

# Recommendations

|   |                               |
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| Visual Resource Management Unit No 17     | Assessment Units 100-113      |
| Broad Pass - Alaska Range Character Types | Approximate length 23.5 miles |

## GENERAL

Visual resource management unit number 17 includes the most scenic portions of the Broad Pass and Alaska Range character types. This 23½ mile stretch of highway includes Summit lake and the pass marking the divide between waters draining into Cook Inlet and the Yukon River; the junction with the Denali highway, and the upper reaches of the Nenana River. Cantwell is the only year-round community within this character type and is located 2 miles west of the Parks highway.

Roadside visual absorption capability is low through Broad Pass and moderate to high north of the Cantwell cutoff. Visible commercial and residential land use is concentrated around the Denali highway - Cantwell junction with the Parks Highway. Through Broad Pass some residential development is visible around Summit lake. Roadside gravel extraction sites, power lines, and railroad related facilities are the other types of land developments common to this management unit.

## PRIMARY MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Officially designate this portion of the George Parks highway as a scenic highway and develop guidelines to manage the particularly sensitive foreground lands in a manner conducive to conserving scenic resource values. Within the Broad Pass character type a greenbelt would be inappropriate due to the generally high visibility of almost all foreground and middleground lands. The guiding principle here should be that the visual impact of potentially objectionable structures and land uses (e.g. surface mining, power lines) is reduced as a function of its distance from the viewer. Consequently, objectionable uses should be located as far from the road as possible. Furthermore, special design techniques would need to be employed (landscaping, berms, painting of surfaces) to further reduce visual impact.

Within the Alaska Range Character type (north of milepost 211) a 200 ft wide greenbelt beyond the highway right of way should be maintained along those portions with a high

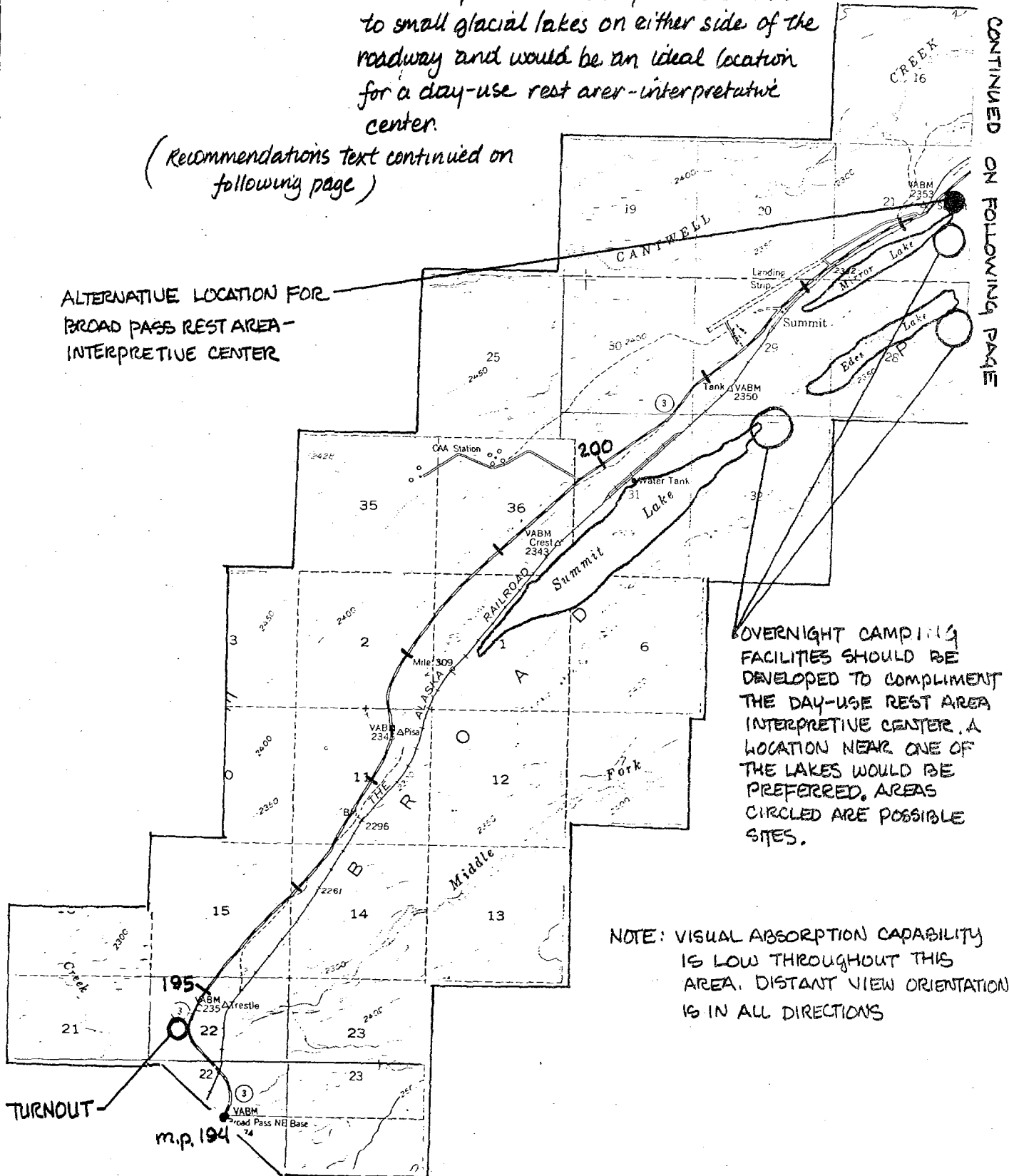
visual absorption capability rating. Those foreground lands with moderate to low visual absorption capability ratings require additional field observations to determine an appropriate greenbelt width.

Develop roadside rest area-interpretive centers at the two sites suggested on the accompanying maps. A professional landscape architect should develop master development plans for each site.

Site one: This site is at the summit of Broad Pass near milepost 205.8. It provides direct access to small glacial lakes on either side of the roadway and would be an ideal location for a day-use rest area-interpretive center.

(Recommendations text continued on following page)

ALTERNATIVE LOCATION FOR BROAD PASS REST AREA-INTERPRETIVE CENTER



OVERNIGHT CAMPING FACILITIES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED TO COMPLEMENT THE DAY-USE REST AREA INTERPRETIVE CENTER. A LOCATION NEAR ONE OF THE LAKES WOULD BE PREFERRED. AREAS CIRCLED ARE POSSIBLE SITES.

NOTE: VISUAL ABSORPTION CAPABILITY IS LOW THROUGHOUT THIS AREA. DISTANT VIEW ORIENTATION IS IN ALL DIRECTIONS

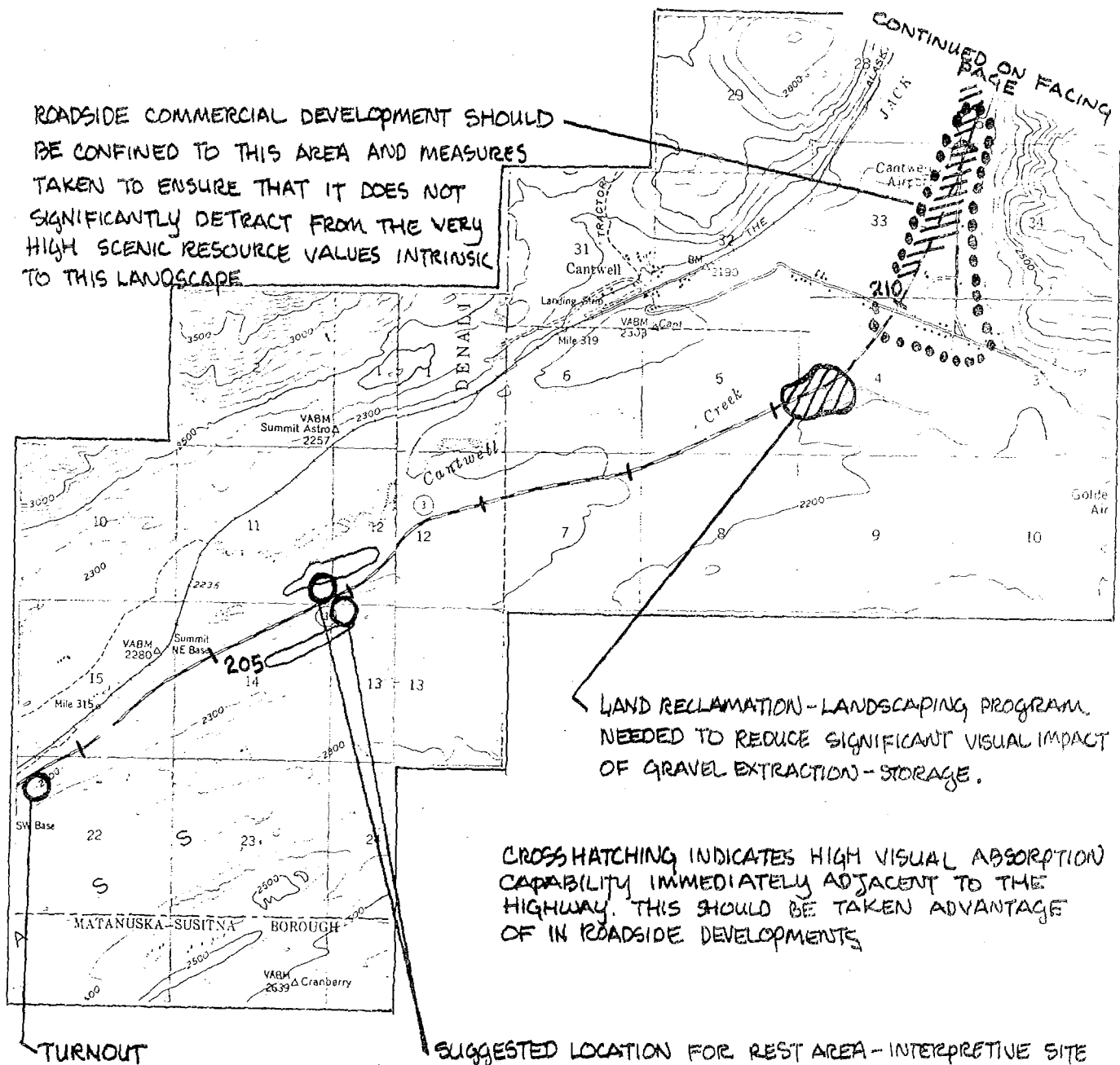
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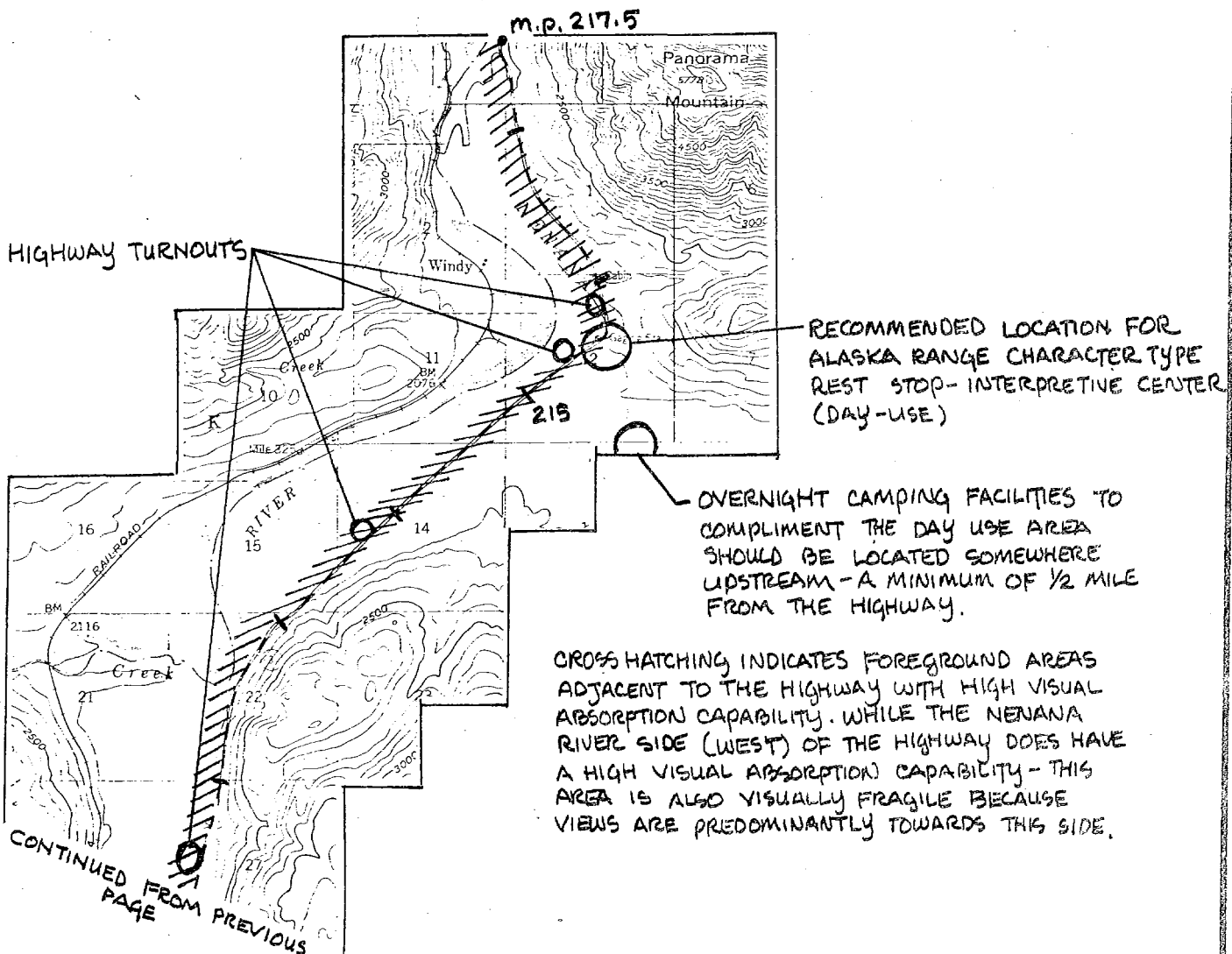
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Site two: This site is near the highway crossing of the Nenana River (milepost 215.5). This interpretative site would focus on the natural history of the Alaska Range and the Nenana River which is an important landscape feature for nearly 100 miles of the Parks highway. The rest area near the highway should be a day use area. A overnight facility should be located up the Nenana River Valley at least 1/2 mile from the highway.

Scattered recreational cabins and residential developments in the Broad Pass area would not significantly impact upon scenic resource values provided they are located beyond the foreground distance zone (1/4 to 1/2 mile from the highway) and that they are near  
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trees to provide scale and a sense of a natural setting. Existing developments around Summit Lake are a good example of this type of acceptable residential-recreational development. Within the Alaska Range character type of this visual resource management unit, recreational cabins should only be permitted beyond the established greenbelt and only if a system of access roads are developed to reduce the number of intersections with the Parks Highway.

Roadside commercial development should remain concentrated around the Denali Highway-Cantwell junctions (mileposts 210-211). Commercial roadside development outside of this area should not be permitted. Land development guidelines and performance standards should be adopted for future commercial roadside development in the permitted area. These should include:

- Retention of a minimum of 25% of the existing natural landcover within the 100 ft strip of land immediately adjacent to the highway right of way.
- Junked vehicles and other litter should not be visible from roadway
- Landscaping and/or revegetation programs should be implemented around those places where more than 25% of the natural landcover has been removed.

# Recommendations

Visual Resource Management Unit No 1B

Assessment Units 114-122

Alaska Range Character Type

Approximate length: 13.7 miles

## GENERAL

Visual resource management unit number 1B begins at milepost 217.5 and follows the east side of the Nenana River for approximately 14 miles to the point where the George Parks highway enters Mt. McKinley National Park. This stretch of highway is on lower river terraces and floodplains within a very narrow, high-walled valley. The steep valley walls direct views along the direction of vehicular movement. Visual absorption capability is variable, with some of the low river terraces covered with dense stands of spruce while steep hillsides have open tundra. Scattered roadside residential developments are common, as well as occasional commercial tourist facilities. However, except for the large commercial development at Mt. McKinley Village just south of the Park entrance these developments have moderate to low visual impact. Numerous undeveloped roadside turnouts are present - all of which are located on the Nenana River (west) side of the highway.

Scenic resource values are moderate. Scenic resource management recommendations focus on ways to allow for roadside development while taking advantage of visual absorption capability and other techniques to minimize its visual impact. Development would be preferable here instead of within the more scenic stretches of highway immediately to the north and south of this management unit.

## PRIMARY MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Meet the demand for roadside (accessible) commercial and residential developments within this area rather than in the more scenic areas immediately to the north and south. Commercial development should concentrate itself around the one established commercial node (Mt. McKinley Village) or within areas with high visual absorption capability on the east side of the Parks Highway. All commercial developments should retain a minimum of 25% of the natural landcover immediately adjacent to the highway. Use of professional design services (architects and landscape architects) should be encouraged in an effort to introduce buildings which fit in better with the surrounding landscape.

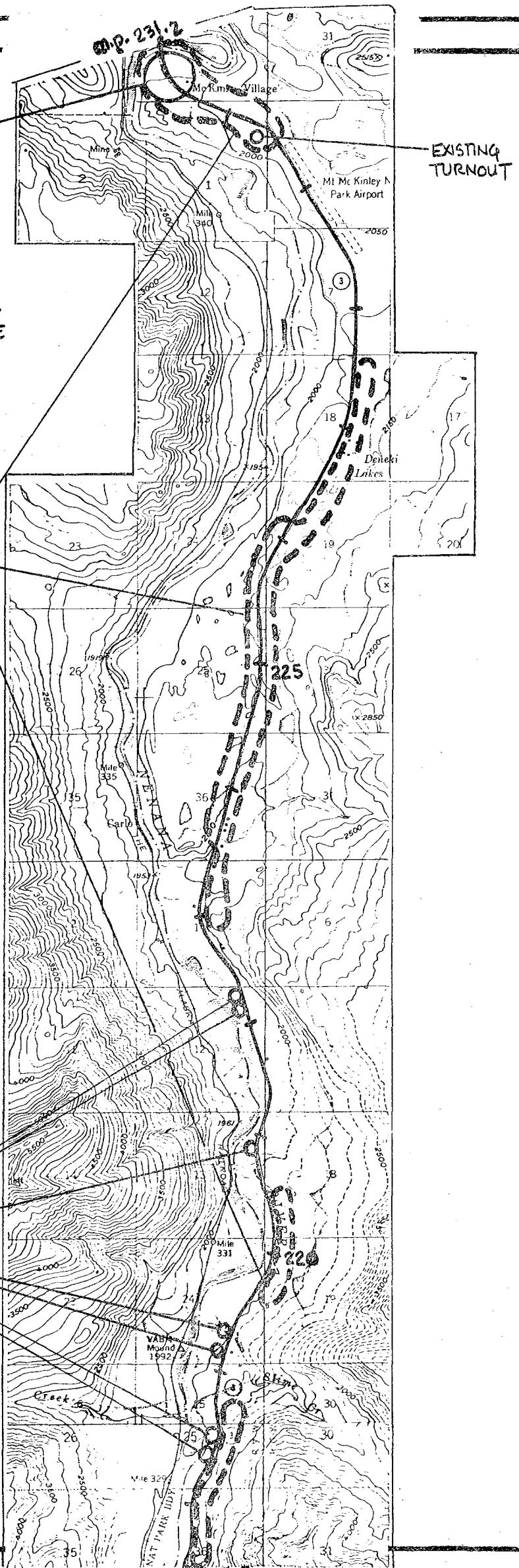
This portion of the Parks highway could be a good location for meeting the growing demand for recreational homesites. Presently numerous homes and cabins are to be found here, but all have moderate to low visual impact. Using either large lots (5 acres or more) or cluster development

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COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY IS PRESENTLY CONCENTRATED AROUND THIS AREA. FUTURE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE LOCATED HERE TO REINFORCE THIS AS THE COMMERCIAL CENTER AND ELIMINATE SCATTERED-INEFFICIENT DEVELOPMENTS WHICH ARE ALSO OFTEN VISUALLY LESS DESIREABLE THAN CONCENTRATED DEVELOPMENTS.

DASHED LINES INDICATE GENERAL DISTRIBUTION OF FOREGROUND LANDS WITH MODERATE TO LOW VISUAL ABSORPTION CAPABILITY. ALL OTHER LANDS IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE HIGHWAY HAVE HIGH VISUAL ABSORPTION CAPABILITY. CONSULT VIEWSHED MAPS FOR THESE ASSESSMENT UNITS FOR A CLEARER DEPICTION OF VISUAL ABSORPTION CAPABILITY DISTRIBUTION.

EXISTING TURNOUTS



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concepts, and standards for the removal of the natural landcover, roadside residential-recreational development should have a minimal impact on the scenic quality.

Design standards need to be implemented for further commercial development around Mt. McKinley Village. Already extensive land clearing and landform alteration has occurred. Presently the visual impact is moderate. However, if additional commercial development or expansion of existing facilities were to occur it could result into a serious visual problem. This is accentuated because of its proximity to Mt. McKinley National Park and the high number of people who either enter or leave the park past this development. By simply controlling the amount of the natural landcover which can be removed within each development, its visual impact could be significantly reduced.

Roadside land development should not occur on the west side of the highway from milepost 217.5 to 223.5 because viewer orientation is predominantly in this direction.

Because of moderately high intrinsic and composite visual quality ratings, this area is not a priority area for scenic highway designation. However, due to its proximity to Mt. McKinley National Park and the intensive recreational use it receives it could be added to the scenic highway system of the George Parks highway. In either case, it should be remembered that from a scenic resource management perspective roadside development is preferable here to areas immediately to the north or south.

Use of the numerous existing turnouts should be encouraged and maintenance continued. However, development efforts should focus on the roadside rest area-interpretative center system which is part of this set of recommendations. (See visual resource management unit number 15 for a discussion of litter barrels.)

# Recommendations

Visual Resource Management Unit No 19

Assessment Units 123-126

Nenana Gorge Character Type

Approximate length: 5.5 miles

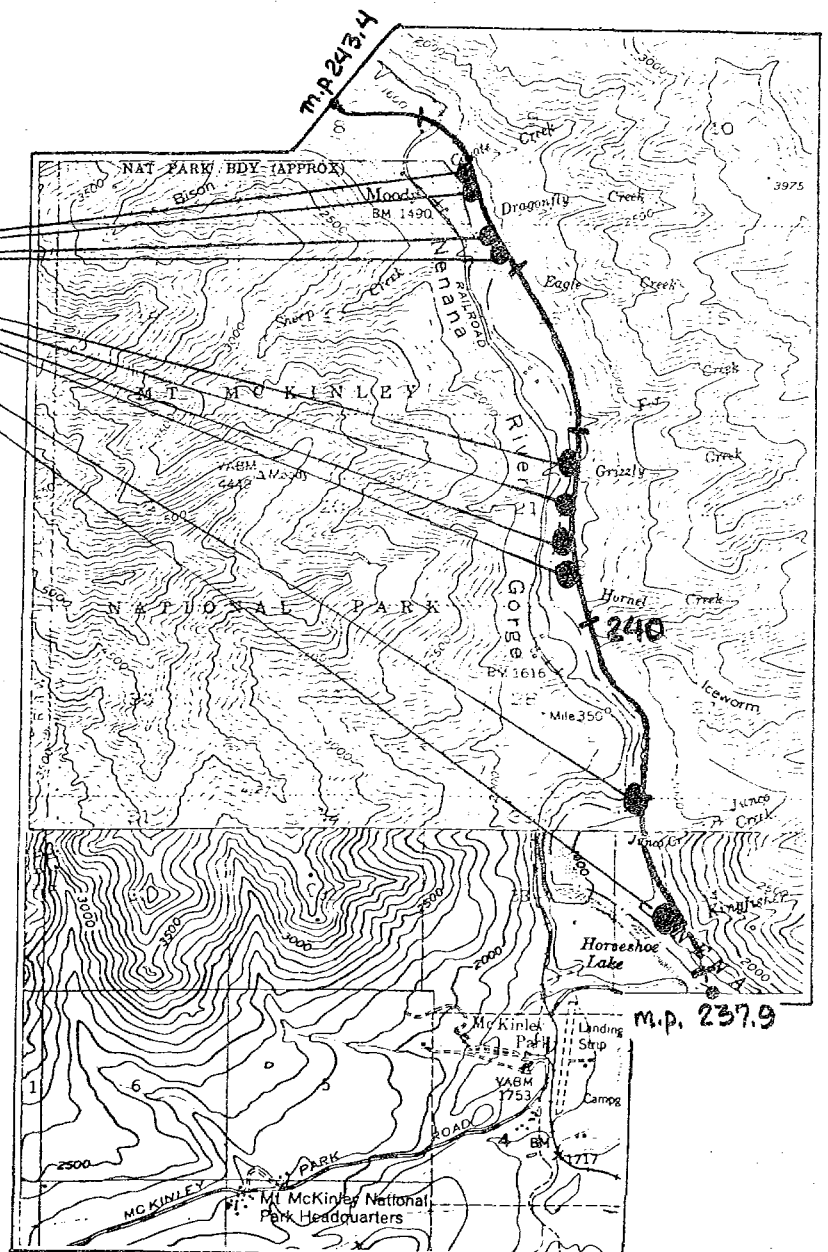
## GENERAL

Visual resource management unit number 19 is 5½ miles of some of the most scenic portions of the entire George Parks highway. Within this unit the highway follows the Nenana River through a very narrow, steep walled gorge. Landform diversity is extremely high and there are numerous views of the roaring Nenana River and numerous small creeks feeding into it. Dall sheep are commonly sighted on the slopes above the canyon - particularly towards Sugar Loaf mountain to the northeast. This is one of the few areas along the entire highway where wildlife such as the sheep might be commonly viewed. In many ways this is one of the George Parks highway's most visually sensitive areas because of its high scenic quality, high use by visitors to Mt. McKinley National Park and generally very low visual absorption capability. Due to the very steep, unstable topography it appears that a highway and a railroad are the only land uses which this gorge could support. The addition of another strong development, such as a powerline or homes would undoubtedly have a significant visual impact.

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EXISTING TURNOUTS

A ROADSIDE REST AREA-INTERPRETIVE CENTER IS RECOMMENDED FOR THE NENANA GORGE CHARACTER TYPE SHOWN HERE. FURTHER FIELD STUDY IS REQUIRED TO DETERMINE BEST SITE.





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## PRIMARY MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

To officially designate this portion of the George Parks highway as a scenic highway and develop guidelines to preserve the particularly high and sensitive scenic resource values intrinsic to this landscape. Due to the steep, unstable slopes and the very low visual absorption capability it is recommended that no additional man-made developments be located within this canyon (other than a carefully designed and sited rest area - interpretative center). A narrow roadside greenbelt would be inappropriate and ineffective due to the high visibility factor of most of the land within the gorge. Additionally the visual quality is important to both travelers by train and river runners. This data does not measure the viewsheds from these other two means of traveling through the canyon. Consequently, it is recommended that the entire canyon be considered a greenbelt area.

At present numerous paved turnouts exist within the Nenana gorge - most of them on large cut and fill pads developed during road construction. Further field work needs to be conducted in order to determine the most appropriate site for a day-use roadside rest and interpretative center. A landscape architect should do a site search and master development plan for such a facility. The other turnouts should continue to be maintained, however future development should focus on the rest-interpretative center facilities. The landscape architect should also study and develop recommendations for highway related details (signing, guardrail design, litter barrel design) within this and other scenic highway areas.

At present many of the paved highway turnouts function as overflow camping sites during times when Mt. McKinley Park is filled to capacity. This often results in large concentrations of motor homes and other vehicles, litter problems and a general visual blight on the landscape. Needed overnight overflow facilities should be developed outside of this canyon. One of the most logical locations would be up the Yanert Fork River, or north of the Moody Creek bridge. This landscape cannot support the visual impact of numerous large recreation vehicles, trash barrels, out houses and other facilities associated with overnight camping.

# Recommendations

Visual Resource Management Unit No 20

Assessment Units 127-135

Nenana Uplands Character Type

Approximate length: 12.3 miles

## GENERAL

Visual resource management unit number 20 begins just south of the Bison gulch bridge and trends south for twelve miles to 1.7 miles north of the bridge over Little Panguingue Creek. The most notable landscape feature is the nearby mining-railroad community of Healy which is approximately two miles east of the highway. This portion of the George Parks highway follows the upland river terraces on the west side of the Nenana River and crosses numerous variable flow creeks coming from the foothills of the Alaska Range to the north and west.

Scenic resource values are extremely variable. Two short stretches of highway (assessment units 128 and 130) have very high intrinsic and composite visual quality ratings while the remaining portions are of moderate to low ratings. Views are predominately to the north and east-southeast. The foothills to the west of the highway are so close as to effectively block and direct views in these other directions.

## PRIMARY MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

To officially designate assessment units 128 and 130 as scenic highways. The option also exists to further designate assessment units 127 and 129 as scenic highways, which would result in a continuous, more easily managed unit. Units 127 and 129 had moderately high ratings. Foreground lands within all four of these assessment units have moderate to low visual absorption capability ratings. This suggests that additional field work is needed to determine the type of greenbelt guidelines and width would be appropriate to managing these scenic resources.

Establish a rest area-interpretive center at the top of the hill just beyond milepost 247. This rest area would focus on mining activities as well as the history of Healy which is visible from this site. A master development plan should be prepared by a professional landscape architect.

Commercial roadside development should be encouraged only near the turnoff to Healy and between mileposts 248-249 where it presently is located. Commercial and residential roadside development should not be permitted in those areas identified for scenic highway designations within the recommended greenbelt area.

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Necessary roadside land developments should be located first in those areas with high foreground visual absorption capability. Additionally performance standards guiding the clearing of land immediately adjacent to the road need to be adopted and enforced. As a general rule, a minimum of 25% of the natural landcover immediately adjacent to the highway should remain undisturbed in any development.

Because views are predominantly to the south and east, across the Nenana River Valley, the foreground and near middleground lands on the east side of the road are more sensitive than those on the west side.

Mining activity within the middleground and background generally has a low visual impact. Mining activity in the foreground, particularly if immediately adjacent to the highway would have a high visual impact and should be avoided within this distance zone.

Existing roadside turnouts should be maintained. However the focus of future development should be towards the realization of a rest area-interpretative center system recommended here.



# Recommendations

Visual Resource Management Unit No. 21

Assessment Units 136-140

Nenana Uplands Character Type

Approximate length: 8 miles.

## GENERAL

Visual resource management unit number 21 consists of 8 miles of roadway situated at the base of the Alaska Range foothills on an upper Nenana River terrace. This unit includes the highway crossings of Slate and Rock Creeks. This portion of the George Parks highway is characterized by high intrinsic and composite visual quality ratings. Numerous expansive views across the upper Nenana River valley to the flat-topped ridges marking its eastern edge as well as considerable sequential diversity contribute to this high scenic quality rating. Roadside commercial and residential land developments are absent. The strongest visual impact comes from utility lines, gravel pits and soil removal sites located immediately adjacent to the highway. Foreground visual absorption capability varies from low to high.

## PRIMARY MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

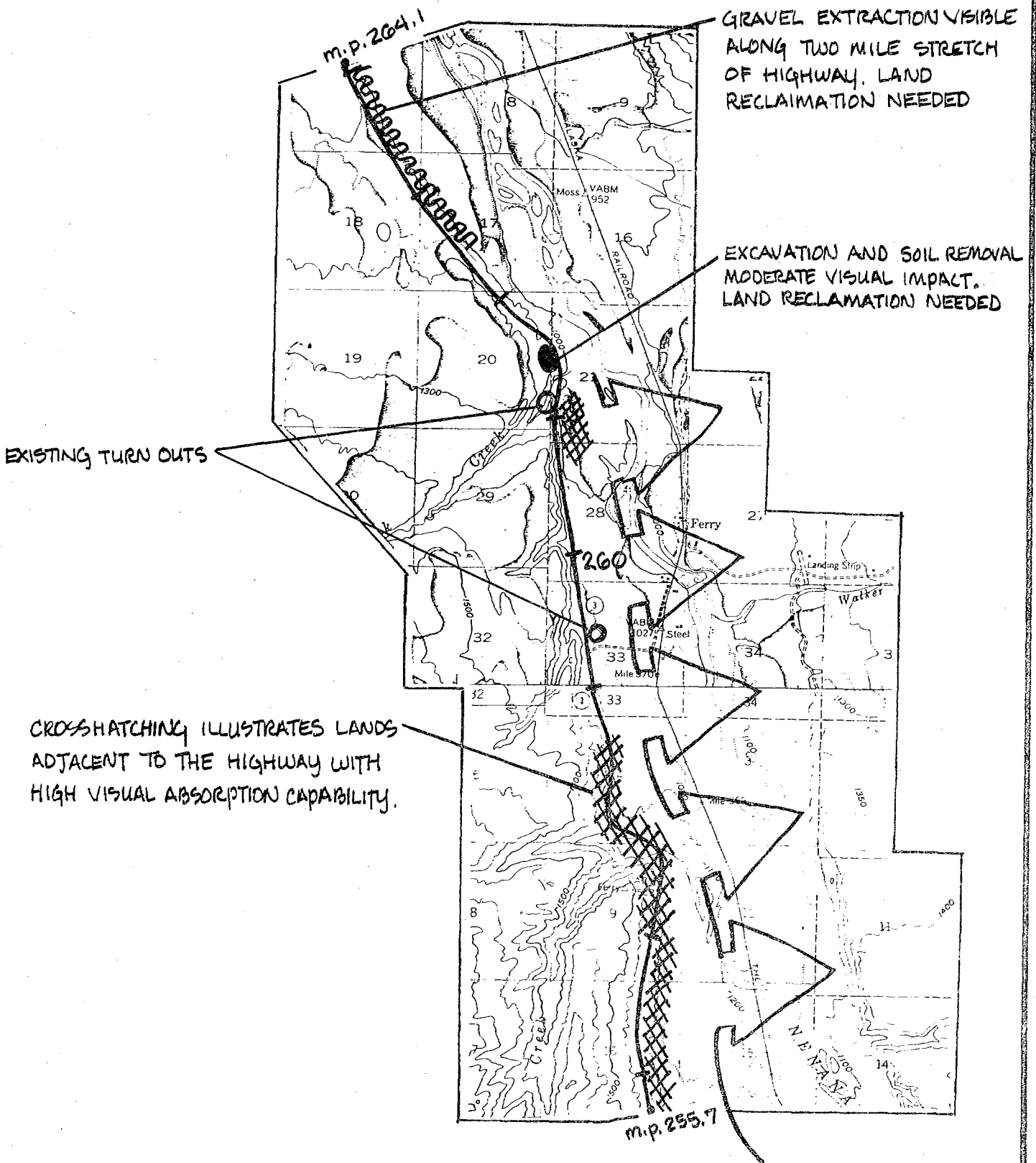
To officially designate this portion of the George Parks highway as a scenic highway and develop guidelines to manage the particularly sensitive foreground lands in a manner which conserves the high scenic resource values. A 200 ft wide greenbelt beyond the highway right of way should be established along those portions of the road with high visual absorption capability. Additional field work is required to determine an appropriate greenbelt width along those foreground areas with moderate to low visual absorption capability.

To discourage roadside commercial and residential development along this portion of the George Parks highway. Such land developments are more appropriately located to the south in visual resource management unit no. 20.

Foreground and middleground lands on the east side of the highway are more sensitive because views are oriented to this side. Roadside developments such as gravel extraction, recreation sites and timber cutting would have less visual impact if located on the west side of the highway.

To continue to maintain existing turnouts and roadside parking facilities - especially near Rock and Slate Creeks. However, future development of a rest area facility should focus on those areas identified in this study to be part of the Parks highway rest area, interpretative center system. Such a site has been proposed for visual resource management unit number 20, approximately

8 miles to the south. Either Rock or Slate Creeks might be good locations for overnight camping facilities since the roadside rest areas are for day use only.



VIEW ORIENTATION PREDOMINANTLY TO THE EAST. LAND AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENTS WILL HAVE A LESSER VISUAL IMPACT IF SITUATED ON THE LEFT (WEST) SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY.

# Recommendations

Visual Resource Management Unit No 22

Assessment Units 141-144

Nenana Uplands character Type

Approximate length: 7.6 miles

## GENERAL

Within visual resource management unit number 22 the George Parks highway parallels the Nenana River on an upper terrace to the west. The most notable natural features within this management unit are the highway crossings of June and Bear Creeks. Visual quality ratings were moderate. Land development adjacent to the road are negligible. Adverse visual impacts result from views of power lines, gravel pits and roadside turnouts. Management recommendations focus on utilizing the existing visual absorption capability to absorb and screen future roadside developments.

## PRIMARY MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

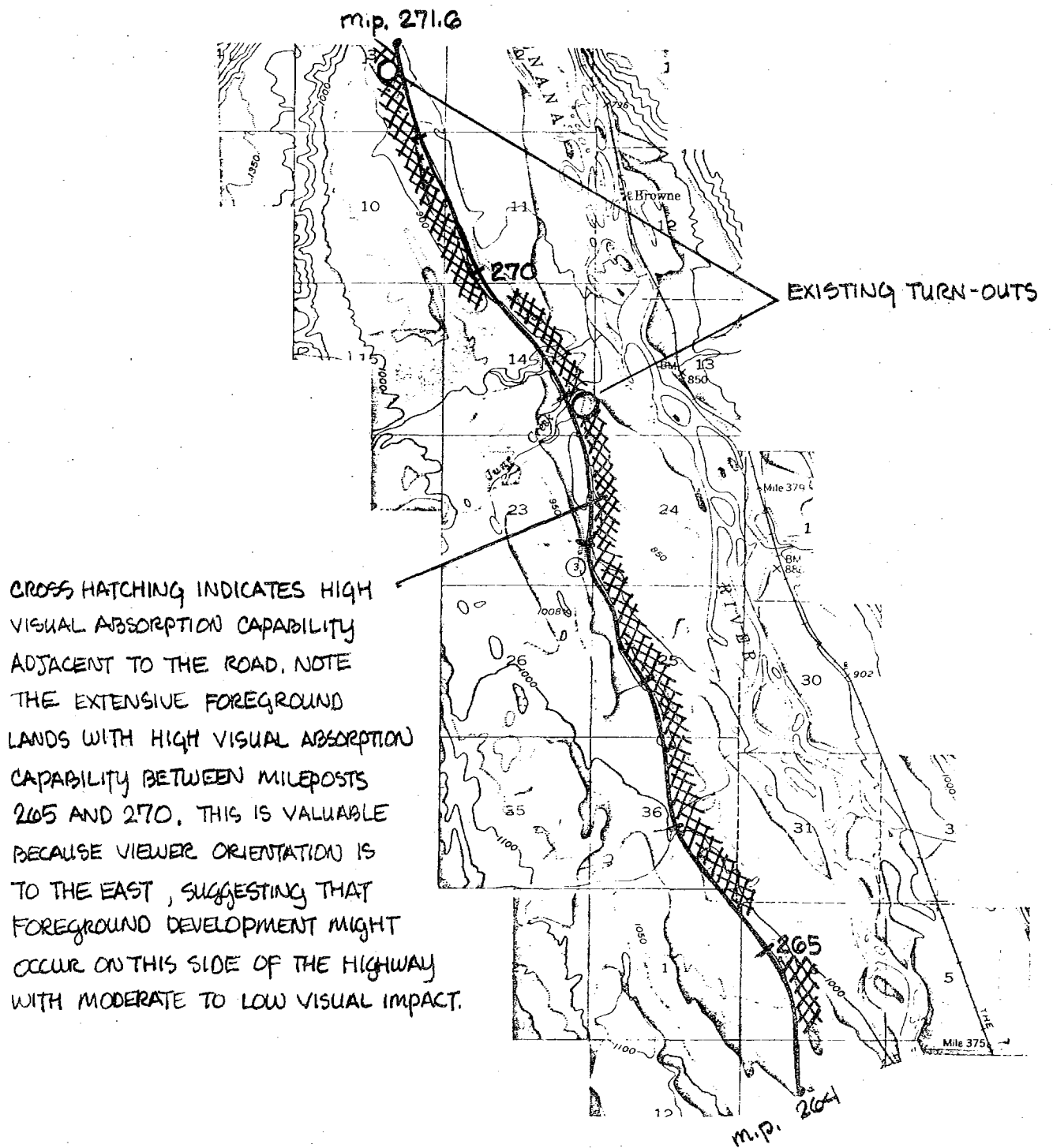
Scenic quality ratings for this area were not quite high enough to make it a priority area with respect to scenic highway designations. However, the intrinsic visual quality and composite ratings were high enough to warrant its possible inclusion in a scenic highway system. The designation of this as a scenic highway would result in a continuous 20 mile section of high scenic resource value. It would be considerably easier to manage a single 20 mile stretch of roadway rather than three shorter sections each with different management strategies. In any case, roadside related land developments would generally be better located here than in the higher scenic quality visual resource management units 21 and 23 to the south and north respectively.

Retain and maintain existing roadside turnouts and rest areas within this visual resource management unit. However, efforts towards future rest area, roadside related facilities should focus on those rest area-interpretative centers identified for other portions of the highway. For example, the Nenana Uplands Interpretative center is proposed for milepost 247.5.

Adopt performance standards for land clearing on sites adjacent to the highway right-of-way. One such standard would be a retention of a minimum of 25% of the existing landcover per acre of land bordering the right-of-way.

The lands to the east of the roadway are visually more sensitive than those to the west because views are oriented across

the Nenana valley to the east. Roadside developments would be best situated within areas of high visual absorption capability and on the west side of the roadway.





# Recommendations

Visual Resource Management Unit No 23

Assessment Units 145-147

Nenana Uplands - Nenana River Lowlands Character Types Approximate length: 4.4 miles

## GENERAL:

Visual resource management unit number 23 consists of four and one half miles of highway near the Nenana River crossing at milepost 275.7. This relatively short stretch of roadway scored very high intrinsic and composite visual quality ratings. Presently roadside land development is visibly absent. The few gravel pits and land clearings are, for the most part well screened by the moderate to high visual absorption capability encountered in this landscape.

## PRIMARY MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

To officially designate this portion of the George Parks highway as a scenic highway and develop necessary guidelines to manage the particularly sensitive foreground lands in a manner which respects these especially high scenic resource values. A 200 ft wide greenbelt beyond the highway right of way along those portions with high visual absorption capability is recommended. Additional field work is needed to determine an appropriate greenbelt width along those portions of the highway foreground with moderate to low visual absorption capability.

To develop a roadside rest area-interpretative center adjacent to the Nenana River near the highway bridge (milepost 275.5). Even though the highway parallels this river for a considerable distance, this is one of the few places in its lower reaches where it is immediately accessible from the highway. A professional landscape architect should be employed to develop a master plan for this facility. As with the other rest area-interpretative centers, it should be a day-use facility only. A public overnight camping site should be developed nearby to meet the demand for overnight use. This camping area should be situated a minimum of 1/2 mile from the highway. Sites up or down river from the bridge should be evaluated for possible campground development.

Roadside commercial and concentrated residential development should not be permitted within this area. Natural resource developments such as gravel pits, timber cutting, mining should

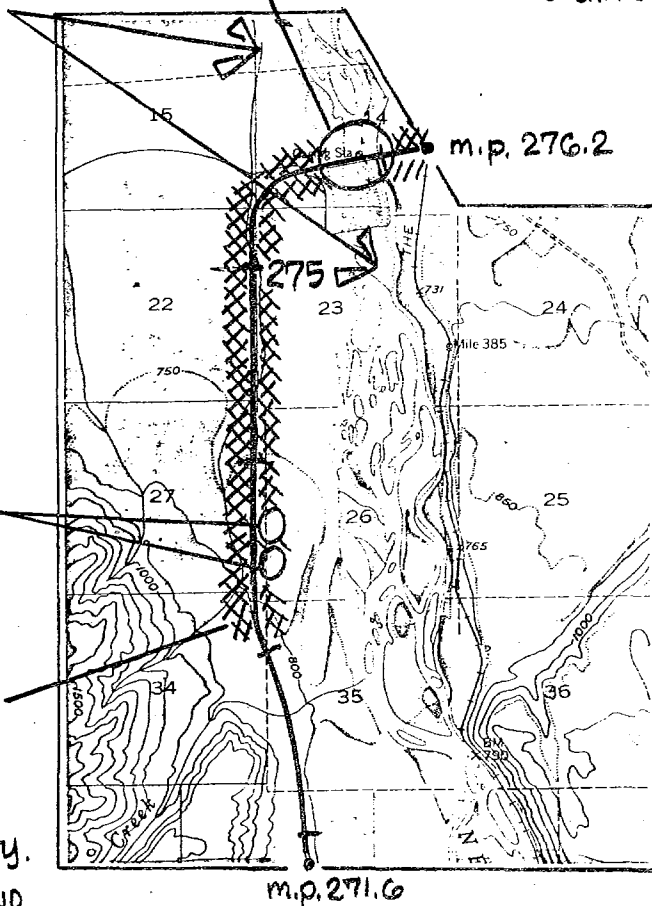
only be permitted beyond the established greenbelt. Roadside commercial and residential development would be most appropriately situated in the recommended areas in visual resource management unit number 24 immediately to the northeast.

DEVELOP OVERNIGHT CAMPING FACILITIES TO COMPLEMENT DAY USE REST AREA - INTERPRETIVE CENTER. SITES UP OR DOWN THE NENANA RIVER SHOULD BE EXPLORED.

RECOMMENDED LOCATION (GENERAL) FOR REST AREA - INTERPRETIVE CENTER. INFORMATION WOULD DEAL WITH NENANA LOWLANDS CHARACTERISTICS

GRAVEL PITS (WELL SCREENED)

CROSS HATCHING REPRESENTS THOSE FOREGROUND LANDS ADJACENT TO THE HIGHWAY WHICH HAVE HIGH VISUAL ABSORPTION CAPABILITY. A 200 FT WIDE GREENBELT BEYOND THE HIGHWAY RIGHT OF WAY IS RECOMMENDED FOR THESE AREAS



# Recommendations

Visual Resource Management Unit No 24  
Nenana Lowlands Character Type

Assessment Units 14B-167  
Approximate length: 38.5 miles

## GENERAL

Visual resource management unit number 24 begins at the highway bridge over the Nenana River (milepost 275.5) and extends north for 38 1/2 miles to approximately ten miles past the community of Nenana. This visual resource management unit encompasses virtually the entire Nenana lowlands character type. Scenic resource values along this portion of the George Parks highway are consistently low to moderate. This is because there is little visual diversity within this flat, densely vegetated landscape. The often long, straight stretches of roadway provide few distant or lateral views resulting in a generally monotonous driving experience. Only a single one mile stretch of highway (assessment unit 163) at the bridge over the Tanana River just north of the community of Nenana scored with a high intrinsic and composite visual quality rating. 15 of the remaining 18 assessment units within this visual resource management unit scored low.

In addition to low scenic resource values, there are numerous instances of roadside land developments which are visually objectionable. These uses include powerlines and substations, abandoned cars and other roadside litter, gravel pits, and extensive land clearing around commercial and residential developments. This is unfortunate because the actual visual absorption capability adjacent to the road is generally very high - offering a good opportunity to realize roadside land use with minimal visual impact.

Scenic resource management recommendations focus on ways to add visual diversity to this landscape, soften the impact of existing roadside developments and guide the location of future commercial and residential land uses adjacent to the highway.

## PRIMARY MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

To encourage future commercial and residential roadside development to take advantage of areas of high visual absorption capability and retain a minimum of 25% of the natural landcover within the first 200 ft. of land immediately adjacent to the roadway project of way.

To encourage commercial roadside development in a concentrated

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fashion around existing commercial nodes. Commercial activity is presently concentrated around mileposts 277-280, 289 and 305 (Nenana). Particular attention should be given to the emerging strip development around mileposts 277 to 280.

To add visual diversity to this landscape by encouraging roadside agricultural development on those sites capable of supporting this activity

Roadside residential development may increase the scenic quality through adding visual diversity provided that it does not result in extensive areas of cleared land and broad vistas of uninteresting tract housing. Large individual lots (5 acres) would be most compatible with scenic resource management objectives as this type of development most likely would add visual interest with a minimum of natural landcover disturbance. Properly designed larger developments would also be desirable

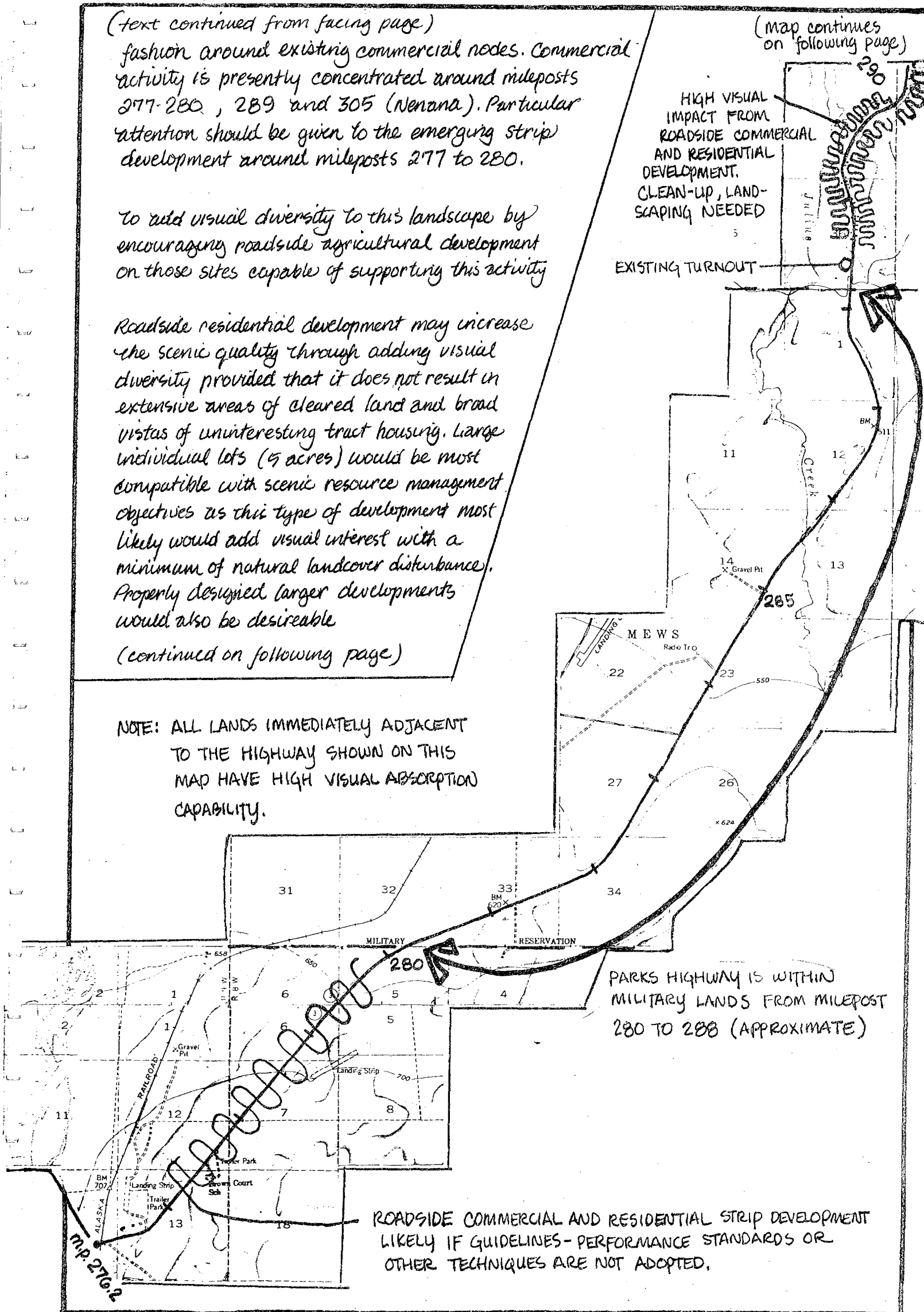
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NOTE: ALL LANDS IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE HIGHWAY SHOWN ON THIS MAP HAVE HIGH VISUAL ABSORPTION CAPABILITY.

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HIGH VISUAL IMPACT FROM ROADSIDE COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT. CLEAN-UP, LANDSCAPING NEEDED

EXISTING TURNOUT



ROADSIDE COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL STRIP DEVELOPMENT LIKELY IF GUIDELINES-PERFORMANCE STANDARDS OR OTHER TECHNIQUES ARE NOT ADOPTED.

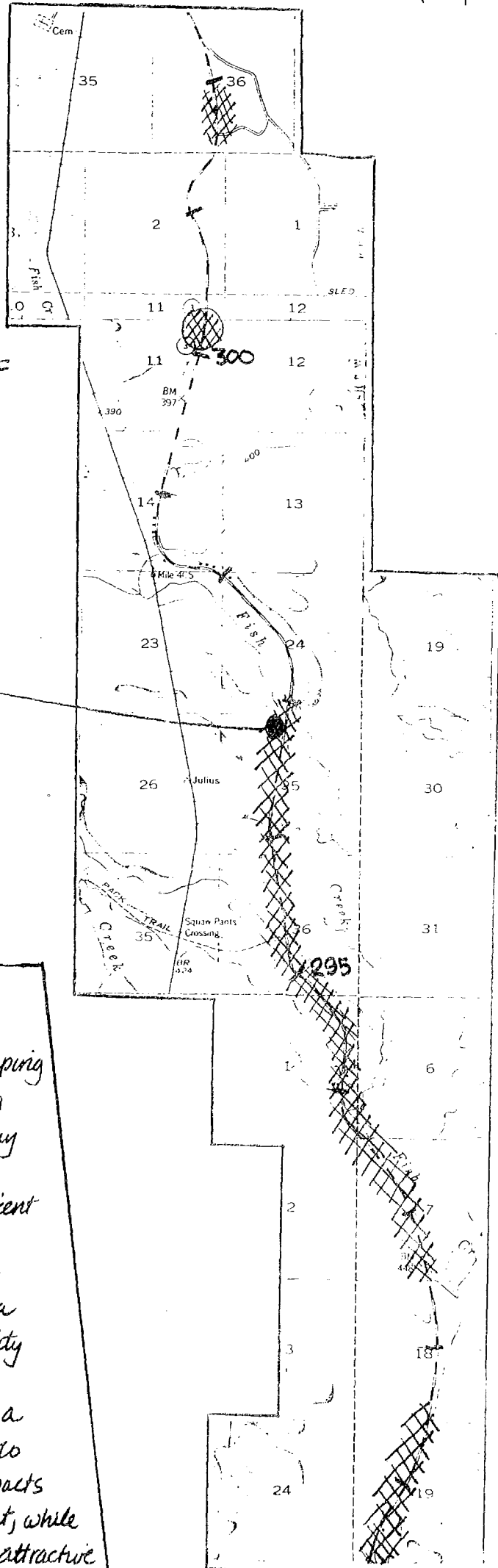
PARKS HIGHWAY IS WITHIN MILITARY LANDS FROM MILEPOST 280 TO 288 (APPROXIMATE)

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CROSS HATCHING INDICATES AREAS OF HIGH VISUAL ABSORPTION CAPABILITY IN FOREGROUND LANDS ADJACENT TO THE HIGHWAY.

EXISTING TURNOUT



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Concentrate roadside motif of way landscaping efforts of the Department of Transportation along mileposts 303 to 305.5 (the highway through Nenana). This portion of the highway is situated higher than the adjacent town - resulting in distinctive views over the city, across the Tanana River towards the nearby hills. In many respects Nenana is potentially a very picturesque community when viewed from the Parks highway. A roadside landscaping plan, developed by a landscape architect should be prepared to soften some of the strong foreground impacts of land clearing and industrial development, while developing a more natural and visually attractive foreground through which to view this community.

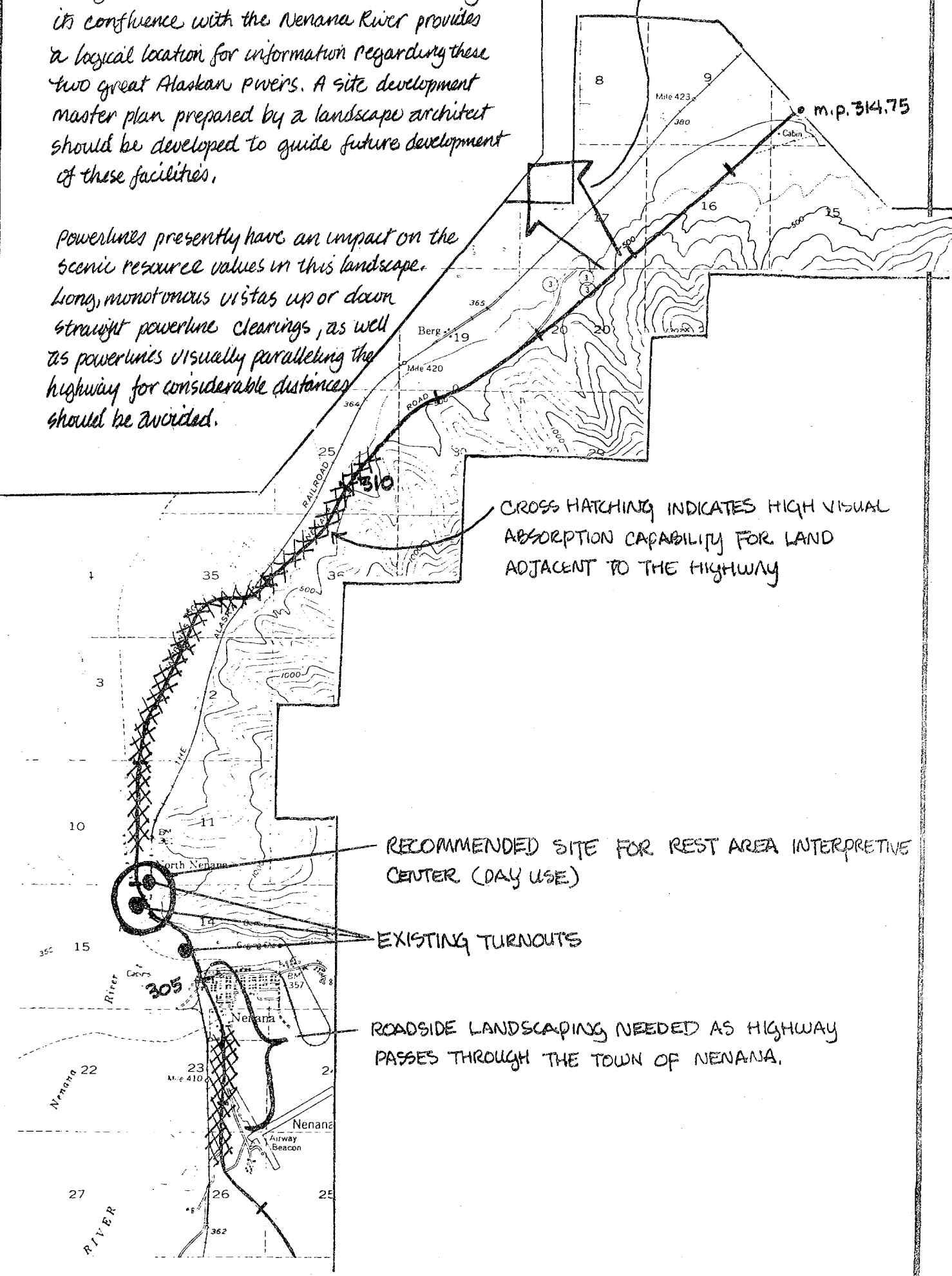
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Develop a highway rest area- interpretive center near milepost 305.0. This site, near the highway bridge over the Tanana River and overlooking its confluence with the Nenana River provides a logical location for information regarding these two great Alaskan rivers. A site development master plan prepared by a landscape architect should be developed to guide future development of these facilities.

Powerlines presently have an impact on the scenic resource values in this landscape. Long, monotonous vistas up or down straight powerline clearings, as well as powerlines visually paralleling the highway for considerable distances should be avoided.

GOOD VIEW OVER TANANA LOWLANDS



CROSS HATCHING INDICATES HIGH VISUAL ABSORPTION CAPABILITY FOR LAND ADJACENT TO THE HIGHWAY

RECOMMENDED SITE FOR REST AREA INTERPRETIVE CENTER (DAY USE)

EXISTING TURNOUTS

ROADSIDE LANDSCAPING NEEDED AS HIGHWAY PASSES THROUGH THE TOWN OF NENANA.

# Recommendations

Visual Resource Management Unit No. 25

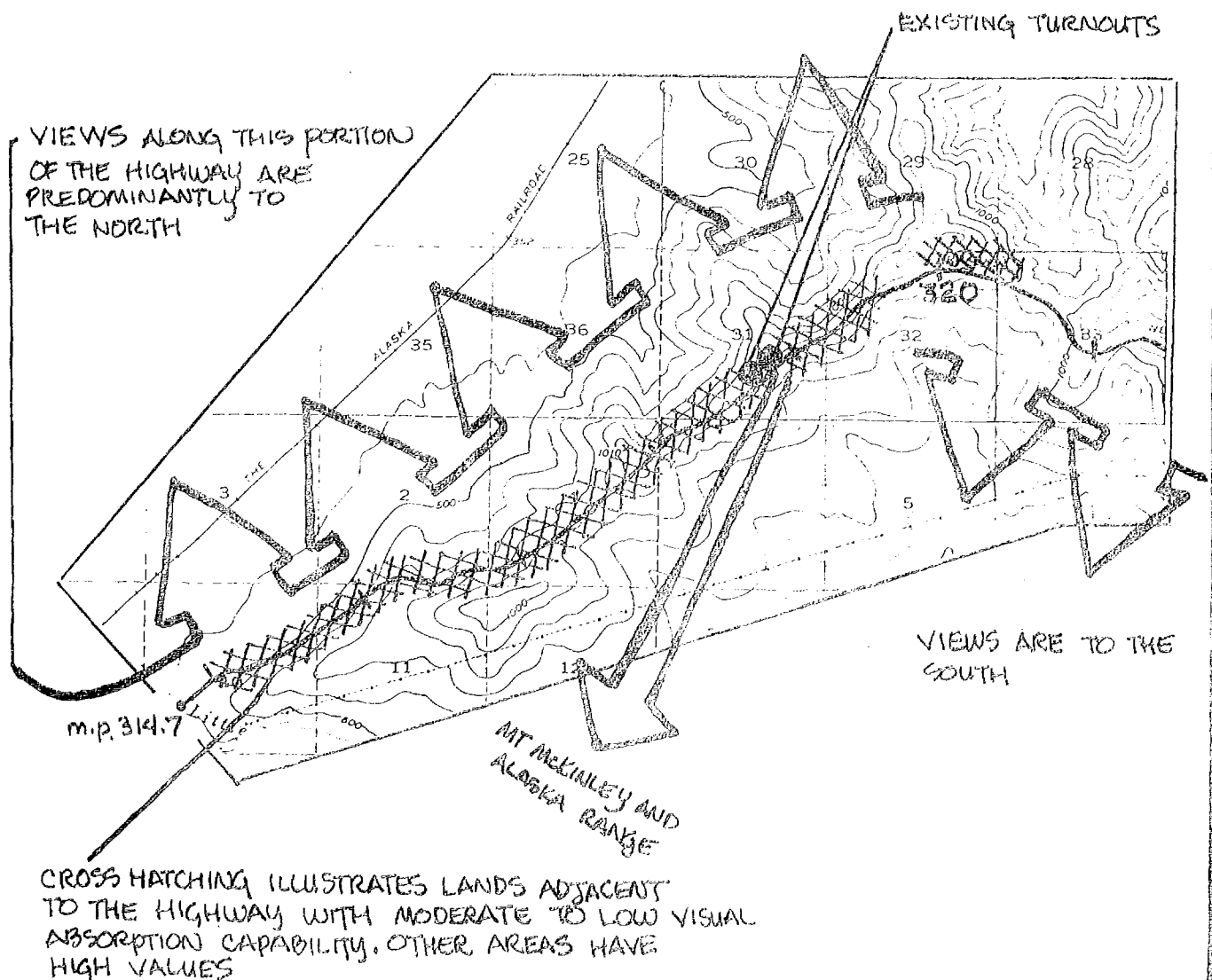
Assessment Units 168-174

Tanana Ridge Character Type

Approximate length: 13 miles

## GENERAL

Visual resource management unit number 25 begins approximately ten miles northwest of the community of Nenana and trends north-northeast for 13 miles towards Fairbanks. This portion of the George Parks highway ascends at a moderate grade from an elevation of under 400 ft. at Goldstream Creek bridge to 1100 and 1200 ft. elevations as it traverses a ridgeline. This ridgetop location affords numerous expansive views across the broad Tanana River valley. Since the Tanana River makes a broad, horse shoe type bend around these hills, expansive views of this river are possible both to the south and north. This portion of the George Parks highway follows closely the alignment of the old Nenana-Fairbanks highway, however significant recent alignment has transformed it into a wide road with the absence of sharp curves and steep grades. As a result of this recent work, road cuts and fills are visibly the predominant factor impacting the very high scenic resource values intrinsic to this stretch of roadway. With time the visual impact of these road cuts and other evidences of construction should be greatly reduced as natural revegetation of these bare, soilless lands progresses. Within this predominantly birch-aspen-spruce forest the visual absorption capability of the foreground varies from moderate to high.

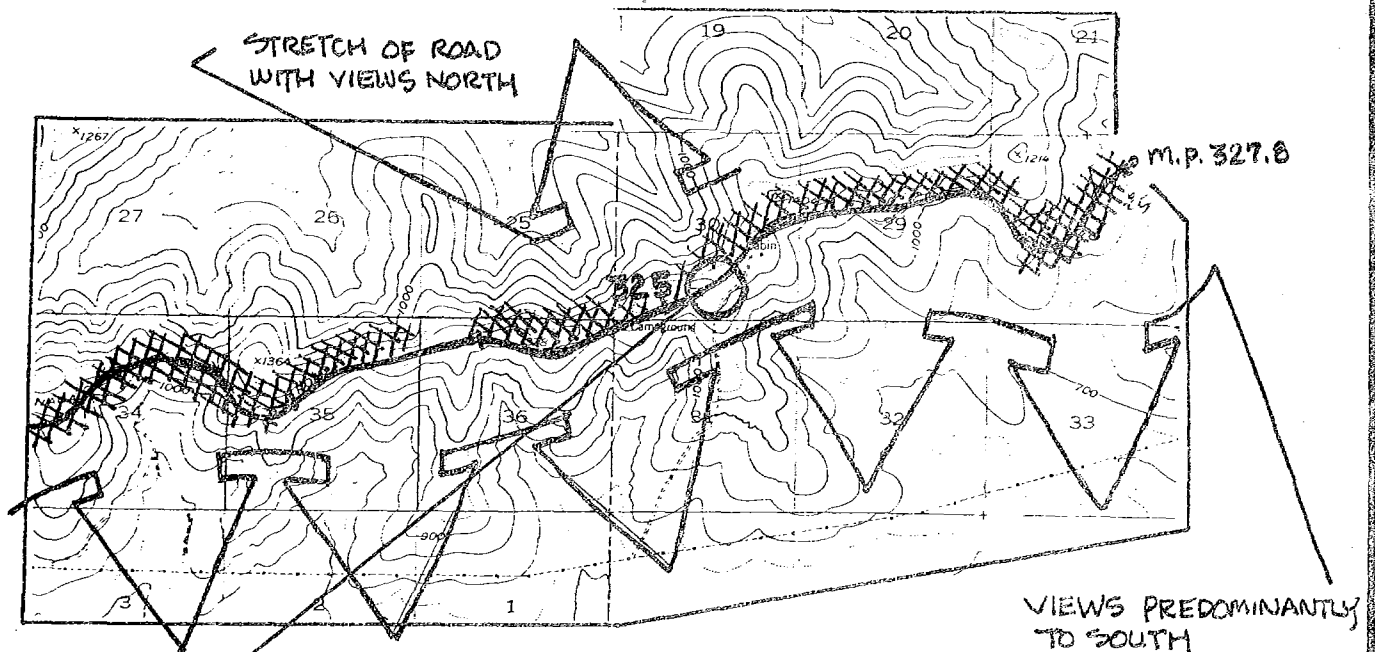


## PRIMARY MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

To officially designate this portion of the George Parks highway as a scenic highway and develop guidelines to manage the foreground lands in a manner which respects these especially high scenic resource values. A 200 ft wide greenbelt beyond the highway right of way is recommended for those portions of the road with high foreground visual absorption capability. Additional field work is recommended to determine an appropriate greenbelt width along those portions of the highway with moderate to low visual absorption capability.

Roadside commercial, residential or industrial development should not be permitted within this visual resource management unit. Such developments would be more appropriately located to the east in visual resource management unit number 26 or in unit 24. Residential development may be compatible with scenic resource management provided it were situated outside of the designated greenbelt area, and at least 33% of the natural landcover is left undisturbed.

Clearcut timber harvesting should not be permitted within the designated greenbelt area. (see visual resource management unit Number 27 for additional information).



A rest area - interpretative center should be developed in the location shown on this map (milepost 324.5 approximately). This site offers expansive views both to the north and the south and could be an ideal location for trails and information regarding the natural history of this landscape. A landscape architect should develop a master plan for this facility.



# Recommendations

Visual Resource Management Unit No. 26

Assessment Units 175-179

Tanana Ridge Character Type

Approximate length: 10 miles

## GENERAL

Intrinsic and composite scenic resource values within that area designated as visual resource management unit number 26 are moderate to low. This is primarily because the ridge that the road traverses is relatively broad, allowing few views to the middleground and background and resulting in a generally less stimulating visual and experiential driving experience. Additionally there are visually distracting commercial and residential developments, land clearing, large bare roadcuts, and frequent views of powerlines. The primary management strategy for visual resource management unit number 26 should be to encourage needed roadside land developments here rather than in adjacent management units which have considerably higher scenic resource values. At the same time an effort should be made to control the type of roadside visual blight which is just beginning along one portion of the highway within this management unit.

## PRIMARY MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Concentrate future commercial roadside development within this area rather than in the more scenic and sensitive visual resource management units to the east (number 25) and west (number 27). Commercial development should focus around existing developments between mileposts 328 and 329 to keep its visual impact to a minimum.

Open up occasional views from the road to the north by selective clearing and thinning of foreground vegetation in appropriate locations.

Concentrate efforts at roadside right of way planting - revegetation programs within that stretch of roadway presently subject to significant adverse impact from roadside land development, (see map). Native trees and shrubs should be allowed to revegetate portions of the highway right-of-way to screen - reduce the visual impact of extensive land clearing immediately adjacent to the right-of-way.



# Recommendations

|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Visual Resource Management Unit No. 27 | Assessment Units 180-185       |
| Tanana Ridge Character Type            | Approximate length: 11.4 miles |

## GENERAL

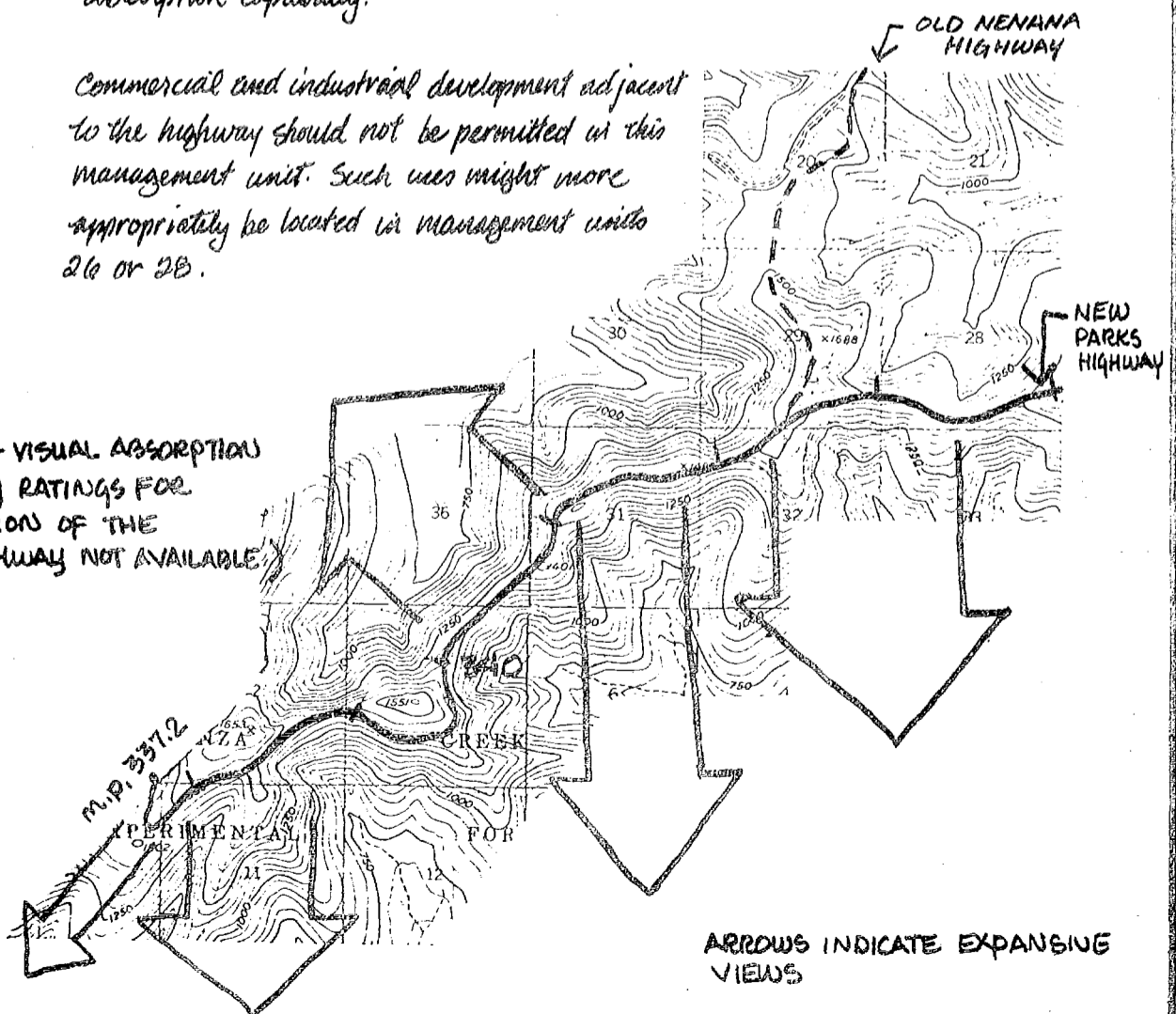
Visual resource management unit number 27 includes eleven miles of highly scenic roadway. The west half of this management unit follows the old Nenana highway, while the eastern half is a completely new road which traverses the ridge, dividing Alder and Cripple Creeks. The highway cuts and fills associated with the straightening and upgrading of the old Nenana highway portion and the construction of the new section are the only land developments impacting the very high scenic resource values intrinsic to this stretch of highway. Given time, these cuts and fills should develop a vegetation cover and should eventually make this one of the most scenic portions of the George Parks highway.

## PRIMARY MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

To officially designate this portion of the George Parks highway as a scenic highway and develop guidelines to manage the particularly sensitive foreground lands in a manner which respects these particularly valuable scenic resources. A 200 ft wide greenbelt beyond the highway right of way is recommended along those portions of the highway with a high visual absorption capability. Additional field work is needed to determine an appropriate greenbelt width along those portions of the highway with moderate to low foreground visual absorption capability.

Commercial and industrial development adjacent to the highway should not be permitted in this management unit. Such uses might more appropriately be located in management units 26 or 28.

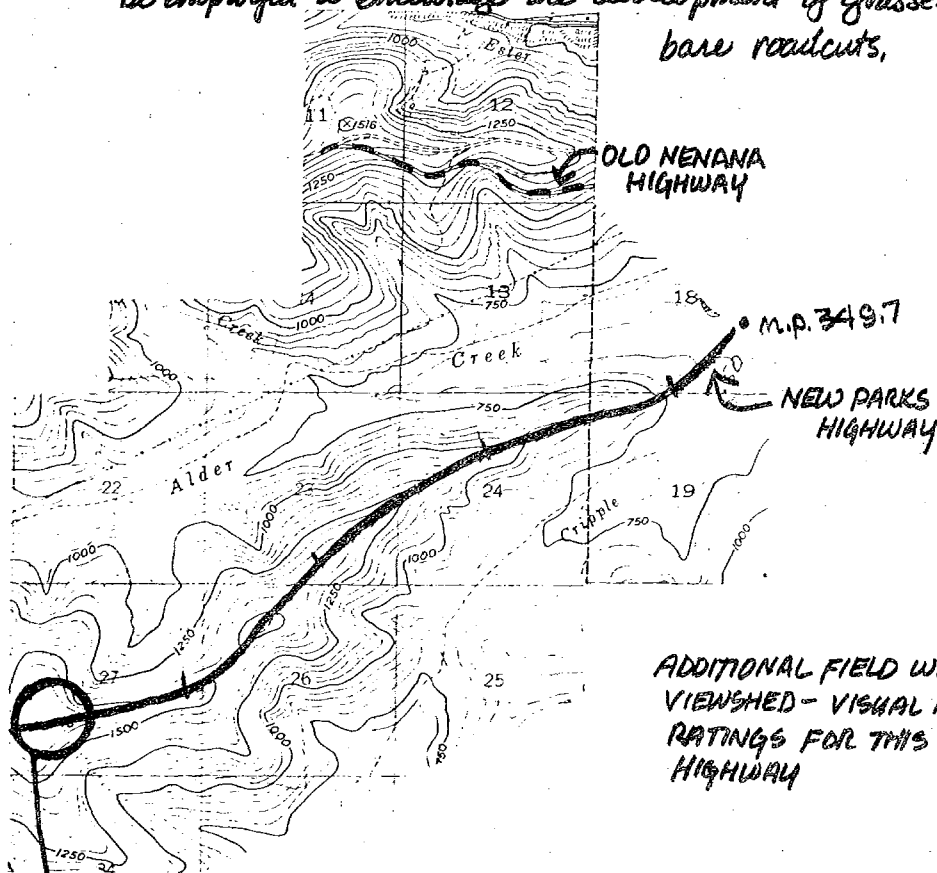
(VIEWSHED-VISUAL ABSORPTION CAPABILITY RATINGS FOR THIS PORTION OF THE PARKS HIGHWAY NOT AVAILABLE)



Some residential development could be compatible with a scenic highway management strategy provided that residences are located beyond the designated greenbelt area, at least 50% of the natural landcover on the site is left undisturbed and individual access roads with the highway are not developed.

Clearcut timber harvesting should not be permitted within the designated greenbelt area. Hillslopes immediately below the road are less sensitive than those across the valley which are in the direct line of sight of the viewer. Due to the location of the road and the general density of the forest cover, timber harvesting should have minimal visual impact provided it is done outside of the greenbelt area and appropriate design and silvicultural techniques are employed (sizing and shaping of cut areas, siting of roads, minimal soil disturbance, rapid regeneration).

Along those very steep roadcuts where erosion is occurring and natural revegetation is not proceeding, artificial planting techniques should be employed to encourage the development of grasses to cover the bare roadcuts.



ADDITIONAL FIELD WORK REQUIRED TO DETERMINE VIEWSHED - VISUAL ABSORPTION CAPABILITY RATINGS FOR THIS PORTION OF THE PARKS HIGHWAY

A rest area - interpretive center should be developed at the site indicated on the map (milepost 344.4 approximately). This location offers the potential for expansive views both to the north and south. The George Parks Highway monument presently is located at the recommended site. A professional landscape architect should be employed to develop a master plan for the design and development of this facility.

# Recommendations

Visual Resource Management Unit No 2B

Assessment Units 186-193

Chena Ridge - Chena lowlands Character Types

Approximate length: 7.4 miles

## GENERAL

Visual resource management unit number 2B includes the last 7½ miles of the George Parks highway as it enters Fairbanks. Intrinsic visual quality ratings within this area were moderately high, however foreground land developments have significantly reduced the visual quality. Consequently the primary management objective for this management unit is restoration along those portions hit by visual blight, taking advantage of areas with high visual absorption capability in future developments, and to adopt and use design considerations, guidelines and performance standards in the development of roadside lands. These measures can lead to the creation of a visually pleasing entrance and exit to Alaska's second largest city.

## PRIMARY MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Locate scenic rest areas - interpretative centers in the two locations illustrated on the map. The Ester Creek turnout could focus on gold placer mining in the Fairbanks area. This facility would be situated with adequate views of mining tailings and other visual evidence of past and present mining activities.

The Chena River turnout would be a visitor information center for travelers entering the city. The educational - interpretive material could focus on Fairbanks as a city built on an active floodplain, and natural history information about the Chena - Tanana River lowland areas. Such facilities would be for day use only and need not be extensive. They could be very significant in helping people develop a better understanding of the landscape they are traveling through.

Future roadside land developments should be required to retain at least 25% of the natural forested landcover within the 100 ft immediately adjacent to the highway right-of-way.

Land clearing on those highly visible and sensitive portions of Chena Ridge should not be allowed. No structures higher than the existing treecover should be permitted along the ridgetop.

A land reclamation-beautification effort should concentrate on the two mile stretch of roadway east of the Parks highway- Old Nenana highway junction. This is the area most severely impacted by roadside development and landscape alteration. This is an area where the State Department of Transportation and Public Facilities through a right of way planting program, could have a significant impact on scenic resource values. (See map).

