

OPEN LETTER REGARDING MCCARTHY CREEK

PLEASE NOTE: The following information is in response to requests for what I see happening and what I would do about it. This info is respectfully submitted and is not a solicitation for work. I welcome your input on this topic and hope it will generate proactive discussion among user groups.

“Current” Situation: This past summer the McCarthy Creek floodplain near McCarthy aggraded (raised) a significant amount. This was predicted in a hydrologic study years ago, and it presents potential problems for those who rely on access to the south side of the creek. The floodplain has elevated so much that summer creek levels are just below the bridge deck. The floodplain has crested many of the upstream finger dikes, and the current wants to cut behind them, flow across the road, and run downstream between the Powerhouse and the Commissioner’s cabin. So far ROWCON has prevented this by “plugging holes” as they have developed. However, this is strictly a stop-gap measure. It’s only a matter of time before we experience a large-scale breach that could leave McCarthy Creek impassible—and then everyone across the creek will be impacted!

Initial Remediation: ROWCON is raising the bridge 3 feet in order to allow flood waters to safely pass. The work is expected to cost approximately \$94,980, and is now in progress (12/18). To partially offset cost, McCarthy Creek bridge passes will be increased by \$75. We regret the necessity of this, but can see no other way around it.

Raising the bridge, although necessary, does not address the issue of the expanding floodplain.

Long-Term Remediation: Here’s a proposed scope of work to prevent McCarthy Creek from bypassing the bridge:

- Raise the road approximately 8 feet so that it would be level from Seltenreich’s cabin to the bridge.
- Line upstream side of raised road with riprap.
- Remove gabions above the bridge to allow water access back to the main floodplain.

The creek would be allowed to claim the low area above the road and then be forced out under the bridge. This fix would protect road/bridge users, Powerhouse, and Comm’r’s cabin, but not upstream properties. (See diagrams.)

Cost: ROWCON estimates this remediation project to cost \$95,000 – \$115,000.

Be advised that road repairs are not the responsibility of ROWCON, the Powerhouse, or the Commissioner’s; neither are they linked to management of the bridge. The responsibility lies with all those who use the road.

Implementation & Payment Options which acknowledge this communal responsibility:

1. **Do Nothing Now.** If and when the creek reroutes on the town side of the bridge, ROWCON will likely be called in to do emergency work with no responsible party to pay the bill. The total cost of repairs would be higher due to the emergency nature of the work. ROWCON would probably be inclined to do the work, passing on the cost by increasing bridge rates—probably nearly double the current rate.
2. **Stakeholders Pool Resources.** McCarthy Cr. Lot Owners Association, as an organized entity and the largest contingent of bridge/road users, could organize all stakeholders (i.e. Univ. Subd., Powerhouse & Commissioner, Nizina Sub’s., Dan Creek miners, etc.). Each pays their part, the work gets done and paid for before the emergency, and bridge rates remain unchanged.
3. **A grant** is pursued to cover the cost of the work, and bridge rates remain unchanged.

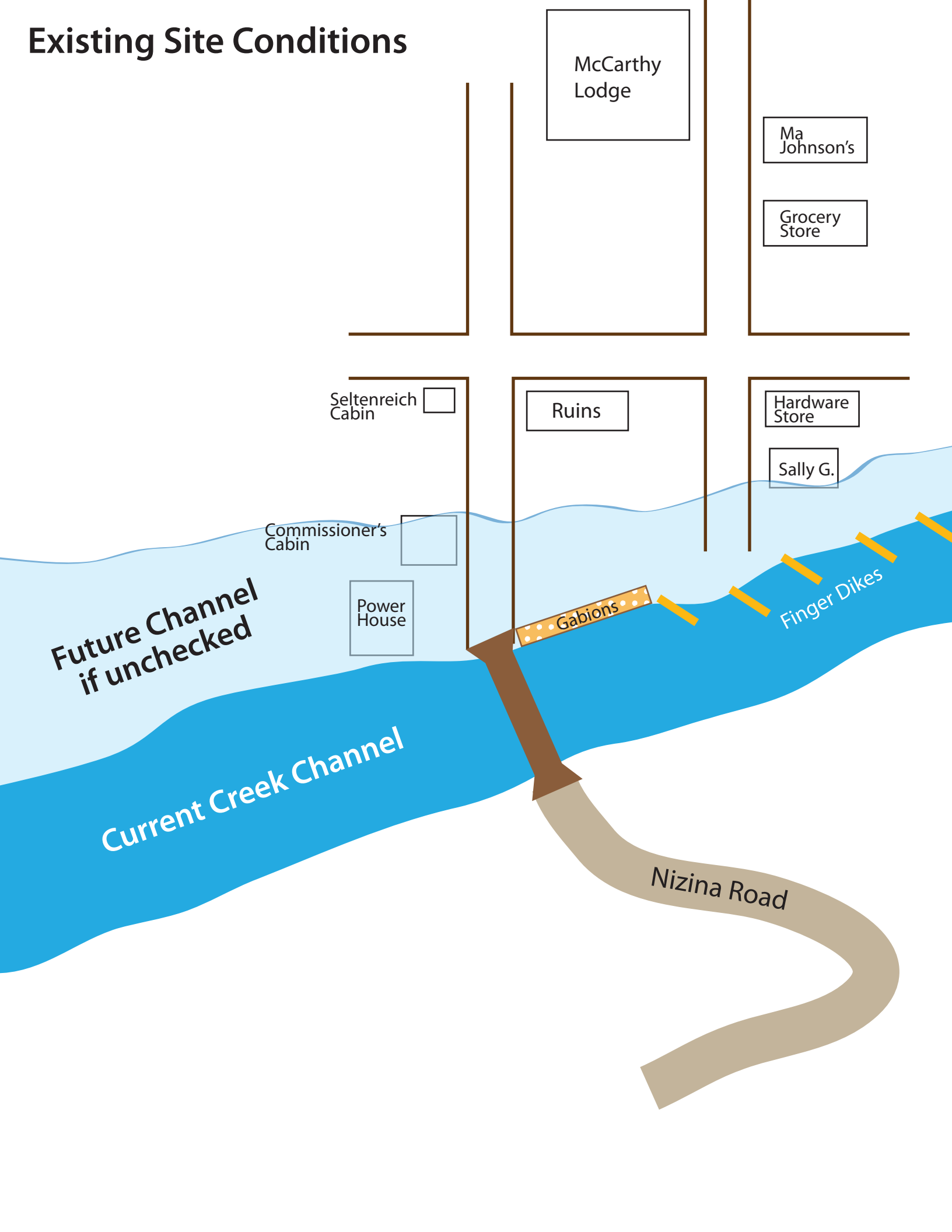
In conclusion: It’s probably not a matter of if but when there will be a catastrophic breach of McCarthy Creek that will leave many residents stranded. If we act now, then the work can be done at a time of our choosing for minimal disruption to users of the road and bridge. But if we take the “do nothing now” approach, then at some point the creek will breach, necessitating emergency remediation. It is highly plausible that this could occur during summertime, as was the case with the recent flood event. Acting now rather than in a crisis also allows for more payment options.

I hope you’ll give some time and thought to this issue. Constructive feedback will be welcomed!

Respectfully Submitted,

Keith Rowland, ROWCON

Existing Site Conditions



Proposed Fix

