

Appendix F

CRITERIA FOR RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY RATINGS

Introduction

Information on resources and uses was analyzed for each unit. Preliminary information was reported in the 1994 Public Review Draft of the Kenai Area Plan, Volume II. Extensive additional analysis has been gathered and analyzed since that time and is summarized under each region and unit in Chapter 3 of this plan.

This analysis identified the distribution, quantity, and quality of each of the nineteen major resources and uses in the planning area. Units were evaluated for their suitability for supporting each type of use -- the inherent capability of the land to sustain a certain type of use or resource harvest taking into account natural promoting and constraining factors. For settlement, for example, this included analyzing the physical ability of the land to support residences based on such factors such as access, slopes, soils, drainage, elevation, and vegetation. The suitability of the units for different uses is outlined on a unit-by-unit basis in the resource information summary charts in Chapter 3.

A list of the major criteria for identifying suitability for each resource follows.

Agriculture

The suitability of a unit for agricultural use was determined by whether the area supports existing agriculture use, where the unit is located relative to other agricultural areas (the agricultural land in the planning area is primarily located on the southern Kenai Peninsula), and in a few cases, whether the unit had the physical characteristics necessarily for agricultural use (i.e., south-facing, not located in an alpine area).

Detailed analysis of the suitability of units for agricultural purposes was not undertaken because in many cases, these lands are desirable not only for agriculture, but for other types of settlement, and may not be used for agriculture. The intent of the plan is to assure the maximum flexibility of use, because these parcels may be selected for borough conveyance. For this reason, most of the units with agricultural potential are designated Settlement or Resource Management--High Value.

Aquatic Farming

Because there are so many variables involved in determining suitability of sites for aquatic farming, sites were not evaluated for this use. However, existing, past, and proposed authorizations for this use were noted on a unit-by-unit basis. The documentation is a good

indicator of whether the industry will likely show long-term interest in these areas. However, it is not a good indicator of new areas that may attract industry interest.

Heritage

The Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) maps maintained by the Alaska office of History and Archaeology were used to determine concentrations of known sites within the planning area. Sites were noted on a unit-by-unit basis. Sites that were on the National List of Historic Places were designated for heritage resources. Since the purpose of the mapping was to alert plan users of the presence of sites so inadvertent damage does not occur through authorizations, the presence of sites were noted in the plan but not ranked.

Fish And Wildlife Habitat and Harvest

The Habitat Division of ADFG determined the suitability of the land for wildlife habitat and harvest based on estimates of habitat quality and human use. The species distribution and life history of key species (e.g. caribou, anadromous fish, bear) were first mapped using important life functions (e.g. spawning, winter concentrations, calving). The factors were then aggregated putting the highest values on biological criticality and species diversity. See Tables 2-1 and 2-2 in the *Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Harvest* section of Chapter 2 for the list of species that warrant designating units “fish and wildlife habitat” and the list of sensitive life history activities and recommended timing restrictions.

Forestry

A forestry designation was assigned to land that is or has been forested and is suited for long-term forest management because of its physical, climatic, and vegetative conditions. Many of the forested lands in the planning area have been severely affected by spruce beetle infestation and are expected to lose a significant number of trees over the next five years. For this reason, many forested lands not designated forestry are slated for salvage harvest operations, even though they are not intended for long-term timber production. The forestry designation is intended only for those lands, which will be managed over the long term for timber production. With a few exceptions, lands designated fish and wildlife habitat or recreation do not allow for commercial timber harvest, but salvage operations may be authorized there. The remainder of state lands are under other designations that allow for smaller-scale commercial harvest, harvest prior to clearing for resource development, and salvage harvest. There are also a few units that are specifically designated for personal use forestry, but personal use and house log cutting may be authorized under all designations. The plan also identifies areas used for forest research and education.

Grazing

Existing grazing authorizations were mapped, as well as areas suitable for grazing. High value areas with long-term use such as Fox River Flats were designated for grazing. The remainder of the areas and authorizations were noted under the Land-Use Designation Summary Tables in Chapter 3.

Materials

Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTPF) maps of materials sites and authorizations on plats were used to determine the units with materials designations. The sites identified by DOTPF that are still needed for materials or transportation purposes (i.e., storage) were designated for materials.

Mineral Resources

The problems in locating and measuring subsurface resources make it difficult and misleading to apply a Minerals designation in the same way designations are used for surface resources, such as timber. However, a primary surface designation for minerals can be used where intensive mineral exploration or development is currently taking place or is highly likely in the near term (5 to 10 years). There were no such high-value subsurface mineral areas found on state lands, so no units were designated for minerals. The state lands in the Chuitna River drainage were designated Coal, based on the well-known reserves in that region.

Oil and Gas

Since locations of known oil and gas resources are proprietary information and leasing of land for oil and gas is under a separate process, state lands were not designated Oil and Gas. However, the presence of facilities such as oil and gas platforms, tidelands facilities (Drift River and Nikiski) is noted on a unit-by-unit basis.

Recreation and Tourism

Units were evaluated for their potential to provide recreation and tourism opportunities. This included both areas with dispersed uses such as hiking, boating, and viewsheds, and areas that are intensively used and could be managed as recreation sites by the DNR Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR). Potential park additions were evaluated during the development of the Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan, the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill land acquisition process, and by DPOR as part of the Kenai Area Plan process.

The *Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan* (1998) was utilized to evaluate scenic resources along the Seward Highway as well as information from areas used extensively for sightseeing such as Resurrection Bay. The most important trails in the planning area were mapped and noted in the Land-Use Designation Summary Tables in Chapter 3. The GIS coverage of the anadromous streams identified by ADFG and the state navigable waterbodies was utilized in order to identify streams where pedestrian or retention buffers (or both) are needed. In addition, these coverages were utilized to identify which sections of six river systems on the lower peninsula will be closed to new mineral entry in order to protect habitat and recreation.

Units were also evaluated to determine which areas may be suitable for commercial recreation leasing based on existing uses and past studies of areas. Finally, important anchorages were noted and shown on the region maps in Chapter 3.

Settlement

In order to identify areas suitable for settlement, the following criteria were used:

- Existing or potential access--particularly near the existing road system.
- Drainage.
- Distances to services (power, water) and other residential areas.
- Past state land sales in the area.
- Existing surveys of lots.
- Relative isolation from other state lands (i.e., odd lots, small remnant parcels).
- The unit meets other suitability criteria.
- Note that while many units did not meet DNR's criteria for areas likely to be sold through the state land sale program, they may meet the borough's criteria and may be subsequently sold after conveyance to them.

Because of the accessible nature of the planning area, a suitability study for remote cabins was not conducted.

Trails, Transportation, And Access

Several sources of information were used to determine important trails and public access, including the *Kenai Easement Atlas*, *National Geographic Trails Illustrated* topographical maps, USFS/USGS topographical maps, the Kenai Peninsula Borough trail mapping effort, Kenai Peninsula Road and Recreation maps, existing GIS coverages which show roads, trails, seismic lines and other land access routes, aerial ortho photos, and contacts with individuals within the region. BLM publications provided information on the Iditarod National Historic Trail System and the race trail. Most of this information is shown on the GIS maps included in Chapter 3 and noted under the Land-Use Designation Summary Tables in Chapter 3 on a unit-by-unit basis.

Waterfront Development

The main sources used to determine important areas for waterfront development were records on existing and proposed authorizations, the Kenai Peninsula Borough (KPB) Coastal Management Program, and an evaluation of resources on adjacent uplands and tidelands that need tideland access.

Water Resources, Watersheds, and Wetlands

Areas of important water sources, watersheds and wetlands, were identified by evaluation information available from existing planning efforts that identified community watersheds, primarily the *KPB Coastal Management Plan*. The watershed needs of the existing hydroelectric project (Bradley Lake) were also reviewed. Cooper Lake was not evaluated because the drainage is primarily in USFS ownership. Information on the presence of and type of wetlands was obtained from the National Wetlands Inventory 1:63,360 maps, USGS maps, and aerial photos. Information on the physical function of each wetland has not yet been developed for the planning area although a hydrogeomorphic guide for the Kenai watershed is under development by an interdisciplinary team.