

MANAGEMENT UNIT 11: KAHILTNA-KROTO

MANAGEMENT INTENT

Management Unit 11 contains the corridors of Kroto and Moose Creeks, a section of the Kahiltna River corridor, and a large area of lowland forest with stringers of wetlands between Kroto Creek and the Kahiltna. Kroto and Moose Creeks and their major tributary, Chijuk Creek (the stream entering Kroto Creek in Section 28 of T21N R6W S.M.), are important anadromous fish streams and spring concentration areas for black bear and are used extensively for fishing and boating. The unit is highly productive for timber of commercial value and is of moderate value for moose winter range. It offers opportunities for settlement and small scale agricultural development. There are concentrations of mining claims along the Kahiltna although there is little mining activity at present. The river corridors in the unit will be retained in public ownership and managed for public recreation and fish and wildlife habitat as well as protection of water resources. Most of the forest lands also will be retained in public ownership and managed for timber and wildlife habitat. Several sites have been designated for agricultural homesteads, and a small settlement area is designated near Neil Lake.

This management unit is currently inaccessible by road. It is likely that roads eventually will extend south into and through the Amber Lake area and into this management unit. A road would make these lands accessible for timber management; hunting, fishing and other types of recreation; agricultural development and settlement. See the Transportation section of Chapter 4 for additional information on the routes proposed for consideration for future access development.

The large forest and wetland areas in subunit 11a and 11e will remain open to mineral location except for land along Chijuk Creek and be available for coal leasing. Five subunits will be closed to mineral location and unavailable for coal leasing. They include areas open to settlement (11d and 11e) or agriculture (11g), the Kroto Creek-Moose Creek corridor proposed for legislative designation (11b), and a public recreation site on the Kahiltna River (11c). All public lands in this unit are available for oil and gas leasing.

The seven subunits within this area are the forest land and wetlands between the Kahiltna River and Kroto Creek corridor (11a), the Kroto-Creek-Moose Creek corridor (11b), a public recreation site on the Kahiltna River (11c), the past Neil Lake remote parcel area (11d), an additional disposal area at Neil Lake (11e), the wetlands between Kroto Creek and Moose Creek (11f), and agricultural homestead areas west of Kroto

Creek (11g). See the maps at the end of this section for boundaries of these areas, and the accompanying chart for a summary of land uses for each subunit.

Subunit 11a, the forest and wetland areas between Kroto Creek and the Kahiltna River will be retained in public ownership and managed for timber, water and wildlife resources. Because of the high potential for commercial forestry and importance of the area for moose winter range, this subunit is recommended for legislative designation. Although there is no existing road access into this subunit, access could be provided in the next 5-10 years via extensions from Oilwell Road, or construction of a winter or year-round logging road that continues south of forest lands in Petersville Road subunit 1a.

Subunit 11b, the Kroto Creek-Moose Creek (Deshka River) corridor will be retained in public ownership and managed for hunting, fishing, riparian habitat and public recreation. Because of its extremely high public value it is recommended for legislative designation. The Department of Fish and Game ranked the Kroto-Moose system the most important in the entire study area in terms of a combination of habitat values and public use. It is one of five rivers in the study area proposed for legislative designation by ADNR and ADF&G in the Southcentral Recreation Action Plan. This corridor is an extension of the Kroto Creek and Moose Creek corridors proposed for legislative or administrative designation in Petersville Road subunits 1b and 4a. It is recommended that public use cabins be built on state lands in this subunit to support recreational use of Kroto and Moose Creeks.

Subunit 11c: A small area of land on the Kahiltna River is identified as a public recreation site. This unit will provide a public wayside and campground for river users.

Subunit 11d is the past Neil Lake remote parcel area. No additional sales are planned in this subunit because there are a large number of existing private parcels in the area and because it is important to keep some of the land near the lake available for public recreation. In addition, it is recommended that the state acquire property on Neil Lake adjacent to Kroto Creek to provide public access from the lake to the creek.

Subunit 11e (Neil Lake East) is identified for additional settlement. Because of its proximity to the Kroto Creek corridor and its accessibility by floatplane, this subunit is an important site for public as well as private recreation. Additional land sales shall be in a subdivision that will be designed to protect both public and private

LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

SUBREGION Susitna LowlandsMANAGEMENT UNIT 11 — Kahiltna-Kroto

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP (GENERALIZED)	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				PROHIBITED SURFACE USE(S)*	COMMENTS
		SURFACE		SUBSURFACE			
		PRIMARY USE(S)	SECONDARY USE(S)	LOCATABLE MINERALS	LEASEABLE MINERALS		
11a Forest land	State	Forestry Water Resources Wildlife Habitat	Public Rec.	Open except along Chijuk Creek (see mgmt. guidelines)	Available for leasing	Land Disposals Portions closed to grazing (see mgmt. guidelines)	Recommended for legislative designation
11b Kroto Cr./Moose Cr. Corridor	State/ Borough	Public Recreation Water Resources Wildlife Habitat	Forestry	Closed	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Grazing Land Disposals	Recommended for legislative designation
11c Kahiltna River Recreation site	State	Public Recreation	Forestry Wildlife Hab.	Closed	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Remote Cabins Trapper Cabins Land Disposals	—

*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.

LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

SUBREGION Susitna Lowlands

MANAGEMENT UNIT 11 - Kahiltna-Kroto

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP (GENERALIZED)	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				PROHIBITED SURFACE USE(S)*	COMMENTS
		SURFACE		SUBSURFACE			
		PRIMARY USE(S)	SECONDARY USE(S)	LOCATABLE MINERALS	LEASEABLE MINERALS		
11d Neil Lake	State/ Private	Settlement (past remote parcel area)	Forestry Public Rec. Wildlife Hab.	Closed	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Remote Cabins Trapper Cabins	—
11e Neil Lake East	State	Settlement	Forestry (personal use) Public Rec. Wildlife Hab.	Closed prior to disposal	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Remote Cabins Trapper Cabins	Estimated net disposal area = 510 acres
11f Wetlands	State	Wildlife Habitat Water Resources	Forestry Public Rec. Remote Cabins	Open	Available for leasing	Land Disposals	—
11g Kroto West homesteads	State	Agriculture (homesteads)	Forestry Public Rec. Wildlife Hab.	Closed along Chijuk Creek; rest of unit closed prior to disposal	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Remote Cabins Trapper Cabins	Estimated net disposal area = 2,200 acres

*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.

recreation opportunities. It is recommended that one or more public use cabins be constructed at Neil Lake.

Subunit 11f is a large wetland lying between Kroto and Moose Creeks. It will be retained in public ownership to protect water resources and wildlife habitat.

Subunit 11g includes three separate blocks of land near the eastern boundary of the management unit. These areas will be offered for private use through the agricultural homestead program.

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 & Wildlife Habitat
- *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 by subunit.

Management Unit 11 (all subunits)

Protection of Transportation Routes

Chapter 4 of this plan identifies a system of possible improvements to the regional and local transportation system. Two of these routes pass through this management unit. The precise location of these routes has not been determined, although a general location is shown on the maps in Chapter 4. Land use authorizations in this unit such as land sales, leases, or other actions should be located so as not to preclude the option to build these roads along feasible and efficient routes.

Subunit 11a (forest lands)

Mining

Lands within 400' each side of the Chijuk Creek will be closed to mineral entry. The closure is intended to protect water quality and fish and wildlife habitat on one of the most important tributaries to Kroto Creek.

Grazing

Grazing is prohibited within the riparian zone along the Kahiltna River.

Subunits 11a & 11b (Forest lands and Kroto Creek-Moose Creek)

Management Plans and Remote Cabins

It is recommended that a joint management plan be prepared for subunits 11a and 11b. The management plan will determine, among other things, whether or not remote cabins will be permitted in these subunits. Remote cabin permits will not be offered until and unless areas open to remote cabins are designated by a management plan.

Subunit 11b (Kroto Creek-Moose Creek corridor)

Transportation

Road crossings of Kroto and Moose Creeks should be minimized. Road crossings must be designed in consultation with the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and the Department of Fish and Game.

Since protection of habitat and recreation 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.

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 Kroto Creek-Moose Creek corridor. Specific mitigation measures necessary to protect the values for which the river corridor was established will be developed as part of the lease sale process. Mitigation measures will be developed on a case by case basis consider-

ing 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.

Subunit 11c (Kahiltna River Recreation site)

Recreation

Exact boundaries of subunit 11c will be determined following site planning for recreation facilities. Acreage in subunit 11c not included in the recreation site will be added to subunit 11a.

Subunits 11d and 11e (Neil Lake and Neil Lake East)

Lakeshore Management

No additional land within 500 feet of the shoreline of Neil Lake will be sold. Public access from the lake to Kroto Creek must be maintained. If necessary, access will be maintained through purchase of a public corridor.

Subunits 11d, 11e & 11g (Neil Lake, Neil Lake East, and agricultural homesteads)

Stream Corridors

The management intent for land adjacent to the streams referenced below is to permit fishing, camping and other active uses, and to protect water quality and riparian habitat. Consequently, this land should be retained in public ownership. Corridor widths will be set on a case-by-case basis using policies in Chapter 2. The standard minimum buffer width (200' on each side of the river) should be used on the unnamed streams that appear on the 1:63,360 scale USGS topographic maps. On Chijuk Creek, one of the most important tributaries to Kroto Creek, the buffer should be 400' on each side of the creek to permit hunting and provide camping opportunities.

Subunit 11g (Kroto West Ag Homesteads)

Subsurface

Lands within 400' each side of Chijuk Creek are closed to mineral entry.