

MANAGEMENT UNIT 13: NORTH ALASKA RANGE

Background

Location and Land Ownership. This unit comprises the upper watersheds of the rivers that drain north from the Alaska Range -- the Big River, Middle Fork, Windy Fork, and South Fork rivers. It is state-owned land except for some selected land along the South Fork river, and Cook Inlet Region, Inc. land west of the South Fork and south of Farewell. There are numerous parcels of private lands within this subregion. Approximately 250 parcels were staked within three past state remote parcel offerings, and there are a dozen Native allotments and two federal trade and manufacturing sites.

Resources and Land Use. Most of this area is mountainous, with rugged peaks rising to over 9,000 feet. Splitting the mountain ranges are broad, high valleys along the Big, Windy Fork, Middle Fork, South Fork, Post, and Hartman rivers. These valleys are covered by short, open, white spruce and hardwood forests. The lower mountain slopes are in shrub tundra; the upper elevations in alpine tundra, snow, and ice. The footslopes of the range on the northern perimeter of the unit grade from shrub tundra into black spruce woodlands.

The wooded valleys have moderate potential for settlement, and are very scenic. The alpine scenery also brings in a small number of river runners, climbers, and hikers, and will probably attract more use in the future. Mineral potential is moderate to high throughout the mountains. This unit encompasses the Farewell mineral belt where concentrations of lead, silver, gold, zinc, rare earth elements, and other commodities exist. The mineral industry continued to be interested in mineral exploration in this area. A number of mining claims exist in this area, but none are actively mined at present. The Tonzona coal deposit stretches along the northern boundary of the unit but lack of access makes coal extraction unlikely in the near future.

There are no communities within this unit, and these state lands receive relatively little local use. Some residents of Stony River, McGrath, and Nikolai hunt bear, caribou, and moose in the upper valleys, and there is some trapping in portions of the area. More commercial guiding for big game takes place in this area than in any other unit in the planning area. Fifteen registered guiding areas are wholly or partially within this unit and there are pending applications for five guide sites.

Access. Access to this area is limited. The primary access is by small plane to gravel bars along the major rivers, tundra landings, or lakes. There are private airstrips at Farewell Lake, Rohn River, and White Mountain, and an unmaintained public strip at Farewell. The northern edge of the unit can be reached by boat along the Big River and South Fork in high water. The Iditarod Race Trail crosses the unit, and there are trails from Farewell to White Mountain, and along the Dillinger and Post rivers.

Management Intent

The intent for this unit is to support continued public use of game and recreation resources, and to provide opportunities for private and commercial recreation. The alpine scenery, game, and fly-in access make lands in this unit very attractive for private cabins, and for guided and individual hunting, floating, and climbing trips. Four areas are designated for settlement and may be offered for private ownership during the next twenty years. The settlement areas contain a total of about 7,000 acres that could be offered for private ownership. Two areas will be open for widely dispersed remote cabin permits. These offerings are designed to concentrate private lands and cabins in and adjacent to past sale areas, or on the periphery of the main public use areas to minimize impacts on guiding and public recreation. The great majority of the land area will be retained in public ownership and

managed for multiple use with the emphasis on wildlife habitat and harvest and public recreation. Retained lands will remain open for mineral entry; disposal areas will be closed prior to sale. The unstaked portions of past disposal areas not available for further staking will be reopened to mineral entry.

Subunit 13a - Post River

This subunit is nearly all state owned. The lower part of the South Fork valley is state selected. The Post River subunit includes most of the high mountains in the North Alaska Range, and the valleys of the Middle Fork, Post River, and Hartman River, and most of the South Fork and Windy Fork valleys. There are permits for three trapping cabins in this subunit and applications for five guide sites. Subunit 13a will be kept in public ownership for multiple use with emphasis on protecting wildlife habitat; supporting continued commercial, sport, and subsistence use of game resources; and public recreation. Lands in the Middle Fork drainage will be open for remote cabin permits at a very low density. These permits are intended to allow additional individual private recreation sites while avoiding the core areas for commercial guiding operations. The southeastern boundary of this subunit borders Lake Clark National Park. The present boundary between the park and 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 land exchange. Exchange of land in the upper Stony River area to clarify the park boundary would be compatible with the management intent for this subunit.

The past Windy Fork and Mount Rich remote parcel areas are within this subunit (see Map 2.3). Nineteen parcels were staked in Windy Fork, along the river and around the larger lakes. Sixty-four people staked in Mount Rich, along the Hartman and South Fork rivers and a large lake. Suitable land for settlement in these areas is limited to narrow strips near the rivers. Because there is little suitable land left unstaked, these areas will not be offered for additional staking. There were no entries on large, steep or inaccessible por-

tions of the past disposals. Unstaked areas will be reopened to mineral entry. The portion of 13a in T24N R30W S.M. sections 1-4 and 9-11 was included in the original Big River disposal, and closed to mineral entry. These lands have high mineral potential and will be reopened to new mineral entry.

Subunit 13b - Big River Disposal

This subunit was opened to staking of remote parcels in 1982. One hundred seventy parcels were staked during that opening. The stakings comprise less than 5 percent of the land within the disposal area, and few parcels have been developed. The Big River valley has extensive open white spruce cover, pretty mountain views, and relatively good fly-in access to river bars and lakes. Following the close of the ten-year lease period on the initial stakings, a limited amount of land will be made available for additional stakings. The total number of stakings from the past plus the future offering will be limited to 200 parcels. If all previously staked parcels are surveyed and patented, 30 additional stakings will be allowed, or a total of 1,200 acres if all entrants stake the allowed maximum of 40 acres. If some previous stakings are terminated or relinquished, additional new stakings equal to the number of those terminated or relinquished will be allowed. The portion of the original Big River disposal area in T24N R30W S.M. sections 1-4 and 9-11 is included in subunit 13a and will not be reoffered for settlement because of high mineral potential.

Subunit 13c - Big River South

This subunit is adjacent to the past Big River disposal. It is high rolling country covered by open white spruce forest. Lakes provide fly-in access. Approximately 1,400 acres will be made available for private ownership. Land offerings in this area may be held jointly with the Big River (13a) reoffering.

Subunit 13d - Mount Rich Addition

Subunit 13d is adjacent to the past Mount Rich remote parcel area. This is high, open forest country in the upper South Fork valley. Access is by plane to gravel bars in the Mount

Rich area or downriver. Approximately 2,100 acres will be made available for private ownership in this subunit. There is one existing trapping cabin permit in this subunit.

Subunit 13e - Dillinger River

This subunit is on the northern footslopes of the Alaska Range along the Dillinger, Jones, and South Fork rivers. There is fly-in access to gravel bars along the South Fork and possible tundra landing areas within the disposal boundaries. Open hardwood forests on some south-facing slopes and open white spruce forests along the South Fork River offer some good cabin sites. One trapping cabin permit on the South Fork has been issued in this subunit. Approximately 4,600 acres will be offered for private ownership.

Subunit 13f - Hinterlands

Three blocks of state land with low surface resource values and little public access make up the Hinterlands. Included are some of the upper elevations of the Big River drainage and glaciers in the southcentral part of the North Alaska Range. These lands will be kept in state ownership and available for general use.

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:

- Cultural resources
- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Lakeshore management
- Public and commercial recreation resources
- Remote cabins and trapping cabins
- Settlement
- Stream corridors
- Trail management
- Wetlands management

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

General

Grazing. Grazing leases or permits generally will not be allowed in some areas because of their importance as moose winter range, caribou calving areas, and Dall sheep habitat (Map 2.1). Temporary passage of livestock is not prohibited through these areas to reach areas where grazing is permitted. Grazing may be allowed in portions of these areas if consistent with the guidelines in Chapter 2 ("Grazing on Important Habitat Lands").

Grazing is prohibited in the unit except in the following areas. All townships are in the Seward Meridian:

T24N R30W
T24N R29W
T23N R30W
T23N R29W
T22N R30W
T22N R29W
T21N R30W
T21N R29W
T21N R28W
T20N R30W
T20N R29W
T20N R28W
T29N R23W
T29N R22W sec. 1-11 and 15-20
T30N R21W sec. 1-3; 10, 11, 19-21, 29, 30
& 31

Subunit 13a - Post River

Remote Cabin Permit Areas. Parts of this subunit is within the Styx River, Middle Fork, and Tonzona-South Fork 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 2c, 2d, 3a, 3b, 4a, and 4b are also within this block. A total of nine remote cabin permits will be allowed in the Styx River block, three in the Middle Fork block, and 19 in the Tonzona-South Fork block, with a maximum of one remote cabin permit allowed in any one township.

Subunit 13b - Big River Disposal

Net Sale Area in Reoffering. The lease period for past stakings in the Big River remote parcel area will elapse in 1992. Following the close of this period, the Big River area will be available for additional staking. The total number of parcels allowed from the past plus the future offering will be 200 parcels. The reoffering will include thirty new parcels plus additional stakings equal to the number of past stakings terminated or relinquished. The total acreage available in the reoffering will be 40 acres times the number of parcels available. If the minimum of thirty parcels are offered, the net acreage would be 1,200 acres.

Subunits 13b and 13c - Big River Disposal and Big River South

Disposal Design. Lake 1594' is on the boundary of the past Big River disposal and the future Big River South offering. Most of the lake is within the past disposal and its shoreline completely surrounded by stakings. The portion of the lakeshore within subunit 13c will be retained in public ownership to protect public access to the lake, and public recreation opportunities. In addition, if any of the past stakings on the lakeshore in subunit 13b are relinquished or terminated, public access sites and recreation sites on the lake will be identified and kept in public ownership prior to reoffering of the Big River disposal. Prior to the reoffering, the Big River area also will be reviewed to determine whether portions of the area are so densely staked that they should be closed to additional staking. A 100-foot corridor will be retained in public ownership on each side of the Big River to protect public access and opportunities for recreational use of the shoreline. Lakes on which floatplanes can land will be subject to Chapter 2 guidelines re-

quiring public retention of at least 50 percent of the lakeshore. These lakes are important for public access and public recreation.

Subunit 13d - Mount Rich Addition

Disposal Design. In order to protect public access, public recreation opportunities, and riparian habitat, a 200-foot corridor will be retained in public ownership on the east bank of the South Fork River; due to steeper terrain on the west side of the river, the publicly retained corridor on the west bank will be 100 feet.

Subunit 13e - Dillinger River

Instream Flow and Disposal Design. The Jones River flows through the southwestern portion of the proposed Dillinger River land disposal. The river supports a small and potentially sensitive run of king salmon. If the disposal 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 king salmon population. A 200-foot staking setback will be required on the Jones and Dillinger rivers to protect the shores of the anadromous stream and guarantee the shoreline will be available for public use. A 100-foot staking setback will be required on the South Fork to protect public access and opportunities for public recreation along the river bank. Lakes on which floatplanes can land are important for public access and recreation. Lakes identified as floatplane lakes at the time of disposal design will be subject to Chapter 2 guidelines requiring public retention of at least 50 percent of the lakeshore.

RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

Management Unit 13 - North Alaska Range

Resource	Subunit			
	13a	13b	13c	13d
Agriculture	Unsuited	Unsuited	Unsuited	Unsuited
Energy	Moderate to high coal along NW perimeter	Moderate coal potential in T24N R30W	---	---
Fish	Windy Fork, Sheep Cr., South Fork, Post R.: resident fish	Big R.: salmon and resident fish	None documented	None documented
Forestry	Most unsuited, some low potential in valleys; personal use in Mt. Rich area	Open forests in disposal important for personal use	Open forests in disposal important for personal use	Open forests in disposal important for personal use
Grazing	High potential in perimeter of subunit & upper S. Fork valley	High potential	High potential	High potential
Historic/cultural	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Materials	Low potential	Low potential	Low potential	Low potential
Minerals	Moderate to high potential, some claims	Variable potential, one claim mining	Low potential	Low potential
Oil & gas	Northern perimeter in Minchumina sedimentary basin	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Public access	Plane to gravel bars, lakes, unmaintained strips, & natural landing areas; boat on S. Fork in some seasons	Plane to gravel bars and lakes	Plane to lakes	Plane to gravel bars
Recreation	Moderate use and potential	Moderate use and potential	Moderate use and potential	Moderate use and potential
Settlement suitability	Most unsuited, some low to moderate in valleys	Moderate	Mostly moderate, some low	Mixed moderate and low
Wildlife	B-1; bear, caribou calving in parts, sheep; moose winter range at lower elevations	Mostly B-1; some A-1 & B-2; bear, caribou, moose, ducks	B-1/B-2; bear, caribou, moose, ducks	B-1; bear, caribou, moose; sheep at upper elevations
Important trails	Iditarod Race Trail, Farewell-White Mt. trail, Dillinger R. trail, Post R. trail	Farewell-White Mt. trail	None identified	Iditarod Race Trail

See glossary for definition of ratings.

RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

Management Unit 13 - North Alaska Range, cont.

Resource	13e	Subunit 13f
Agriculture	Unsuited	Unsuited
Energy	Low coal potential	Moderate coal potential in T24n R30W, rest very low
Fish	Jones R.: small salmon run	None documented
Forestry	Some open hardwood forest in disposal important for personal use	Most unsuited; some open forest in W block important for personal use in adjacent disposals
Grazing	High potential	East block unsuited, rest high potential
Historic/cultural	Unknown	Unknown
Materials	Low potential	Low potential
Minerals	Low potential	Very high potential in T24N R30W; rest very low to moderate
Oil & gas	In Minchumina sedimentary basin	Unknown
Public access	Plane to gravel bars near subunit	Plane to unmaintained airstrips in western block
Recreation	Moderate use and potential	Moderate potential
Settlement suitability	Some moderate; most unsuited	Most unsuited; low in W block
Wildlife	B-1/C; moose winter range, bear	B-2; bear, caribou
Important trails	Dillinger R. trail	
See glossary for definition of ratings.		

LAND-USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

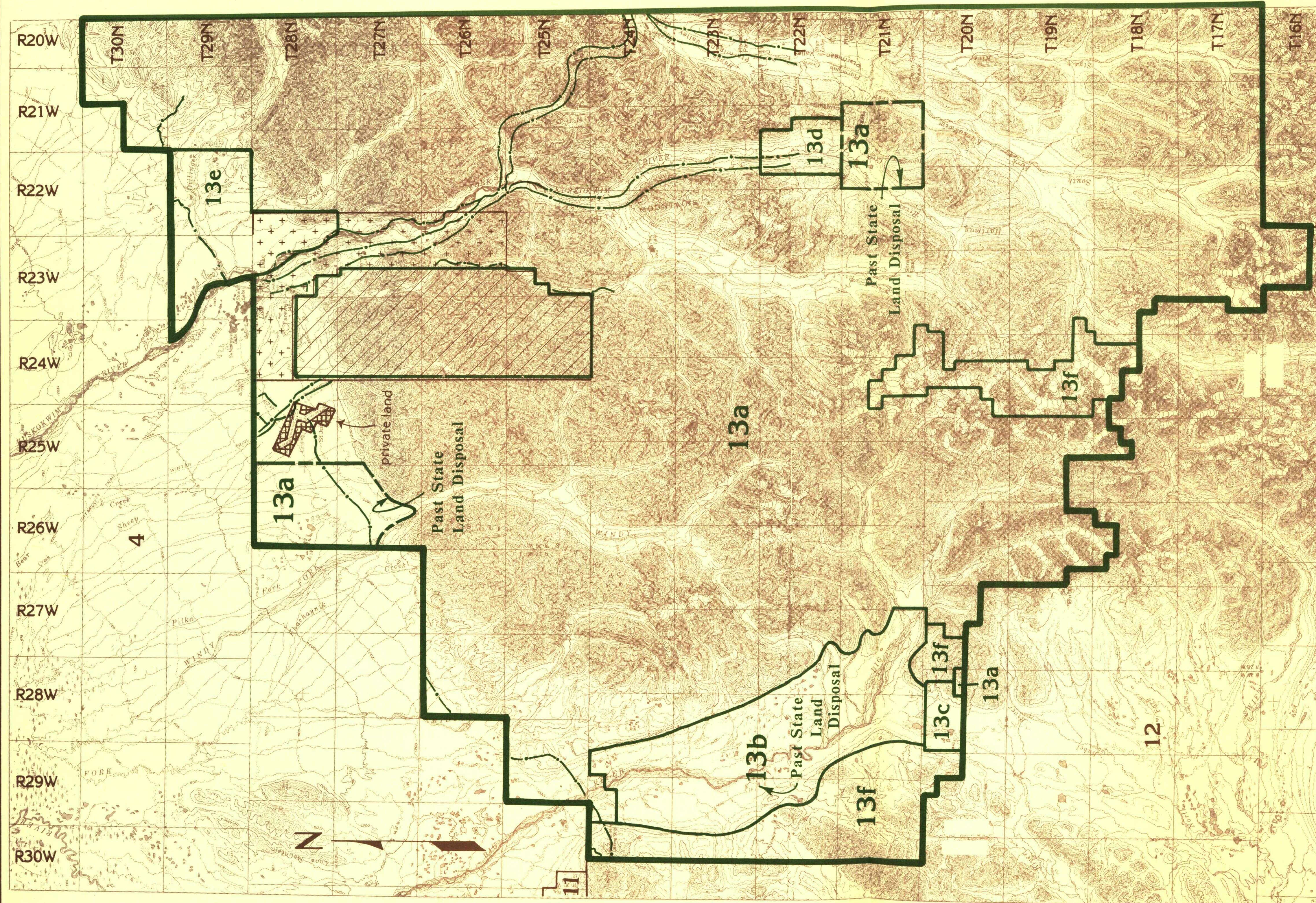
MANAGEMENT UNIT 13 - NORTH ALASKA RANGE

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				COMMENTS
		Primary Surface Uses	Secondary Surface Uses	Prohibited Surface Uses ^a	Subsurface ^b	
13a Post River	Most state, some 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 staked areas of past disposals	Includes past Windy Fork & Mt. Rich disposals
13b Big River Disposal	State/private	Settlement	Forestry Public recreation Wildlife habitat	Grazing in part of subunit Remote cabins Trapping cabins	Closed	Past disposal; see guidelines for additional sale area.
13c Big River South	State	Settlement	Forestry Public recreation Wildlife habitat	Grazing in part of subunit Remote cabins Trapping cabins after sale is scheduled	Closed prior to sale	Net sale area = 1,400 acres
13d Mt. Rich Addition	State	Settlement	Forestry Public recreation Wildlife habitat	Grazing in part of subunit Remote cabins Trapping cabins after sale is scheduled	Closed prior to sale	Net sale area = 2,100 acres
13e Dillinger River	State	Settlement	Forestry Public recreation Wildlife habitat	Grazing in part of subunit Remote cabins Trapping cabins after sale is scheduled	Closed prior to sale	Net sale area = 4,600 acres
13f Hinterlands	State	General use: low resource values		Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	

^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.

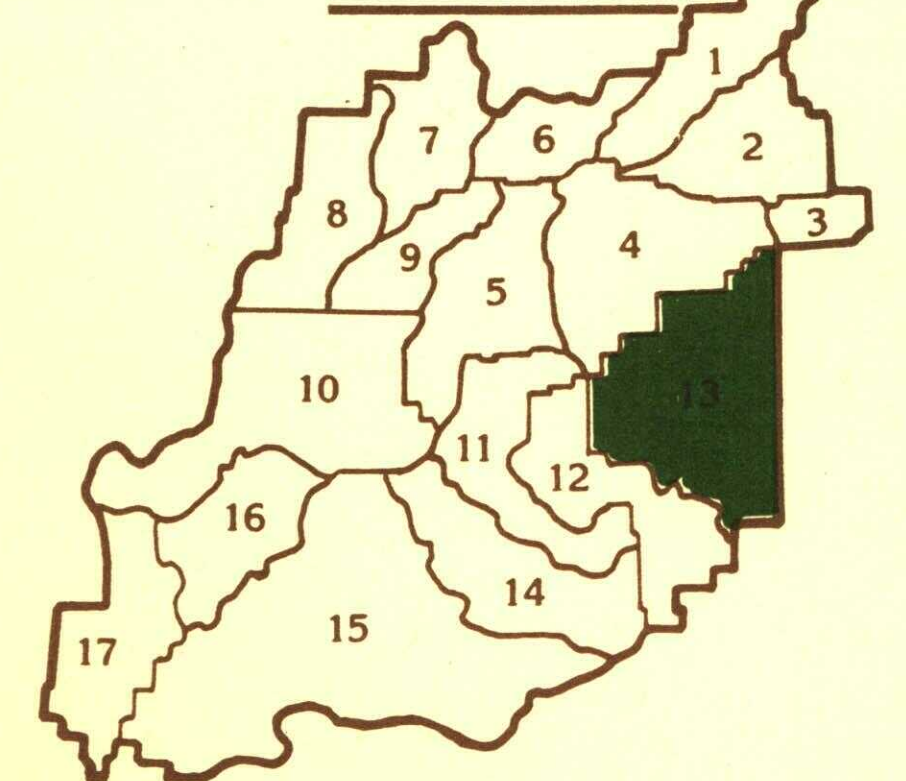
13: North Alaska Range



- Management Unit Boundary
- Subunit Boundary
- State Owned
- State Selected
- Native Owned
- Native Selected
- Federal
- Trails on public lands

Map shows approximate location of 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