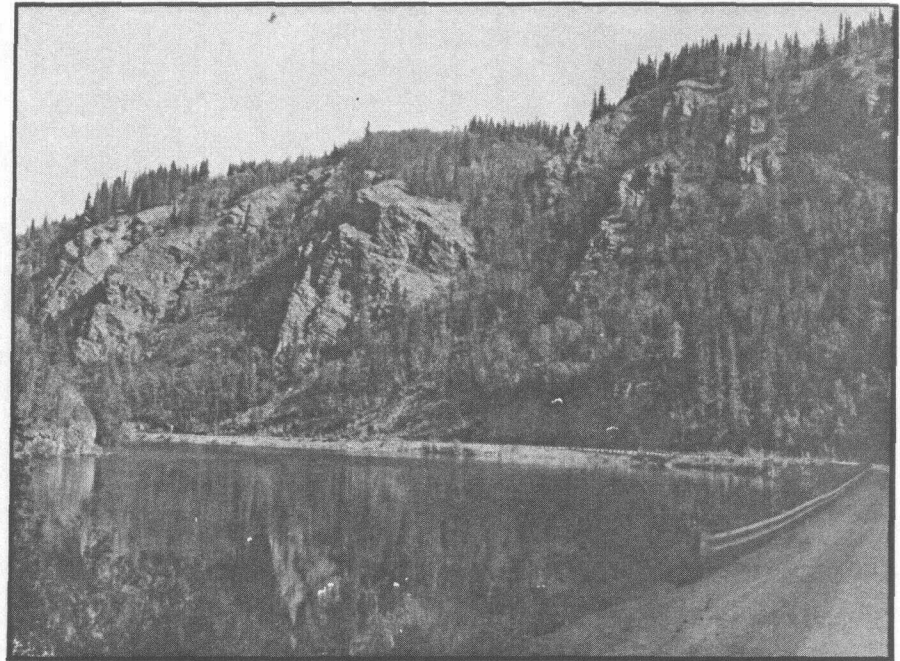


North of Chitina



Through most of the unit, the Edgerton winds through a steep and narrow gorge creating both a sense of enclosure and anticipation that culminates with a series of three lakes. While recreational use is appropriate, facility development would be difficult to screen and would detract from the rugged, scenic quality.

General Description

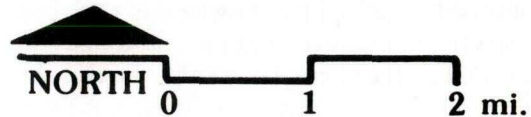
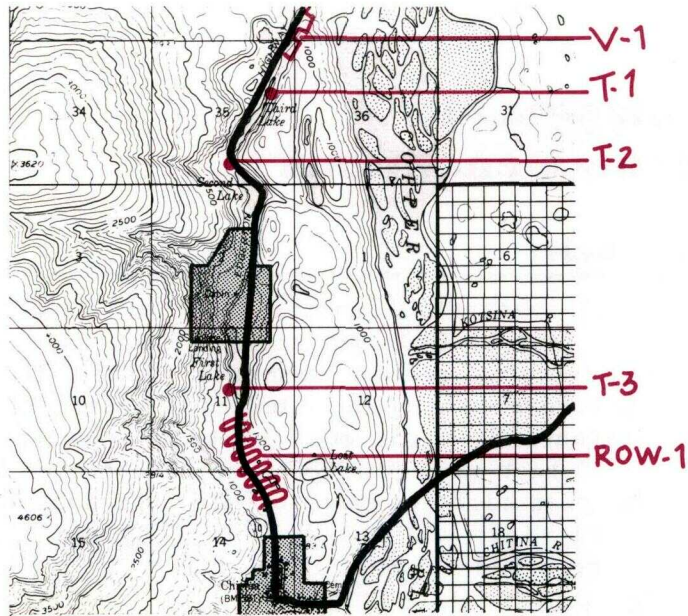
Management Unit 24 consists of approximately 5 miles of the Edgerton Road just north of the community of Chitina. The road parallels the Copper River to the east with the lower hills and mountains of the Chugach to the west. These nearby hills and mountains play a dominant role in the driving experience - creating a winding channel through the hills that essentially blocks all views to the Copper River and Wrangell Mountains to the east, and provides a constantly changing background of slopes, vegetation patterns, and rock features to the west. Land cover near the road is predominantly spruce/hardwood forest, with alpine tundra, small snowfields, and rocky

barren ground visible on the higher slopes to the west. Water features include lakes and small creeks.

Scenic resource values are moderate, and the visual absorption capability of this area is generally low - primarily due to the steeply sloping hillsides close to the road edge through much of the unit. Distant views are possible only at the ends of the unit. From the north end there

24 North of Chitina

Assessment Units E19 - E22



KEY

- V- View Management
- T- Turnout
- ROW- Right of Way Mgt.
-  Native Corp. Land
-  Federal Land
-  Private Land

are glimpses of the Wrangell Mountains, Mt. Wrangell and the Copper River valley. The south end provides some views of Spirit Mountain upon entering Chitina. One Mile, Two Mile, and Three Mile Lakes are major visual foci along the drive. This unit is an attractive entry/exit into Chitina and the Copper River area.

There is little visible land development within this management unit. There is one small residence at the north end and a sanitary landfill which is set back from the road in a well-screened location near One Mile Lake. The only suggestion of its presence is a sign at the access road. The three lakes receive moderate

recreational use. The old road alignment on the west side of One Mile Lake allows people to get away from the noise and dust of the existing road and makes this area particularly popular. The road itself is well-maintained, very wide, and winds through the area in a manner which provides changing views and orientations. Dust is the primary problem associated with the road - the new, wide road encourages fast travel and it is heavily used. The dust problem is exacerbated by the frequent summer winds out of the south which are channeled through the area.

Land Ownership & Management Responsibility

Beyond the highway right-of-way, all lands near the road are either under private ownership or will be owned by the Chitina Village Corporation. The DOTPF has responsibility for managing the road right-of-way which is 200 feet wide through most of the unit.

Visual Resource Management Objectives

Visual resource management actions should be guided by three primary objectives for this management unit: (1)retention, (2)enhancement, and (3)sensitive development.

Retention: To retain those characteristics which make this a particularly interesting and pleasing driving experience as well as a distinctive road entry into the community of Chitina and the lower Copper River area

Enhancement: To enhance the pleasant driving experience through careful road and right-of-way management

Sensitive Development: To encourage recreation and residential development in places and ways which use the land's visual absorption capability and provides the necessary screening, privacy, and separation from the noise, dust, and disturbances associated with a major roadway

Management Recommendations

Greenbelts

The visual absorption capability of this management unit is low; thus the primary means of maintaining existing scenic resource values is to keep land development and landscape modification at a distance from the road. It is recommended that a 100 foot wide greenbelt be established beyond the road right-of-way, between the south end of One Mile Lake and the end of the gorge (just beyond Three Mile Lake). The first 25 feet of this greenbelt should be left in its natural state, without altering landcover or landform, except in cases where it would open up desirable views or provide vehicle access to the area beyond. Some land clearing can take place in the remaining 75 feet except that it should not involve more than 50% of any given area. Construction of permanent structures within this 100 foot wide area is discouraged. This would help to ensure that development does not play a dominant visual role and adequately insulates private development from highway intrusion. The steep, almost undevelopable, hillsides in this unit mean that the greenbelt guidelines will not limit much development.

Some recreational development is desired at One Mile Lake, and here, some clearing and well-screened facilities would be acceptable in the greenbelt if necessary.

Since this will be Native owned land, the village corporation should take this opportunity to adopt this greenbelt recommendation as an easement for all land sales and developments which are adjacent to the road.

Land Use & Development

Due to the steep, rocky slopes which are common throughout this management unit, intensive development would be difficult except for a few small areas adjacent to the lakes. From a visual resource management perspective, land development should respond to the following considerations:

- Avoid additional roadside development north of the existing development near Chitina and manage the right-of-way to create a natural and dramatic entry to Chitina (See Row-1 on map)
- Encourage limited residential development east of the road over the crest of the adjacent hills, overlooking the Copper River Valley and Wrangell Mountains.
- Encourage large, as opposed to small, lot development (5 acres or more) in order to disperse it across the landscape and reduce the visual impacts of more intense development.
- Minimize the number of access roads from the highway to private land developments. Share or consolidate access wherever possible.
- Avoid all developments on the steep slopes west of the highway.
- Encourage residential and recreational homesite use and avoid industrial or commercial uses which

can be visually dominant and disruptive to land-cover and land forms.

Recreation (Rec)

Recreational use within this management unit should take advantage of the existing amenities of lakes and visually interesting mountains. However, due to the low visual absorption capability and relatively confined areas suitable for use, it is recommended that only day use public recreation areas be developed. Both to the north and south there are already facilities for overnight use and areas that could better accommodate such use. Specifically, the area at One Mile Lake is recommended for a day use recreation area (See T-2).

Road Design & Management

Dust is an important concern for recreational use of roadside land in this area. A particularly bad problem in the summer, road dust obscures views and makes activities at the roadside lakes especially miserable. It is recommended that this portion of the road be paved in order to eliminate the problem. This will, at the same time, reduce the visual impact of the road itself since a paved road would not appear as wide as the gravel road which now exists. (See also the paving discussion in Management Unit 23.)

Right-of-way management should continue to selectively clear roadside brush and attempt to create a natural appearing roadside edge. Present roadside management is good. Selective clearing and removal of slash should be the guiding principles for all right-of-way work within this management unit. The goal should be to maintain views

across lakes and to near and more distant hills and mountains while at the same time providing a visually natural road edge, reducing the visual width of the road, and screening and filtering views wherever possible. Selective clearing or trimming of roadside vegetation can also open distant views, such as the spot where the road leaves the gorge outside Chitina, providing the first view across the Copper River (See V-1). Wildflowers and flowering plants are desirable within the right-of-way and should be encouraged.

Turnouts (T)

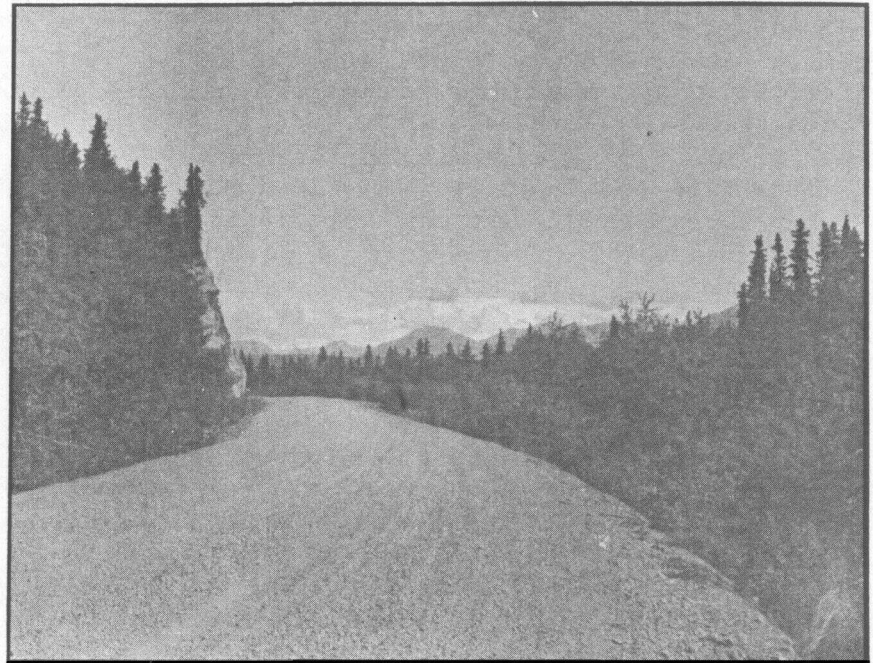
There are two existing roadside turnouts in this short unit and only one limited opportunity to provide more due to the constraints of topography. These sites, however, are important to retain due to the area's popularity and the attraction of its natural amenities.

T-1 Existing Turnout Overlooking Three Mile Lake.

This turnout receives considerable use for fishing and viewing, has a safe entry and exit, and is well-maintained. Trees and other vegetation should continue to be encouraged around the turnout edges. Additional facilities or structures are not appropriate since the site is small, exposed, and such additions would be visually dominant. Better sites for these kind of facilities exist nearby.

T-2 Potential Site at Two Mile Lake.

There is an opportunity to create a small turnout at the north end of Two Mile Lake which offers nice views of the lake and gorge. Development of the site would require some filling at the end of the lake in the marshy area. Visibility for access and egress should be evaluated carefully since the site is on a broad corner. This site should not have a high priority for development and only be considered when overall area demand warrants.



At its north end, the gorge opens to views of the Wrangell Mountains and the Copper River. In this area, sensitive right-of-way management and tree thinning can help open more distant views.

T-3 Existing Turnout and Recreational Use Area on the Old Road Alignment on the West Side of One Mile Lake.

This road provides lake access and is separated from the noise, dust, and disturbance associated with the existing road. It has a poorly marked entrance, particularly at the north end. This could be developed as a day use lake loop road, though through traffic would not be desirable due to the narrow road and its poor condition. An entry should be developed near the south end of the lake where parking would be provided. Vehicular use beyond this area should not be encouraged except for boat launching. Day use activities, such as picnicking, swimming, fishing, boating, wildlife observation, and hiking, should be promoted but not overnight use. It appears that the area was at one time a road way-side and is one of the best sites in the area for day use and roadside related recreation.