

# MANAGEMENT UNIT 17: ANIAK RIVER

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## Background

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**Location and Land Ownership.** The Aniak River management unit comprises the watershed of the Aniak River and land along the south bank of the Kuskokwim River surrounding Kolmakof Lake. The land bordering the Kuskokwim River is nearly all Native-owned. The northern part of the Aniak watershed, including the Doestock Creek drainage is state selected. The upper Aniak watershed -- the majority of the unit -- is state owned. In addition to the Native corporation land, there are approximately fifty parcels of private land within the unit. Most of these parcels are Native allotments along the Kuskokwim River between Chuathbaluk and Napaimiut, or along the Aniak River from the Buckstock River downstream.

**Resources and Land Use.** From the confluence of the Salmon River downstream, the Aniak valley is broad and rolling. Further upstream, the river cuts into the Kuskokwim Mountains, and at its head is bounded by rugged mountain walls. Elevations range up to 4000 feet in the mountains surrounding Aniak Lake. Shrub vegetation dominates the lowlands of the unit, with alpine tundra at higher elevations. Along the Aniak River below the Salmon River confluence there is a band of white spruce forest. Above the Salmon, the band narrows until disappears above Gemuk Mountain. In the lower stretches of the river, there are broad muskegs and recently burned black spruce woodlands inland from the white spruce forests. There is potential for timber harvesting along the lower Aniak River. Forestlands along the Aniak also have high suitability for settlement.

The villages of Aniak and Chuathbaluk, and the seasonal community of Napaimiut are adjacent to the northern boundary of this unit. Aniak is the largest community in the planning area. Although the Aniak River is more difficult to navigate, the Aniak watershed supports an intensity of subsistence and recreational use second only to the Holitna

basin. It is particularly well known for sport and subsistence fishing. Moose are taken along the lower and middle reaches of the river, while trapping is widespread throughout the drainage. Six fishing guides, four registered hunting guides, and several commercial outfitters currently operate in this watershed. The mountainous portions of the unit have moderate to very high potential for minerals, and there are existing claims in the Waterboot Creek drainage, but there is no active mining in this unit at present. Gravel bars in the Kuskokwim River have been used as a source of materials for local construction projects.

**Access.** The Kuskokwim River provides boat access to the northern edge of the unit. Access to the rest of the unit is by boat along the Aniak, Doestock, Kipchuk, and Salmon rivers. There is a large public airfield at Aniak, which serves as the transportation hub for the middle Kuskokwim. Small planes can land on gravel bars along the middle Aniak, on Aniak Lake, and at several natural landing sites and gravel airstrips in the upper Salmon and Kipchuk watersheds. Major trails follow the rivers and provide access into the mining areas in the southwestern part of the unit.

## Management Intent

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The Aniak watershed is of statewide importance for wildlife habitat and harvest and for public recreation. The moose, rainbow trout, and salmon populations are very important for sport and subsistence use and support numerous commercial guiding and outfitting operations. The moose population is limited by the extent of riparian habitat, and is considered fully used at present. The Aniak River is the northern extent of the range for rainbow trout, and attracts an international clientele for fishing. The alpine scenery of the upper watershed adds to the allure of float trips on the river, and is likely to attract increased recreational use in the future. Furbearers,

especially in the lower watershed, are targeted by trappers from Aniak, Chuathbaluk, and Tuluksak. Finally, wood and berries are harvested along the rivers for local use.

The management intent for this unit is to protect the fish, wildlife, and scenic resources that are the basis for sport, commercial, and subsistence activities; to allow for continued use of these resources and other public recreation activities; and to minimize conflicts between potential uses. Nearly all the state land in this unit will be kept in public ownership, and managed for multiple use. Lands throughout the unit will be managed with an emphasis on fish and wildlife habitat and harvest; on timberlands along the lower river forestry also will be a primary use. In order to provide opportunities for additional private ownership of land near the growing community of Aniak, a small area of land along the lower end of the Aniak River may be offered for disposal.

Most of this unit will remain open to mineral entry. However, to protect important salmon populations, spawning beds, and rearing habitat in known mineralized areas, some stream segments will be closed to new mineral entry. Closures include portions of the Buckstock River, Timber Creek, Atsakovluk Creek, and Salmon River. Uplands adjacent to identified salmon spawning or king salmon rearing areas will be subject to leasehold location requirements.

Most lands along the Kuskokwim River and Doestock Creek are Native owned, and portions of the lower Aniak, although state selected, may not be patented to the state. However, the beds of these and other navigable waters in the unit are state owned, and are subject to the guidelines of this plan.

### **Subunits 17a - Aniak Corridor**

This land is in the heart of the hunting, fishing, and trapping areas in the Aniak watershed. In addition, the best timber resources in the watershed are along the river in this subunit. The river is also used for float trips. The upper two-thirds of the subunit are state owned, the lower third state selected. Subunit

17a will be kept in public ownership and managed for multiple use with an emphasis on fish and wildlife habitat and harvest, public recreation, and forestry. Leases for commercial recreation facilities are prohibited in this subunit to protect salmon stocks and the limited moose and rainbow trout populations, and to minimize conflicts between fish and wildlife uses. Nearly all the state land in this unit is open to mineral entry. However, because of their importance for salmon spawning and rearing, the beds of segments of the Buckstock River will be closed to mineral entry and uplands will be subject to leasehold location requirements to ensure compatibility with mining.

### **Subunit 17b - Upper Aniak**

The majority of the lands in the Salmon, Kipchuk, Buckstock, and upper Aniak drainages are within this subunit. The subunit is entirely state owned. Guiding, trapping, subsistence harvesting, sport fishing and hunting, and floating along the Aniak River are concentrated in this subunit. There is an application for one guide site permit within the subunit. These lands will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use, primarily fish and wildlife habitat and harvest and public recreation. Leases for commercial recreation facilities are prohibited in this subunit to protect salmon stocks and the limited moose and rainbow trout populations, and to minimize conflicts between fish and wildlife uses.

Most of the state land in this subunit is open to mineral entry. However, because of their importance for salmon spawning and rearing, the beds of portions of the Buckstock River, Timber Creek, Atsakovluk Creek, and the Salmon River will be closed to new mineral entry. To ensure compatibility of mining and salmon spawning and king salmon rearing, uplands along some streams will be subject to leasehold location requirements where they overlap with known mineralized areas.

### **Subunit 17c - Hinterlands**

Lands in this subunit are state-owned and state-selected lands with low surface resource

values and no river access. They will be retained in state ownership and available for general multiple use. However, leases for commercial recreation facilities are prohibited in this subunit to protect limited moose populations, and to minimize conflicts between wildlife uses. Most state land in this subunit will remain open to new mineral entry. However, because of their importance for salmon spawning and king salmon rearing, the beds of Sawpit, Robin, Loco, Eureka, and Dominion creeks will be closed to new mineral entry. Uplands along some of these streams will be subject to leasehold location requirements to ensure compatibility of mining with salmon spawning and king salmon rearing areas.

#### **Subunit 17d - Aniak-Doestock**

Subunit 17d is state-owned and state-selected land along the lower Aniak River and Doestock Creek. It is the state land closest to the growing village of Aniak. At present, there is little land available in this area for private use but it is likely that more land will be available in the future as Native corporation lands, Native allotments, or other lands are offered for sale or lease. Depending on the availability of such land, this subunit may be made available for disposal of approximately 1,400 acres after 1997.

#### **Subunit 17e - Kolmakof Lake**

This subunit consists of three small blocks of land near Kolmakof Lake. Most of the land has been selected by both the state and Native corporation. A portion of the southeastern block is selected only by the state. The northernmost block is on the south bank of the Kuskokwim River. This is one of the few state-selected sites on the Kuskokwim River in the southern half of the planning area. Kolmakof Lake also provides fly-in access to the subunit. There is a small amount of white spruce forest along the river. If conveyed to the state, this unit will be kept in state ownership and managed for multiple use, including fish and wildlife habitat and harvest, public recreation, and where timber is available, forestry. Portions of this subunit are identified in the USDA Exploratory Soil Survey as

having moderate potential for agriculture. However, there is no detailed information on soils and climate for these sites, and no current market for agricultural land.

### **Management Guidelines**

The complete set of areawide management 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
- Forestry
- Materials
- Public and commercial recreation resources
- Settlement
- Subsurface resources
- Stream corridors
- Trail management
- Wetlands management

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

#### **Subunits 17a, 17b, and 17d - Aniak Corridor, Upper Aniak, and Aniak-Doestock**

**Grazing.** Grazing leases or permits will not be allowed in portions of these subunits because of their high habitat values (Map 2.1). Temporary passage of livestock through is not prohibited through these areas to reach areas where grazing is permitted. The riparian lands in subunit 17a, subunit 17d, and the northern half of subunit 17b are important moose winter range. In addition, lands along the middle Aniak River and a portion of the Kipchuk River are brown bear concentration areas. Land surrounding Aniak Lake in subunit 17b is a caribou calving area. Grazing may be allowed in portions of these areas if consistent with the guidelines in Chapter 2 ("Grazing on Important Habitat Lands"). The areas closed to grazing:

T14N R55W S.M.

T13N R55W S.M. sec. 2-20, 25-29, and 32-36  
T11N R55W S.M. through R57W  
T5N R56W S.M.: that portion south and  
east of the Aniak River

T4N R57W S.M.: that portion south and  
east of the western most tributary to An-  
iak Lake

Subunit 17d - T16N R56W S.M.: sec. 4, 9, 15,  
22 and 27

T17N R56W S.M. sec. 31

T17N R57W S.M. sec. 24

T15N R56W S.M. sec. 2, 11, and 13

T15N R55W S.M. sec. 18, 19, 28-30, 32  
and 33

T14N R56W S.M. sec. 1, 12, 13, 24, 25,  
and 26

T14N R55W S.M. sec. 3-11 & 14-36

T12N R55W S.M. sec. 1-3, 10-15, 21-28 &  
31-36

T12N R54W S.M. sec. 4-6, 7, 8, 17-20, and  
28-34

T11N R57W S.M. sec. 11-14, 22-28 and  
33-36

T11N R54W S.M. sec. 7, 17-21, and 27-34

T10N R58W S.M. sec. 12, 25, 35 and 36

T10N R57W S.M. sec. 1-5, 8-27, 30 and  
34-36

T10N R56W-55W S.M.

T10N R54W S.M. sec. 2-11, 14-23, and 27-32

T9N R58W S.M. sec. 2, 3, 10 and 11

T9N R57W S.M. sec. 1-3, 10-12, 13 and 14

T9N R56W S.M. sec. 3-9 and 18

within one-half mile of the Aniak River in  
T9N R55W S.M.; T8N R56W S.M.; T8N  
R55W S.M.; T7N R56W S.M.; and T7N  
R55W S.M.

### **Subunit 17a - Aniak Corridor**

**Commercial, Industrial, and Transportation Facilities.** Commercial and industrial uses, transportation facilities (including pipelines), or other non-water dependent uses that are inconsistent with the management intent of these subunits will not be authorized within one quarter mile of the Aniak River unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative. This does not prohibit necessary river crossings.

### **Subunits 17a, 17b, and 17c - Aniak Corridor, Upper Aniak, and Hinterlands**

**Commercial Recreation Leases.** In order to protect the fish and wildlife resources that are the basis for sport, commercial, and subsistence activities in the Aniak drainage, and to minimize potential conflicts between uses of these resources, new leases for lodges and other commercial recreation facilities will not be allowed on state lands in these subunits. Temporary facilities to support guiding and other commercial activities are allowed under permit on state lands; private lands can supply sites for permanent facilities.

### **Subunits 17b - Upper Aniak**

**Trapping Cabins.** In order to protect important spawning and rearing areas for sockeye, coho, king, and chum salmon in Aniak Lake and its outlet, trapping cabins will not be allowed within one-half mile of the shore of Aniak Lake.

### **Subunits 17a, 17b and 17c - Aniak Corridor, Upper Aniak, and Hinterlands**

**Mineral Closures and Leasehold Location.** Beds of portions of the Buckstock R., Timber Creek, Atsaksovluk Creek, and Salmon River and their tributaries shown on Map 2.4 will be closed to new mineral entry to protect important salmon spawning and salmon rearing areas. Lands within 200 feet of the ordinary high water mark of some segments of these streams used for salmon spawning and 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.

### **Subunit 17d - Aniak-Doestock**

**Timing of Disposal.** State lands in this subunit will be retained in public ownership until 1998. At that time, the management intent for the unit will be reevaluated. Until 1998, state lands in this subunit will be managed so as not to preclude either multiple use or settlement in this area. It is likely that some land in other

ownerships will be made available for private use in the middle Kuskokwim area (from Aniak to Stony River) before 1998. If a sufficient amount of private land is available by that time, the state will not offer settlement lands in this area.

If by 1998 a sufficient number of private lots have not been made available to the general public at reasonable terms, the Aniak-Doestock subunit should be offered for private ownership. The number of lots offered for sale or lease will be judged sufficient if it is great enough to create a private market of a size appropriate to a rural area. If after 1998 subunit 17a is not needed for settlement, it will be managed for multiple use. The DNR finding of whether or not this subunit is needed for disposal will be subject to public notice and review by the agencies and organizations represented on the Kuskokwim Area Plan Advisory Board.

**Local Lottery.** If land is offered for disposal in the Aniak-Doestock subunit, the lottery for entry permits or parcels should be held in the nearest community, Aniak. Under existing regulations, applicants must be present at the lottery to win a parcel or entry permit.

**Disposal Design.** If land in the Aniak-Doestock subunit is offered for disposal, a 200-foot staking setback will be required on the Aniak River, a 100-foot staking setback on Doestock

Creek, and a 50-foot building setback on other water bodies and wetlands.

### **Subunit 17e - Kolmakof Lake**

**Agricultural Potential.** The two eastern blocks of subunit 17e are identified on the USDA Exploratory Soil Survey as having moderate potential for agriculture. In order to protect their long-term agricultural potential, the Division of Agriculture should be consulted prior to issuing permits or leases for any activities which would significantly diminish their capability to support agriculture.

### **Navigable Waters within Non-state Lands**

**Peregrine Falcon Nests.** There are four known peregrine falcon nests along the Kuskokwim River on the northern boundary of this management unit. In order to protect nesting falcons, the Habitat Division of the Department of Fish and Game should be consulted prior to issuing permits on the state-owned waters and riverbeds in the following areas:

- T17N R53W S.M. sec. 1-3, 10-15, 22-27, and 34-36
- T17N R54W S.M. sec. 1-18
- T17N R56W S.M. sec. 1-18

# RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

## Management Unit 17 - Aniak River

Resource	Subunit			
	17a	17b	17c	17d
Agriculture	Low potential	Low potential to unsuited	Low potential to unsuited	Low potential
Energy	---	---	---	---
Fish	Aniak, Kipchuk, Salmon rivers: salmon, rainbow trout, resident fish	Aniak, Kipchuk, Salmon rivers: salmon, rainbow trout, resident fish	None documented	Aniak River: salmon, rainbow trout, other resident fish
Forestry	Moderate to high value	Most unsuited, some pockets of low value on rivers	Unsuited	High value
Grazing	High potential	High potential	High potential	High potential
Historic/cultural	High values along Aniak River	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Materials	Unknown	Unsuited	Unsuited	Unsuited
Minerals	Very low potential	Most low to very low potential, some moderate to very high in headwaters, esp. Atsoksovluk Creek; a few existing claims	Moderate to very low potential; a few existing claims	Very low potential
Oil & gas	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Public access	Boat, plane, & trails on Aniak River	Boat on Aniak, Salmon, Kipchuk rivers; plane to Aniak L. & gravel airstrips	Local mining trails & gravel airstrips west Aniak River	Boat, trails on Aniak R.
Recreation	Statewide and national use for fishing & floating	statewide and national use for fishing & floating	Unknown	Moderate to high local use
Settlement suitability	High	Most unsuited, some pockets of low to high	Unsuited	High in north block, low in south block
Wildlife	A-2; moose rutting & winter range; brown bear conc.; caribou	A-2/B-1; moose rutting & winter range; brown bear conc.; caribou calving near Aniak L.	B-2; bear, caribou, moose	A-2; moose rutting & winter range; bear
Important trails	Aniak R. trail	Salmon R.-Marvel Dome, Timber Cr.-Cinnabar C.	Sawpit Cr. trail, Dominion Cr. trail	Chuathbaluk-Aniak R. trails

See glossary for definition of ratings.

# RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

## Management Unit 17 - Aniak River

Resource	Subunit 17e
Agriculture	Moderate potential
Energy	---
Fish	Kuskokwim River: salmon resident fish
Forestry	Most unsuited, pockets of high value timber on river
Grazing	High potential
Historic/ cultural	High values along Kuskokwim River
Materials	Potential sites along Kuskokwim River
Minerals	Very low potential
Oil & gas	Unknown
Public access	Boat on Kuskokwim R. in north block; plane to Kolmakof Lake
Recreation	Moderate use on Kuskokwim River
Settlement suitability	Most unsuited, pockets of high along river
Wildlife	A-2; bear, moose
Important trails	Kuskokwim R. winter trail

See glossary for definition of ratings.

# LAND-USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

## MANAGEMENT UNIT 17 - ANIAK RIVER

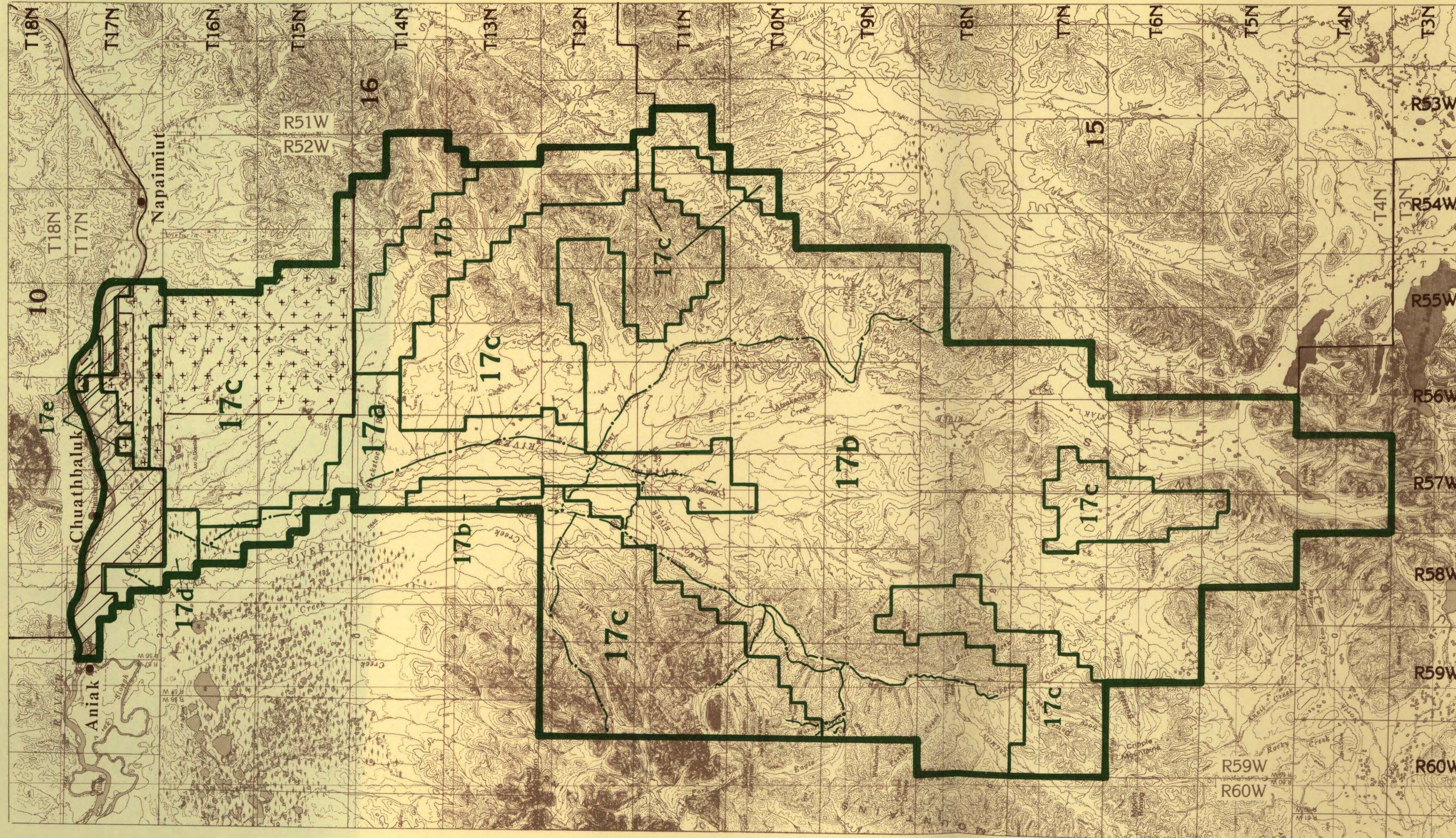
SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				COMMENTS
		Primary Surface Uses	Secondary Surface Uses	Prohibited Surface Uses <sup>a</sup>	Subsurface <sup>b</sup>	
17a Aniak Corridor	Most state, some state selected	Forestry Public recreation Wildlife habitat		Commercial recreation leases Grazing in part of subunit Land disposals Remote cabins	Open except along some streams	
17b Upper Aniak	State	Public recreation Wildlife habitat		Commercial recreation leases Grazing in part of subunit Land disposals Remote cabins	Open except along some streams	
17c Hinterlands	Part state, part state selected	General use: low resource values		Land disposal Remote cabins	Open except along some streams	
17d Aniak- Doestock	Part state, part state selected	Settlement	Forestry Public recreation Wildlife habitat	Grazing in part of subunit Remote cabins Trapping cabins after sale is scheduled	Closed prior to sale	Net acreage = 1,400 1998 or later
17e Kolmakof Lake	State selected state select/ Native selected	Public recreation Wildlife habitat	Forestry	Land disposal Remote cabins	Open	

<sup>a</sup>Other 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).

<sup>b</sup>All 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.



# 17: Aniak River



- Management Unit Boundary
- Subunit Boundary

- State Owned
- State Selected
- Native Owned
- Native Selected
- Federal
- Trails on public lands
- Access easements to public land  
ANCSA 17 (b) easements  
& State Omnibus roads

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:  
Russian Mission  
Sleetmute  
Taylor Mts.  
Bethel

Map Scale:  
1:500,000