

MANAGEMENT UNIT 7: INNOKO RIVER

Background

Location and Land Ownership. The Innoko management unit consists of the watersheds within the planning area that drain into the Innoko River. Major tributaries that are included in this unit are: Hunch, Colorado, Folger, and Beaver creeks. Approximately 95 percent of the lands in this unit are state owned or state selected. Only a few sections are overlapping Native and state selections. Native-owned land in this unit totals approximately two townships located near Ophir. Approximately 76 mineral claim patents and applications are located in the unit. All of these are located near Ophir. One Native allotment is located near Ophir and three are located near Cripple Landing. Although there are few year-round residents in the area, there is a major influx of miners into the region during the summer months to placer operations, near Folger, Madison Mountain, Ophir, and Ganes Creek.

Resources. This unit contains narrow riparian stands of white spruce along the lower Innoko River, Hunch Creek, and Folger Creek. The upper Innoko floodplain is vegetated primarily with mixed spruce, birch, and cottonwood. Middle elevations support mixed shrubs. Higher elevations are primarily covered with open stands of black spruce with some hardwoods on south-facing slopes.

Land Use. Timber in this unit is primarily used for house logs, firewood, and mining-related activities. The main uses and potential of state lands and waters in the area are mining, trails that access the mining districts, the Iditarod National Historic Trail system and race trail, personal-use timber, and a possible road corridor between Ophir and Poorman.

Because of the distance by river from communities and the lack of diversity of big game, subsistence hunting and trapping are taking place at low levels. McGrath and Takotna residents hunt moose along the upper Innoko River. They also hunt moose and bear and

trap beaver along the Ophir-Takotna Road and Beaver Creek. Caribou are hunted on the upper reaches of Folger Creek. Bear hunting and beaver trapping also take place in the vicinity of Folger. There are only two exclusive use guiding areas in the unit.

Access. State lands near Ophir are readily accessible by a road which connects with Takotna and Sterling Landing. The road to Sterling Landing is owned by the state, is maintained by DOT/PF on a seasonal basis, and is open to the public. A DOT/PF-owned airstrip is located in Ophir which is now closed. Private airstrips are located at Ganes Creek and at Folger. Cat trails are frequently used, primarily in winter, to transport equipment, fuel, and goods to mining operations. Because of its distance from the Yukon River villages, the upper Innoko River is a seldom-used means of access in summer. However, sections of the river are used as a winter trail.

Trails and historic sites in the unit are associated primarily with mining which dates back to the first gold rush into the area in 1907 after gold was discovered at Ganes Creek. Many of these trails are now identified as part of the Iditarod National Historic Trail system (Appendix C) which connected Ophir, Ganes Creek, Folger, Cripple Landing, and Dishkakat. Trails near these heavily-mineralized areas are some of the densest in the entire planning area. Many of these trails are still used by miners to access claims. The Iditarod race trail follows these old trails and passes through Takotna, Ophir, and Cripple Landing. These areas also have documented concentrations of historic sites associated with mining in the early part of this century.

Management Intent

Because of the remote location of this unit, high subsurface values, and distances from population centers, the primary historic and

current use of this area has been activities associated with mining. Activities and resources associated with mining include mining claims, highly mineralized areas, trail use, historic sites, and timber harvest. State lands within this unit will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use. Because of the area's distance from existing communities and generally low habitat values (with the exception of winter moose habitat, trapping, and anadromous streams along the Innoko River) this area is suitable for remote cabins at low density. Approximately 30 remote cabin permits will be allowed in this unit with no more than three cabins in any one township. To avoid conflicts with mining activities in areas with both high mineral potential and current mining, remote cabin permits will not be allowed in the Folger, upper Folger Creek, Ganes Creek, Yankee Creek, Spaulding Creek, Ophir, and Madison Creek areas (Map 2.2).

Although bordered by Native-owned lands, the bed of the upper Innoko River and the lower reaches of some of its larger tributaries are navigable and subject to the guidelines in the plan. State-owned beds of navigable waters in this unit will remain open to mineral entry.

Subunit 7a - Ophir-Folger-Madison-Twin Mountains

This subunit contains some of the richest mineralized lands in the planning area. Mining dates back to the gold rush era. Remote cabin permits are not allowed in this subunit because of potential conflicts with mining, public use, and trapping. Wildlife resources are utilized to a limited degree in this subunit. McGrath and Takotna residents hunt and trap in the areas around Ophir and Folger. This subunit contains portions of the Iditarod National Historic Trail system and race trail. These and other trails are extensively used to access mining claims around Folger, Ophir, Ganes Creek, and Eldorado Creek. The subunit will be kept in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on minerals, transportation, and wildlife habitat.

Subunit 7b - Innoko River Corridor

This subunit is entirely state owned. Two trapping cabin permits have been issued in this subunit on the Innoko River. Lands along the Innoko River contain several trails including the Iditarod National Historic Trail system and race trail. These trails and the Innoko River provide the primary means of access into this subunit. The lands along the Innoko River contain the highest timber values in the unit but are used only to a limited degree at present. The Innoko River corridor contains winter moose concentration and anadromous fish habitat. A proposed road corridor that would connect Ophir and Poorman passes through this subunit; it parallels the Innoko River and Hunch Creek (see Appendix C). Grazing is not permitted along the Innoko River to avoid conflicts with moose habitat. McGrath and Takotna residents hunt and trap along the upper Innoko River and along upper Beaver and Folger creeks. This subunit also contains some mineralized lands near Madison Mountain, Beaver Creek, and Twin Mountain. Lands in this subunit will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on forestry, transportation, and wildlife habitat.

Subunit 7c - Hinterlands

Lands in this subunit are state owned, contain low surface resource values and do not have river or road access. One trapping cabin permit has been applied for on the south fork of Folger Creek. State lands in this unit will be managed for general multiple use. Remote cabin permits are allowed in parts of the subunit east of the Beaver Mountains and north of Cloudy Mountain. The subunit is primarily used for access to mineralized areas near Folger, Madison Mountain, Ophir, and Ganes Creek. Options for access will be protected and remote cabins will be set back from identified trails as prescribed in Chapter 2. The land within the subunit will be retained in public ownership and managed for general use.

Subunit 7d - Innoko River Uplands

Lands in this subunit are mostly state owned with some overlapping state and Native selections. With the exception of the block near Ophir, this subunit does not have river or road access. There are, however, cat trails which access mining claims. Segments of the Iditarod National Historic Trail System also cross this subunit. McGrath and Takotna residents hunt and trap in areas around Ophir. This unit contains habitat for moose, bear, and furbearers but other surface resource values are low. Remote cabin permits will be allowed in northern-most block of the subunit. The land within the subunit will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on wildlife habitat.

Management Guidelines

The complete set of 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:

- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Forestry
- Public access
- Remote cabins and trapping cabins
- Subsurface resources
- Trail management

Subunits 7a and 7b - Ophir-Folger-Madison-Twin Mountains, and Innoko River Corridor

Grazing. Grazing leases or permits will not be allowed within 2.5 miles of the Innoko River between the north plan boundary and the mouth of Warner Creek in subunits 7a and 7b because of the areas importance as a moose winter concentration area (Map 2.1). Temporary passage is not prohibited through this

river corridor 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").

Subunits 7c and 7d - Hinterlands and Innoko River Uplands

Remote Cabin Permit Areas. Parts of these subunits are within the Dishna and Folger blocks of the Dishna-Folger-Tatalina remote cabin permit area. Boundaries of the area open for remote cabin permits are shown on Map 2.2. Parts of subunits 7c and 7d are also within these blocks. A total of 74 remote cabin permits will be allowed in the Dishna block, and a total of 36 remote cabin permits will be allowed in the Folger block, with a maximum of three remote cabin permits allowed in any one township.

Subunits 7a, 7b, and 7c - Ophir-Folger-Madison-Twin Mountains, Innoko River Corridor, and Hinterlands

Ophir - Poorman Road Corridor. Residents of Takotna have expressed interest in maintaining options for a future road corridor between Ophir and Poorman. DOT/PF has conducted a preliminary reconnaissance survey and identified a general corridor through which the road might pass. Because the survey was based on aerial photos and the USDA Exploratory Soil Survey, the possible corridor is a generalized 1-3 mile-wide route (see Appendix C) in subunits 7a, 7b, and 7c. Beginning at Ophir, it follows the Innoko River to just south of Cripple Landing at which point it follows Hunch Creek and passes just southeast of Hunch Mountain.

Iditarod National Historic Trail system and race trail. Both trail systems pass through these subunits. Setbacks along them will be consistent with policies in Chapter 2.

RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

Management Unit 7 - Innoko River

Resource	Subunit			
	7a	7b	7c	7d
Agriculture	Unsuitable	Most unsuitable, low along Hunch Cr.	Unsuitable	Unsuitable
Energy	Very low coal potential	Very low coal potential	Mostly very low; low coal potential near Fossil Mt.; rest very low	Very low coal potential
Fish	Innoko R., Beaver Cr., Gaines Cr.: resident fish; Innoko R.: salmon	Salmon & resident fish	Resident fish	Resident fish
Forestry	High potential along upper Innoko R.; moderate on some S slopes; rest unsuitable	High to moderate potential along Innoko R., lower Beaver & Hunch Cr.; rest unsuitable	Low along Folger Cr.; rest unsuitable	Low to unsuitable
Grazing	High potential	High potential	High potential	High potential
Historic/cultural	Historic sites at Ophir & Folger; Iditarod NHTS	Iditarod NHTS Historical sites near Ophir	Iditarod NHTS	Iditarod NHTS
Materials	Low potential	Low to moderate potential	Low potential	Low potential
Minerals	High to very high near Ophir, Folger, and Eldorado creeks; numerous mining claims	Low to moderate; numerous mining claims	Moderate to high potential; numerous mining claims	Moderate to low; mining claims
Oil & gas	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Public access	Ophir-Takotna road, boats on Innoko R., airstrips, cat trails	Boat on Innoko R., airstrips, cat trails	Cat trails	Cat trails
Recreation	Low except along Iditarod Tr.	Low except along Iditarod Tr.	Low except along Iditarod Tr.	Low
Settlement suitability	High along Innoko R.; rest low to unsuited	High along Innoko R.; rest low to unsuited	Low on Folger Cr. & S slopes; rest unsuitable	Unsuitable
Wildlife	Mostly B-2, some A-2 and C; bear, moose	A-2 and B-1; moose winter range, bear, waterfowl	Mostly C, some B-2; bear, moose	A-2 and B-1; bear, moose
Important trails	Iditarod Race Trail & NHTS, cat trails	Iditarod Race Trail & NHTS, cat trails	Iditarod Race Trail & NHTS, cat trails	Iditarod NHTS, cat trails

See glossary for definition of ratings.

LAND-USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

MANAGEMENT UNIT 7 - INNOKO RIVER





SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				COMMENTS
		Primary Surface Uses	Secondary Surface Uses	Prohibited Surface Uses ^a	Subsurface ^b	
7a Ophir-Folger Madison-Twin Mountains	Most state, some state/ Native select. some private	Minerals Transportation Wildlife habitat	Forestry Public recreation	Grazing in part of subunit Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	
7b Innoko River Corridor	Most state, some state/ Native select.	Forestry Transportation Wildlife habitat	Public recreation	Grazing in part of subunit Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	Includes proposed road corridor along Innoko River
7c Hinterlands	State, some state select.	General use: low resource values	Remote cabins in part of subunit	Land disposals Remote cabins in part of subunit	Open	Road corridor along Innoko River
7d Innoko River Uplands	State, some state/Native selected	Wildlife habitat	Remote cabins in part of subunit	Land disposals Remote cabins in part of subunit	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).

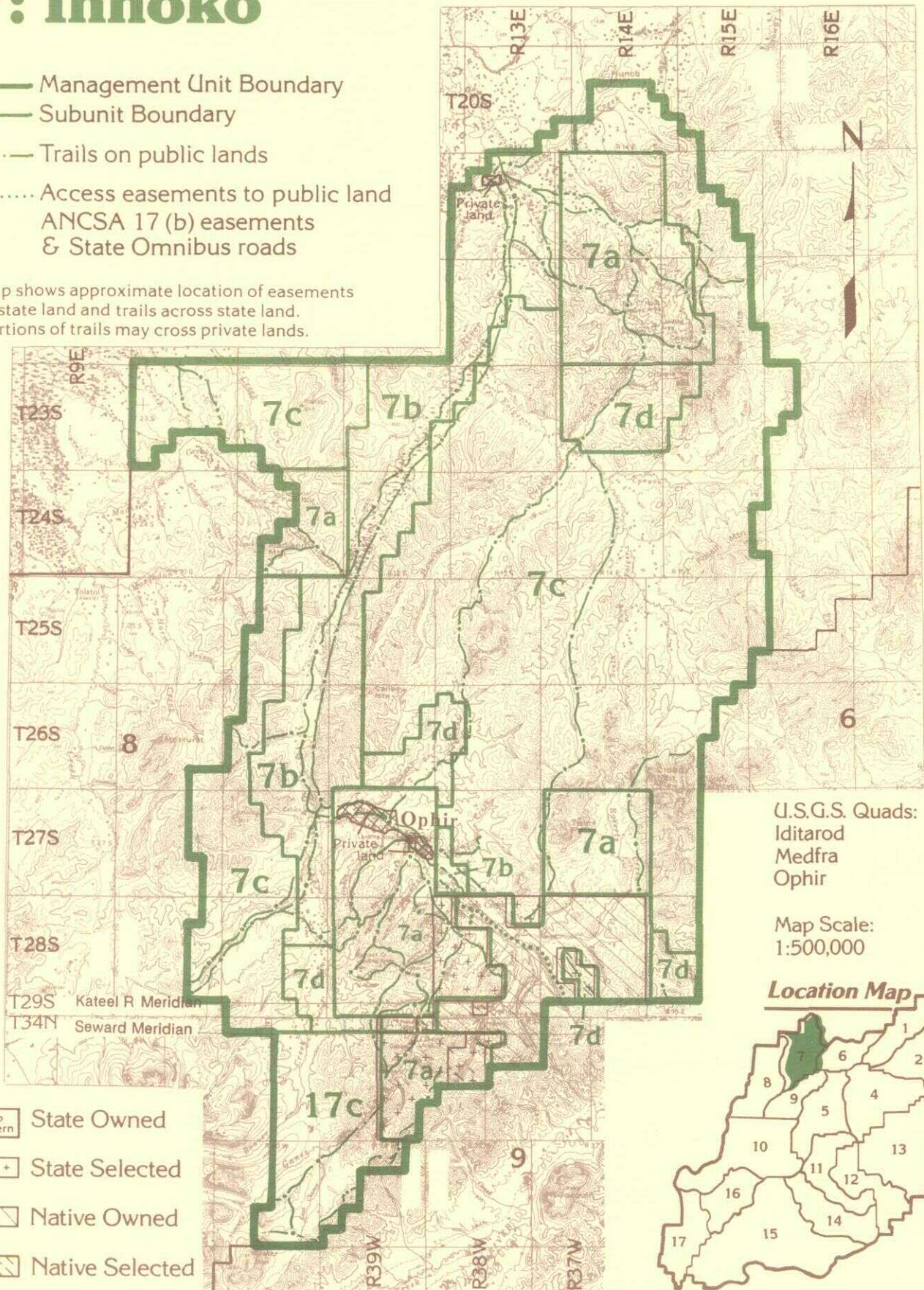
^bAll areas are available for leasing for leasable minerals. Statements of whether or not the unit is open to mineral entry refer only to locatable minerals.





Kuskokwim Area Plan

7: Innoko

-  Management Unit Boundary
-  Subunit Boundary
-  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.



-  State Owned
-  State Selected
-  Native Owned
-  Native Selected

U.S.G.S. Quads:
Iditarod
Medfra
Ophir

Map Scale:
1:500,000

Location Map

