

MANAGEMENT UNIT 7 – TALACHULITNA RIVER

MANAGEMENT INTENT

Management Unit 7 includes lands along the Talachulitna River and Creek system from its confluence with the Skwentna River to Judd and Wolf lakes. The headwaters are split between the river proper, which flows south and west from the Wolf Lakes near Beluga Mt., and Talachulitna Creek which flows easterly from Talachulitna and Judd lakes. Most of the recreational values are concentrated along the boatable portions of Talachulitna Creek from Judd Lake to the confluence with the Talachulitna River and from there north to the confluence with the Skwentna River. The Talachulitna system is one of the most valuable sport fishing waterways in the entire Susitna drainage and is one of the major contributors to the Cook Inlet sockeye and pink salmon commercial fishery. It is also extremely valuable for public recreation, particularly floating.

This management unit will be retained in public ownership. In addition it is recommended for legislative designation to protect water quality, fishery and riparian habitat values, and recreational opportunities along the river and creek. The lands will be managed to provide wilderness recreation while protecting the existing natural resources. At appropriate locations, boat launches and public use cabins or other facilities should be constructed. Land sales and grazing are prohibited throughout the management unit. Public facilities such as campgrounds and boat launches also will be encouraged at Judd Lake, a key access point for float trips. Forestry is a secondary use in this management unit. Timber harvesting is allowed only for personal use and only when consistent with the habitat and public objectives for the corridor, including the intent to maintain the wilderness character of the corridor.

It is recommended that a management plan be prepared for Management Unit 7. The management plan will, among other things, determine what facilities (e.g., campgrounds, put-in and take-out points for float trips, public use cabins) are necessary to support public use of the river and to protect the fish and wildlife and recreation resources within the corridor. Facilities should be designed to preserve the wilderness character of the river corridor. The management plan also will determine whether or not remote cabins will be permitted in this subunit. See the map at the end of this section for the boundary of the management unit and the accompanying chart for a summary of allowed land uses. Management Unit 7 will be closed to mineral location and unavailable for coal leasing to protect the habitat and recreation resources and water

quality along the Talachulitna River and Talachulitna Creek. All public lands in this unit are available for oil and gas leasing.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The complete set of areawide management guidelines is presented in Chapter 2 of this plan. All of the guidelines potentially apply to uses within this management unit; however, those that are most likely to be applicable are indicated with asterisks in the list below.

- Agriculture
- *Fish and Wildlife
- Forestry
- *Recreation
- Settlement
- Subsurface
- Transportation
- Instream Flow
- Lakeshore Management
- *Public Access
- Remote Cabin Permits
- *Stream Corridors
- *Trail Management
- Wetlands Management
- Resource Management

Management guidelines that apply to this management unit only are presented below.

Interagency Consultation

Since protection of habitat and recreational values is of such importance in this unit, and the area is being recommended for legislative designation, special consideration should be given to consulting with the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and the Department of Fish and Game when reviewing permit or lease applications in this unit.

Public Use Cabins

The Talachulitna River corridor is a priority area for the construction of public use cabins. Public cabins should be sited by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources in consultation with the Department of Fish and Game and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Siting should be in conjunction with conveniently located boat launches and done so as to ensure safety along the river while minimizing visual impacts along the shore.

LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

SUBREGION Mt. Susitna

MANAGEMENT UNIT 7 – Talachulitna River

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP (GENERALIZED)	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				PROHIBITED SURFACE USE(S)*	COMMENTS
		SURFACE		SUBSURFACE			
		PRIMARY USE(S)	SECONDARY USE(S)	LOCATABLE MINERALS	LEASEABLE MINERALS		
7 Talachulitna River Corridor	State/ Borough	Public Recreation Water Resources Wildlife Habitat	Forestry (personal use)	Closed	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Grazing Land Disposals	Recommended for legislative des- ignation

*Other uses such as material sales, land leases, remote cabin permits, etc., that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement and management guidelines of this unit, and with the relevant management guidelines in chapter 2.

Cabin sites shall be dispersed along the river and creek corridors in a very low density because of the limited forest resources. Public use cabins shall not be permitted within 200' on either side of the Talachulitna River or Creek. Public use cabins will not be permitted within 100' of any of the other streams shown on the 1:63,360 scale USGS topographic maps.

Oil and Gas

Oil and gas exploration and development activities will be sited and/or timed to mitigate impacts on the fish and wildlife habitat and public use values of the Talachulitna River corridor. Specific mitigation measures necessary to protect the values for which the river corridor was designated will be developed as part of the lease sale process. Mitigation measures will be developed on a case-by-case basis considering timing, topography, vegetation and other factors affecting the impact of oil and gas exploration and development activities on fish and wildlife, habitat and public use values.

Water Quality

Water entering the Talachulitna River should remain undiminished in quality and quantity.

Management Planning/Remote Cabins

Remote cabin permits will not be offered until and unless areas open to remote cabins are designated by a management plan.