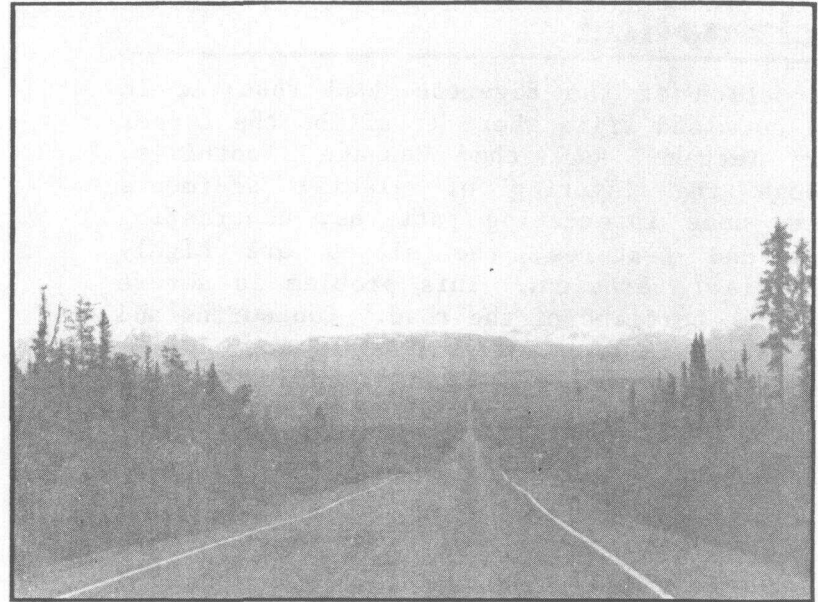


Approach to Kenny Lake

General Description

Management Unit 21 originates at the junction with the Richardson Highway at Pippin Lake and extends east along the Edgerton Road for 7.7 miles to the community of Kenny Lake. Located on the broad Copper River terrace, the area is densely forested in spruce and aspen, which generally encroaches close to the road edge. From a high vantage point near Pippin Lake, the terrain falls off in a series of rolling terraces towards the east, providing a magnificent open panorama of the Wrangells on the near horizon, including the peaks of Mt. Drum, Mt. Sanford, Mt. Wrangell and Mt. Blackburn. This memorable vista is characteristic of the entire unit and is one of its most photogenic aspects. There are views of the Chugach Mountains to the south, but the lack of notable views and the climb back up the terrace make the drive in the westbound direction much less dramatic.

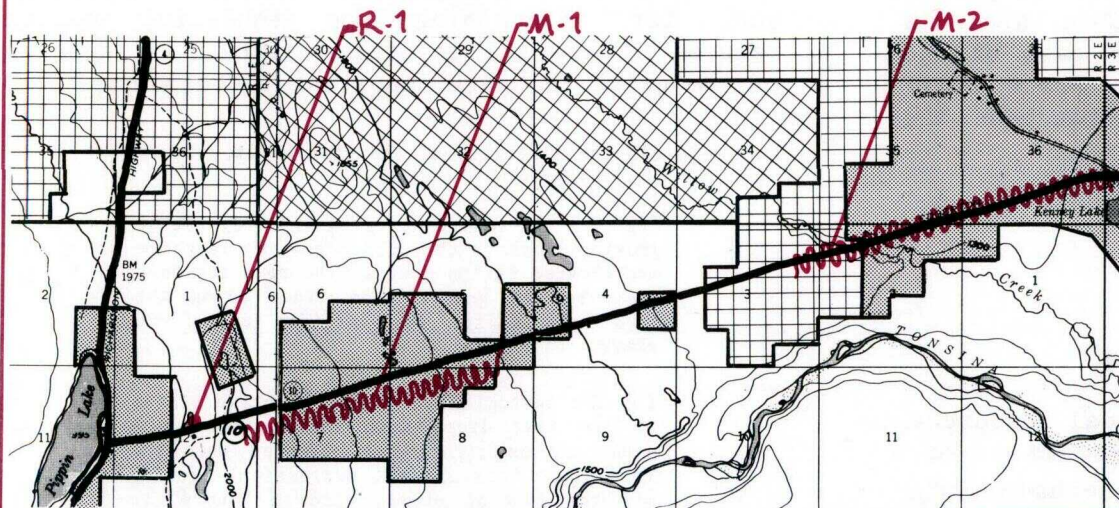
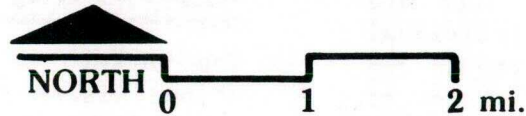


This eight mile long straight stretch of road is a unique aspect of the unit, providing excellent views of the Wrangells. Varying the vegetation cutting practices and species along the right-of-way can help create some roadside diversity.

The road itself is one of the most distinctive elements in this unit. For almost the full length of the unit it cuts an almost perfectly straight path across the uplands. This is broken only by small depressions and ridges, giving the road a slight roller coaster quality. As the road drops into one of the depressions, the views to the Wrangells are temporarily enclosed, then open again as the road crests the next small ridge. The dense spruce and aspen vegetation aligning the road accent its linearity. While as a general rule, long straight road tangents create uninteresting driving experiences, the combi-

21 Approach to Kenny Lake

Assessment Units E1 – E4



KEY


R- Reclamation

M- Impact Mitigation

 Native Corp. Land

 Native Selected Land

 Federal Land

 Private Land

nation of the distant Wrangell Mountains with the ramrod-straight road slicing across the foreground landscape creates an impressive vista. For many this opening drive along the Edgerton is one of its more memorable and pleasant aspects.

Beyond the road, the unit has a rural, farm character. Numerous residential lots line the road-

side, in addition to a number of community facilities such as a school and church. Although not dominant, there are several farms and cultivated fields scattered throughout the unit. In general, however, the area appears only moderately developed; and from the western end the view across the unit is of an evenly forested landscape.

Land Ownership & Management Responsibility

The pattern of land ownership is a patchwork in Unit 21. Most of the lands along the road are privately owned - either in small, individual parcels or larger Native holdings (allotments and corporation lands). There are several pieces of State land near Willow Creek including one parcel slated for a state land disposal. There is also a large materials site only 1/2 mile east of the Richardson-Edgerton junction. The State DOTPF manages a 200 foot right-of-way throughout the unit.

Visual Resource Management Objectives

The management of the high value visual resources in this predominantly privately-owned area, should be guided by three themes: enhancement, appropriate roadside management, and sensitive land use and development.

Enhancement: To enhance the dramatic visual relationship of the mountains and road using vegetation to complement the road's linearity and accent periodic vistas that open at ridges.

Appropriate Roadside Management: To manage right-of-way lands in a manner that retains the special relationship of the road to the landscape and minimizes development intrusions in this corridor.

Sensitive Land Use and Development: To encourage private development - particularly agriculture - that is sensitive to the rural quality and scenic values of the area.

Management Recommendations

Right-of-Way Management

The pattern of private land ownership and the strong visual role played by the road in Unit 21 makes right-of-way management the most important tool for maintaining and enhancing scenic values. There are several qualities or aspects of the drive that are important to retain:

(1) The linearity of the road as it crosses the plateau.

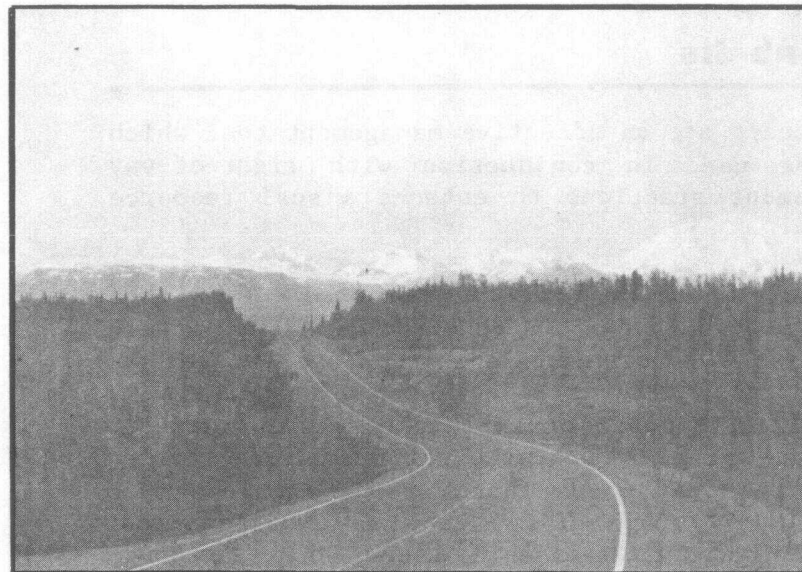
(2) The enclosure created by vegetation growing close to the road edge. While there are cleared strips next to the road for some segments, in general the trees along the road help define the corridor and focus views.

(3) The periodic opening of mountain vistas as the road drops down the terraces. A sense of anticipation is created when the road drops into a small depression, closing off the distant views, with an "entry" to the area beyond defined by trees growing close to the road on the next ridge. The surprise comes as the crest is reached and the view opens to the next valley. This sequential experience is characteristic of the drive to Kenny Lake.

These qualities, which are essential to the character of this segment of road, can be maintained with sensitive management practices on the part of DOTPF's maintenance crews affecting brush clearing, retention of trees and other vegetation in the right-of-way, and planting programs.

Specific guidelines for right-of-way management include the following:

- Retain all native vegetation within the right-of-way where not necessary to trim for road visibility. This means adjacent property owners should be prohibited from clearing these lands.
- Where cutting is necessary for road visibility, minimize the depth of the cut strip (20-25 feet is ample). Also, vary the depth of the cut strip along the road so a hard cut edge is not created. This will add visual interest to the long straight corridor.
- At the ridges which serve as "gateways" to subsequent valley panoramas, encourage trees to grow even denser and closer than 20 feet to the road edge. Preferably, these will be spruce as its year-round, dark green foliage creates a well-defined enclosure.
- Along road edges other than ridges, encourage the growth of deciduous trees - aspen, poplar, willow, etc. The more lush foliage will help to create a softer edge for the long road corridor and the contrasting colors with the denser spruce on the ridges will add visual interest, especially in the fall. Also, in those areas of agricultural development, a band of deciduous trees along the roadside will permit filtered lateral views to the fields beyond, thus enriching the driving experience, particularly for westbound travelers.
- Seed low growing and flowering plants (lupine, vetch, horsetail) in those areas immediately next to the road to create additional color and also provide a feathered vegetation edge ranging from low plants, to high brush to taller trees.
- Minimize the number of access roads through the right-of-way where possible to maintain the sense of the road "corridor".
- Clearing practices should take care to minimize soil disturbance within the right-of-way.



The spruce at the crest of the hill should be retained close to the road edge, creating a distinctive entrance to the long, straight stretch of road beyond.

Impact Mitigation (M)

Some poor right-of-way management practices in the past require attention in this unit to minimize their impact on the driving experience.

- M-1 Tree clearing in the right-of-way, apparently for power pole maintenance, has left an unsightly scar next to the road. Removing the slash and debris and establishing vegetation characteristic of the surrounding area would significantly improve the present appearance and help return the area to its natural condition.
- M-2 Cut banks along the road as shown on the map would benefit from plantings of ground covers and low shrubs.

Greenbelts

Greenbelts are an effective management tool which can be used in conjunction with right-of-way management practices to enhance visual resource values.

Formal greenbelts are not recommended in this management unit for two reasons: (1) the pattern of private ownership along the road outside an incorporated city or borough means that there is no effective means of implementing the greenbelt concept and (2) the relatively dense vegetation along the road means that careful management of land in the right-of-way can provide reasonable protection of the scenic resources. Although greenbelts are not recommended, private landowners are encouraged to set back all development at least 25 feet from the inside edge of the right-of-way. This is recommended not only to protect the quality of the views from the road but also to provide a more pleasant setting for the property owner away from the noise, fumes, and traffic on the road.

Land Use & Development

Large lot residences and farms are characteristic along the road in this unit and they help set the rural development tone for the first half of the Edgerton Road. In general, they do not detract from the scenic resource values; in fact, they tend to add diversity and interest along the road. Residential dwellings - particularly those built of natural materials which are well maintained - add color and variety. The

open fields with their contrasting color and vegetation add visual diversity. In keeping with the rural road theme, additional residential and agricultural development would be appropriate in this unit. New development, however, is encouraged to follow guidelines designed to retain the special scenic and rural values of the area:

- Discourage commercial uses along the road except near the junction or near Kenny Lake Community. Dispersed commercial use tends to be unsightly and is an inefficient use of land.
- Encourage all development to set back a minimum of 25 feet from the inside edge of the right-of-way.
- Promote the adoption of sensitive design and development guidelines through the Cooperative Extension Service. A publication would be designed to educate the residents about the purpose and specific practices of visual resource management and how their development can incorporate these concepts. Community workshops or local television programs could also be used to convey the message.

Material Sites & Reclamation (R)

When located in the right-of-way and visible from the road, material sites constitute a significant visual blight on an otherwise scenic driving experience. While an accessible source of materials is essential for road maintenance, the site need not be located in a visually prominent position. Generally sites should be located outside the right-of-way. Special care must be taken to screen the site from view. Along the Edgerton in

this unit, it is possible to use dense vegetation as an effective means of screening.

At existing material sites, action should be taken to minimize the negative visual impacts stemming from an inappropriate siting decision. Reclamation and/or screening is needed for one site in this unit:

- R-1 Gravel extraction has severely disturbed a large material site 1/2 mile from the junction. It is completely open to view and located immediately adjacent to the road. As an active site, some method of screening is needed while it is still in use. A five foot high berm could be constructed between the road and the site and planted with ground cover, brush and trees. This would provide screening and help blend the berm with the surrounding landforms. Access into the site through the berm should be kept at the minimum size necessary for equipment and should be located at one end of the site. When no longer required, the site should be graded to more natural contours and naturally or actively revegetated.