

MANAGEMENT UNIT 12: SOUTH ALASKA RANGE

Background

Location and Land Ownership. The South Alaska Range comprises the upper watersheds of the rivers draining south and west from the Alaska Range and the Lyman Hills - the Cheeneetnuk, Gagaryah, Babel, Swift, and Stony rivers. Most of the unit is state owned; the western extension of the unit between the Cheeneetnuk and Swift rivers is in federal ownership. A Native allotment on the North Fork Swift River is the only known private parcel in the unit.

Resources and Land Use. Most of the unit is mountainous. The Revelation Mountains in the eastern half are some of the most rugged terrain in the Alaska Range. This part of the planning area is virtually all alpine tundra. The western half is open white spruce and hardwood forests in the valleys of the Cheeneetnuk and Gagaryah rivers, and shrub tundra on the upper slopes of the Lyman Hills. Suitability for settlement and forest management is low in most of the area, but the open forests of the upper Gagaryah valley have moderate suitability for settlement. A few hikers and climbers visit the Revelation Mountains, and the alpine scenery and the dramatic peaks of this area are likely to attract more in the future. There is one existing guide facility in this area and four more sites have been applied for. Mineral potential is moderate in upland areas, although there are presently no producing mines. A mercury mine was operated at White Mountain in the past and the White Mountain claims are actively maintained. The northern edge of the unit falls within the coal belt that follows the north edge of the Alaska Range. Coal is known to be present, but inaccessibility makes development unlikely in the near future.

There are no communities in this unit, and it receives relatively little local use. Residents of Sleetmute, Stony River, and Lime Village make some use of these lands for trapping and hunting for caribou, moose, bear, and sheep. The game resources have brought in many

commercial guides: portions of ten registered guiding areas are within this unit. It is also used for unguided sport hunting.

Access. Access to this area is limited. A number of lakes on the western and central portions of the unit provide fly-in access. There are some natural landing areas in the Gagaryah valley, an airstrip in the upper Stony River valley, and a trail along the Stony River.

Management Intent

State lands in this unit will be retained in state ownership and managed to support continued commercial, sport, and subsistence use of the game, and public recreation. One area in the upper Gagaryah Valley that has moderate settlement suitability will be reconsidered for possible sale when this plan is updated. Opportunities for private recreation use of state lands in this unit will be allowed under remote cabin permits.

State lands in this subunit will remain open to mineral entry. To protect important salmon populations, salmon spawning and rearing beds in known mineralized areas in the headwaters of the Babel, Stony, Cheeneetnuk, and Swift rivers will be closed.

Subunit 12a - Revelation Mountains-Swift Valleys

This subunit contains three blocks of state land in the rugged Revelation Mountains and the high valleys of the Swift River tributaries -- the Cheeneetnuk, Babel, and North Fork Swift rivers. These lands will be retained in state ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on wildlife habitat and harvest, guiding, and public recreation. A portion of the unit will be open for remote cabin permits. One permit for a guide site has been issued, and four others have been applied for in this unit. One trapping cabin permit has been issued in the southeastern portion of this sub-

unit. Nearly all the state land in this subunit is open to mineral entry. However, because of their importance for salmon spawning and rearing, the beds of several tributaries to the Babel River, Cheeneetnuk River, and Stony River will be closed. Uplands along the closed streams in the Stony and Cheeneetnuk drainages will be subject to leasehold location requirements to ensure compatibility of mining with salmon spawning and king salmon rearing areas. Part of this subunit will be open to remote cabin permits. The southern boundary of this subunit borders Lake Clark National Park. The present boundary between the park and the state land is crossed twice by the Stony River. The general management plan for the national park identifies some park lands in this area as suitable for exchange. Exchange of lands in the upper Stony River area to clarify the park boundary would be compatible with the management intent for this subunit.

Subunit 12b - Gagaryah

This state-owned subunit is in the rolling terrain of the upper Gagaryah valley. Open forests, game, the clearwater river, alpine scenery, and a fly-in lake make this area very attractive for private recreational use. The scenery and access also give this area potential for increased public or commercial recreational use in the long term. There is also some current use of this area for hunting. Therefore, this subunit will be retained in state ownership in the near term and managed for general use. When the plan is updated, this parcel will be reevaluated to determine whether it should be kept in public ownership for the long term or offered for sale. This subunit contains approximately 3,700 acres that are suitable for settlement.

Subunit 12c - Hinterlands

The hinterlands comprise three blocks of land in the Lyman Hills and the upper Gagaryah and Babel valleys. They are lands with little access and low surface values. One trapping cabin permit has been applied for in the Revelation Mountains in this subunit. These lands will be retained in state ownership and managed for general multiple use. Part of this

subunit will be open to remote cabin permits. Nearly all state lands in this subunit are open to mineral entry. However, because of their importance for salmon spawning and rearing, the beds of some of the tributaries of the Cheeneetnuk River will be closed. Uplands along these streams will be subject to leasehold location requirements to ensure compatibility of mining with salmon spawning and king salmon rearing areas.

Management Guidelines

The complete set of areawide guidelines is presented in Chapter 2. Any of the guidelines could apply to uses within this management unit. Those most likely to apply are listed below:

- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Public and commercial recreation
- Remote cabins
- Settlement
- Lakeshore management
- Stream corridors

Guidelines specific to this management unit are listed by subunit in the following sections.

Subunit 12a and 12b- Revelation Mountains-Swift Valleys and Gagaryah

Grazing. Grazing leases or permits generally will not be allowed in the following areas because of their importance as moose winter range and Dall sheep habitat (Map 2.1). Temporary passage is not prohibited through these areas for travel between areas to reach areas where grazing is permitted. Grazing may be allowed in portions of these areas if consistent with the guideline in Chapter 2 ("Grazing on Important Habitat Lands"). All townships are in the Seward Meridian.

- T22N R33W sec. 22-23, 26-28, and 31-34
- T20N R28W and R29W
- T19N R26W through R29W; R30W sec. 36
- T18N R24W through R29W; R30W sec. 1, 12-13, 24-25, and 36
- T17N R24W through R28W

T16N R24W through R28W
T15N R24W through R27W; R28W sec. 1-12
T14N R25W and R26W; R27W sec. 1-3, 10-15, 22-27, and 34-36; R28W sec. 19-20 and 29-32
T13N R28W sec. 6-7, 17-23, and 27-31
T12N R28W sec. 6-9, 13-20, and 20-32.

Subunits 12a and 12c - Revelation Mountains-Swift River & Hinterlands

Mineral Closures and Leasehold Location Areas. Beds of the portions of the tributaries to the Babel, Cheeneetnuk, and Stony rivers shown on Map 2.4 will be closed to new mineral entry to protect important salmon spawning and rearing areas. Lands within 200 feet of the ordinary high water mark of the segments of these streams used for salmon spawning or king salmon rearing will be subject to leasehold location requirements. Streams closed or subject to leasehold location are listed in Appendix H. Lease stipulations for leasehold location areas are listed in the Mining section of Chapter 2.

Remote Cabin Permit Areas. Parts of these subunits are within the Little Underhill and Upper Cheeneetnuk blocks of the Alaska Range remote cabin permit area. Boundaries of the area open for remote cabin permits are

shown on Map 2.2. Parts of subunits 11a, 11b, 14c, and 14d are also within this block. A total of nineteen remote cabin permits will be allowed in the Little Underhill block and four in the Upper Cheeneetnuk block, with a maximum of one remote cabin permit allowed in any one township. Fifty-foot building setbacks will be required from the ordinary high water mark of Kristin Creek, Little Underhill Creek, the Cheeneetnuk River, and the unnamed tributary to the Cheeneetnuk River in T23N R31W S.M. identified as an anadromous stream in the ADF&G catalog of anadromous waters.

Subunit 12b - Gagaryah

Gagaryah River Instream Flow. The upper Gagaryah River flows through this subunit. Downstream segments of the river are important for coho spawning. When the plan is updated, this subunit will be reevaluated to determine whether it should be kept in public ownership in the long term or offered for sale. If the subunit is reclassified for settlement and the disposal design results in significant private developments dependent on river water (e.g., small-scale hydropower), an instream flow study should be done to determine the flow levels needed to protect the coho spawning areas.

RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

Management Unit 12 - South Alaska Range

Resource	12a	Subunit 12b	12c
Agriculture	Unsuited	Unsuited	Unsuited
Energy	Moderate to high coal potential in northern edge of subunit	Moderate to high coal potential in northern edge of subunit	—
Fish	Cheeneetuk & Gagaryah: salmon & resident fish; Little Underhill: resident fish	Gagaryah R.: salmon & resident fish; Babel R.: salmon	Cheeneetuk: salmon & resident fish; Shoeleather Cr.: resident fish
Forestry	Most unsuited; some low potential	Some high potential for personal use within disposal	Low potential to unsuited
Grazing	Most unsuited; high potential in northern block	High potential	High potential
Historic/cultural	Low potential	Low potential	Low potential
Materials	Unsuited	Unsuited	Unsuited
Minerals	East half moderate potential, west half low potential	Low potential	Low to moderate potential
Oil & gas	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Public access	Plane to natural landing areas & lakes	Plane to natural landing areas & lakes	None developed
Recreation	Moderate use and	Moderate use and	Moderate potential
Settlement suitability	Most unsuited, some low	Moderate to low	Low to unsuited
Wildlife	Mostly B-1, some A-2 & B-2; moose winter range & Dall sheep in E half;	B-1/B-2; bear, moose	B-2; bear, caribou, moose
Important trails	Stony River trail	None identified	None identified

See glossary for definition of ratings.

LAND-USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

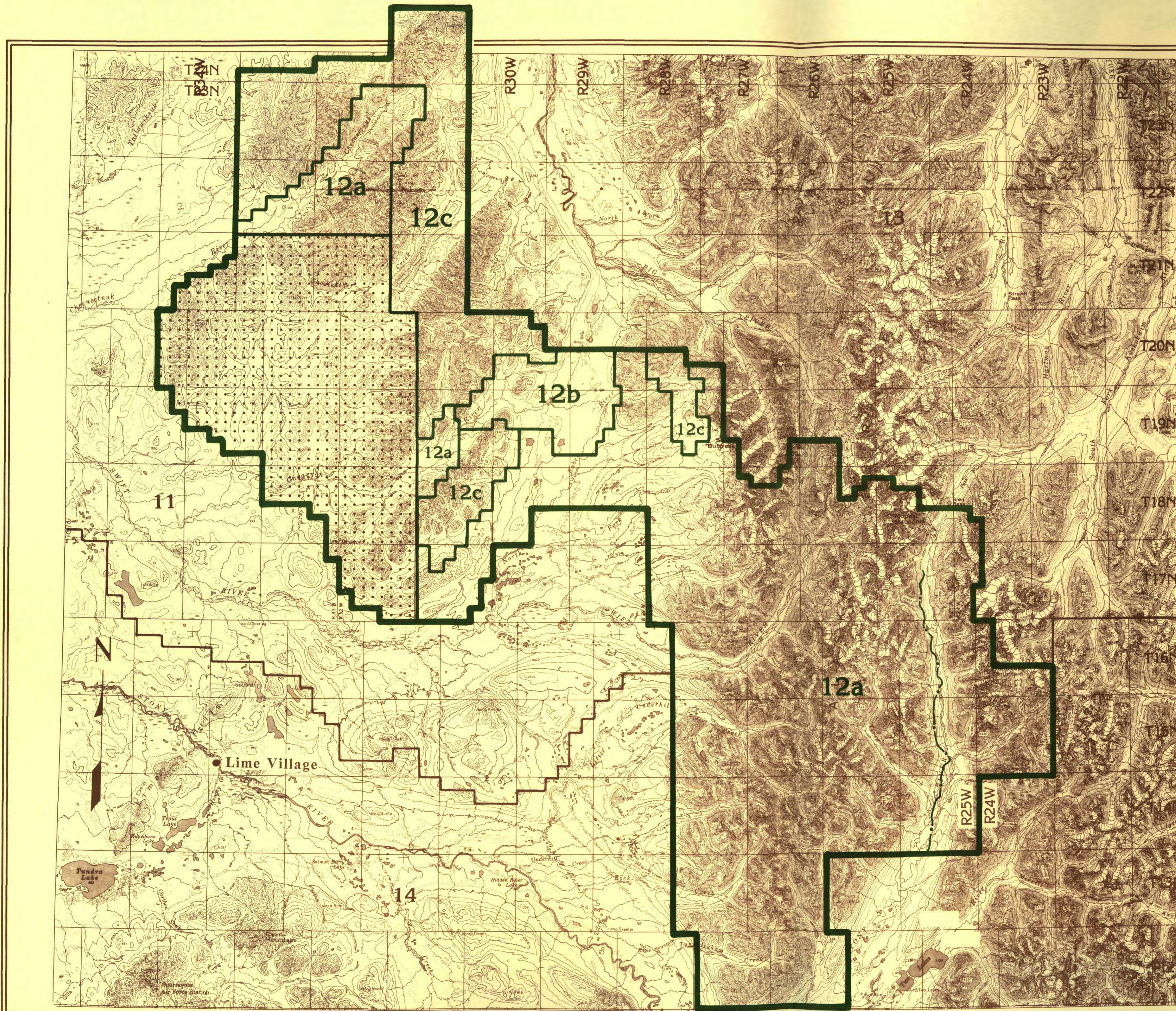
MANAGEMENT UNIT 12 - SOUTH ALASKA RANGE

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				COMMENTS
		Primary Surface Uses	Secondary Surface Uses	Prohibited Surface Uses ^a	Subsurface ^b	
12a Revelation Mts.-Swift River	State	Public recreation Wildlife habitat	Remote cabins in part of subunit	Grazing in part of subunit Land disposals Remote cabins in part of subunit	Open except along some streams	
12b Gagaryah	State	Resource mgmt.	Public recreation Wildlife habitat	Land disposals Remote cabins Grazing in part of subunit	Open	Reconsider for sales when plan is updated
12c Hinterlands	State	General use: low resource values	Remote cabins in part of subunit	Land disposals Remote cabins in part of subunit	Open except along some streams	

^aOther uses such as material sales, land leases, or permits that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management-intent statement, the management guidelines of this unit, and the relevant management guidelines listed in Chapter 2. Grazing may be allowed in portions of closed units when consistent with the guideline in Chapter 2 (Grazing on Important Habitat Lands).

^bAll areas are available for leasing for leasable minerals. Statements of whether or not the unit is open to mineral entry refer only to locatable minerals.

12: South Alaska Range



— Management Unit Boundary
 — Subunit Boundary

State Owned

State Selected

Native Owned

Native Selected

Federal

--- Trails on public lands

Map shows approximate location of easements to state land and trails across state land. Portions of trails may cross private lands.

Location Map



U.S.G.S. Quads:
 McGrath
 Lime Hills

Map Scale:
 1:500,000