner

# Douglas Cemeteries



**Date:** February 24, 2016

**To:** Kirk Duncan, Director  
Department of Parks and Recreation

Members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

**From:** John DelGado, President  
The Douglas Advisory Board

**Subject:** Historical Cemeteries located in Douglas

It has been brought to the attention of the Douglas Advisory Board that only a small portion of one of the five historic cemeteries in Douglas is being maintained by CBJ. Elderly Douglas residents that have family buried in the area has provided the majority of the lawn maintenance and upkeep. These few residents, particularly Tony McCormick, have been dedicating their own time, labor and money for decades to take care of the area where their loved ones are buried. They are at a point where the ability to physically maintain and preserve the ancient burial sites of the founding families of Douglas Island can no longer be done alone.

It is the belief of the Douglas Advisory Board that the few cemeteries of Douglas should be part of the Parks and Recreation maintenance program. These historic cemeteries are included in a comprehensive report of a survey and inventory completed in September 1995 by the Department of Community Development with the assistance of historians and photographers. This report can be accessed on the CBJ website.

In June 2012 during renovation of Gastineau School a contractor the City hired unearthed unknown gravesites. This caused much anguish among the community. To avoid a repeat of such an event reoccurring in the future, the gravesites on the Island need to be maintained so that they are clearly visible.

At the Douglas Advisory Board meeting on February 10<sup>th</sup> you attended the Douglas Advisory Committee meeting and we had the opportunity to show you a draft letter regarding the cemetery maintenance. At the time, you appeared to indicate that this is quite feasible and had several ideas how to accomplish this with minimal effort. This is only a seasonal activity with a little brushing and mowing and CBJ crews are already in the area. It is the Douglas Advisory Board's hope that this will begin this spring and summer.

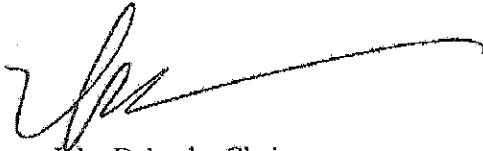


*Page 2 of 2*  
*Douglas Cemeteries*

It is only right that we preserve these historic burial sites and give proper respect to those who helped build the City of Douglas and Treadwell. The past should always be part of our present and future.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you regarding our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Delgado', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

John Delgado, Chair  
Douglas Advisory Board

Cc: Kim Kiefer, City Manager  
Molly McCormick, President, Douglas 4<sup>th</sup> of July Committee

TO: Director Kirk Duncan

FROM: Douglas Advisory Board

The Douglas Advisory Board is requesting CBJ take over the maintenance of the five historic cemeteries on our Island. You and your staff have been generous with your time and met with us on several occasions over the past two years. At the last meeting we had members of the public with loved ones interned at the grave sites and have taken it upon themselves to do some up keep over decades of years. They no longer can do this. CBJ has been doing a limited amount of maintenance on some of the cemeteries but it is time now to address the internment sites as a whole.

When the City of Douglas incorporated with the City of Juneau it appears there was an oversight and this important detail was not clearly addressed. Records show that since the 70's this has been an issue to present day. Correspondence with the State, the City and concerned Douglas residents has resulted in no action being taken to give the dignity our ancestors who are buried on the Island deserve. In the 90's there was a request that was given to the City Manager and the Lands Director, but this did not happen and maintenance for the cemeteries went ignored.

The Douglas Advisory Board recommends that it is time for CBJ to do whatever is necessary to provide maintenance to these historic and sacred grounds. We can't let another fifty years go by before we do something. Our families and our community need to know the loved ones buried in Douglas, who contributed so much to the Island, will not be forgotten.

The Douglas Advisory Board will do anything it can to assist CBJ in this effort and respectfully asks to be included in correspondence and meetings as you move this request forward to the appropriate entities within the City government.

*Clerk's Office Received Nov. 14, 2017 B. McEwen*

To: Mary Becker, Chair

Lands Committee

From: Douglas Advisory Board

February 15, 2018

The Douglas Advisory Board supports the letter to the Lands Committee and CBJ from Merrill Sanford on February 2, 2018, regarding the transfer of the Eagles Cemetery to CBJ. Please see other correspondence the Clerk has provided from our Board to CBJ and Parks and Recreation Director Duncan regarding our request that maintenance of the Douglas Cemeteries be performed by CBJ.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. Please keep the Douglas Advisory Board apprised of this request and status moving forward.

-----Original Message-----

From: Merrill Sanford <[fish3duck@aol.com](mailto:fish3duck@aol.com)>

To: jmbecker <[jmbecker@gci.net](mailto:jmbecker@gci.net)>

Cc: rorie.watt <[rorie.watt@juneau.org](mailto:rorie.watt@juneau.org)>; GREGG.CHANEY <[GREGG.CHANEY@juneau.org](mailto:GREGG.CHANEY@juneau.org)>;

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Sent: Fri, 2 Feb 2018 2:23 pm

Subject: Eagles' Cemetery Letter

**Mary Becker, Chair  
CBJ Lands Committee**

Our family on the Isaak side, long time Douglas residents, have maintained and taken care of the Eagles' Cemetery on Douglas Highway. The land was deeded over to G. R. (Mex) Isaak from the Eagles' Aerial in the 1970's. Grandpa Mex maintained the grounds for many years. He deeded the cemetery over to a friend and two family members in 1987. Various family members have helped maintain the cemetery for the past 25 years. We have buried several Douglas residents and family members at this site during this time. We have a current deed in the name of Merrill Sanford, son-in-law of Mex Isaak. This was just executed in January 2018, to help facilitate with the transfer (hopefully) to the City & Borough of Juneau.

We have an official deed in hand, a plat of the land and a plat of the grave sites with names. We also have some history of the Eagles' Cemetery and the Odd Fellows Cemetery. Kim Kiefer worked on trying to straighten out the Odd Fellows Cemetery land ownership when she was Parks & Rec Director. We have written history on the Odd Fellows Cemetery which was given to Kim when she was City Manager. There are five cemeteries in the area and they should be owned and taken care of by the CBJ. Our ancestors, family and friends are interned here.

Since we have clear title and plat information on the Eagles' Cemetery we wish to transfer the deed to the city at no land cost. The family has paid \$500-\$800 a year for the past five years that I know of to maintain the Eagles' Cemetery. Some of us would still like to volunteer to do light maintenance on site according to your rules.

Kirk Duncan, Parks & Rec Director, came to the Douglas Advisory Committee Meeting a few months ago and knows about this idea.

Please let us know, as soon as possible, what the next steps are for having the City & Borough to take over the Eagles' Cemetery.