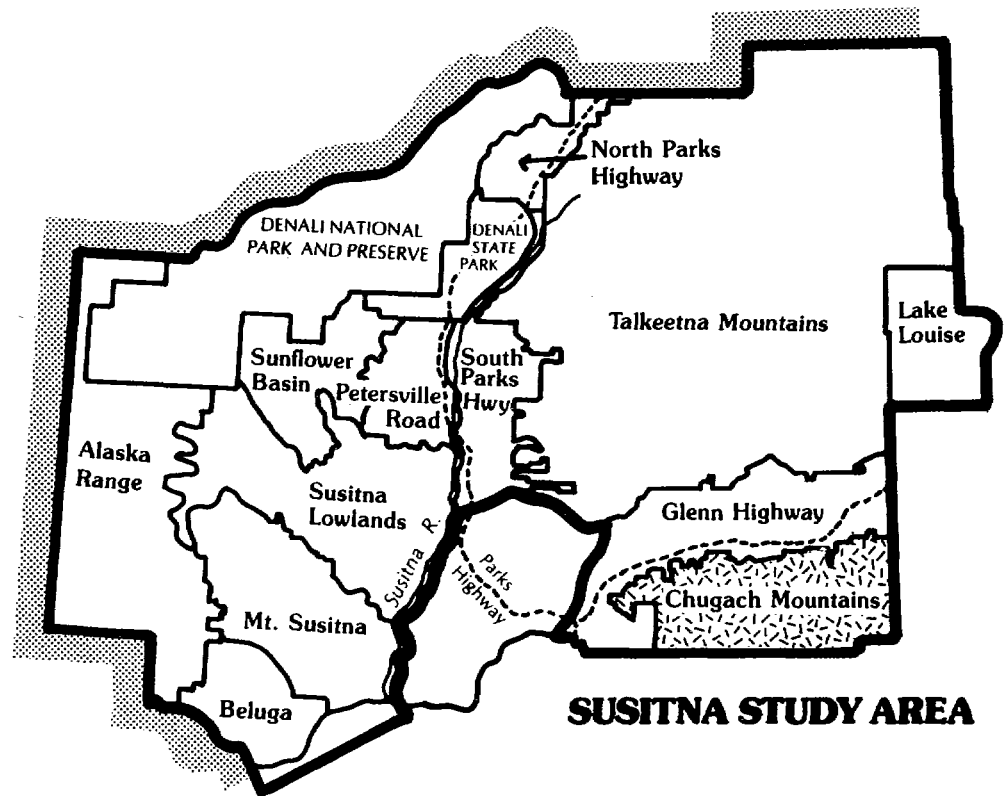


CHUGACH MOUNTAINS SUBREGION



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The following section describes land use policy within the Chugach Mountains Subregion. It is divided into two parts. The first is an overview of resources and their management for the subregion as a whole. The second presents specific statements of management intent, land use designations, prohibited uses, and management guidelines for each of the subregion's four subunits. Maps showing land ownership in the subregion and boundaries of subunits are presented at the end of the second part.

1. SUBREGION OVERVIEW

Background

This subregion encompasses the northern flank of the Chugach Range. It includes primarily the mountainous areas above 1000 feet in elevation. The lowland, farming areas near Butte are part of the Glenn Highway Subregion, as is the Jim-Swan Lakes area. The majority of land in this subregion is owned by the State of Alaska, although the Eklutna Native Corporation owns some land in the western portion. The Matanuska River is a barrier between road-accessible portions of the borough and the land within this subregion.

The area supports considerable recreational use, including hunting, hiking, climbing, and skiing. It also provides important habitat for sheep, bear, moose, waterfowl and small game. In addition, the area has potential for long-term mineral development. There is one large grazing lease (approximately 50,000 acres) that is mostly south of the Glenn Highway in the northeast portion of the subregion. The lease also extends north into the Glenn Highway Subregion as far as Tahnetta Lake. It encompasses portions of the South and East forks of the Matanuska River and Trail Creek.

Existing access into the area is primarily by air and trail. Several trails run up the Knik River Valley and along Moose Creek. In addition, there is a trail that extends southeast from the Glenn Highway down to the east side of Nelchina Glacier. These trails commonly are used to reach popular moose, bear, and sheep hunting areas. There are no plans to provide additional transportation routes to or within this management unit.

Management Summary

It is anticipated that the majority of this subregion will remain undeveloped and roadless for many years. It will be retained in public ownership and managed to

protect existing values and uses: fish and wildlife, recreation, and minerals. Two townships of federal land in the southeast portion of the subregion have been selected as part of the state's land entitlement. This land has not yet been conveyed to the state. Because the land has low resource values, it is recommended that the selection be relinquished so the state may select more valuable land elsewhere.

Further details of management intent by resource are presented below:

Settlement

No areas are recommended for land sales because there is little potential for settlement due to topography and climate.

Agriculture and Grazing

There are no areas recommended for agricultural development since there is little potential for agriculture due to topographic limitations, climate, and poor soils. Land in the Lazy Mountain area, however, has potential for grazing. Grazing will be designated a secondary use in this area.

Forestry

There is little potential for forestry due to topographic and climatic limitations. Forestry is not a designated use in this subregion because of these limitations.

Fish and Wildlife

This area supports sheep, brown bear, moose, furbearers, and small game. Moose concentrate mainly in the river valleys at lower elevations. Sheep and brown bear are found at higher elevations. Sheep populations are estimated to be between 3,500 — 4,000 animals, 100 — 150 of which are harvested annually. The area will be retained in public ownership to support fish and wildlife habitat and human use.

Recreation

Recreational activities supported by this area in addition to hunting, include hiking, mountain and glacier climbing, and skiing. The area will be retained in public ownership to protect recreational opportunities.

Subsurface

Hardrock mining and mineral exploration are and will continue to be very important activities in this

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subregion. Known deposits include chromium, copper, nickel, zinc, and gold. Concentrations of claims generally occur near river valleys. There is little potential for coal or oil and gas. The great majority of public lands will remain open to mineral location except for the mineral lick area (within subunits 1a & 1d) which is open under leasehold. All public land in this subregion is open to exploration and development of coal and oil and gas.

Transportation

There are no immediate plans to increase access to this area. Access will continue to be primarily by air and trail.