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5. Talachulitna River Management Unit

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1
2 **5. Talachulitna River Management Unit**

3
4 **Background**

5
6 **Miles of River**

7
8 This unit includes 64.5 miles of the Talachulitna River and 22 miles of Talachulitna Creek.

9
10 **Land Ownership**

11

State	51,734 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	917 acres
Private & Other	147 acres
Total	52,798 acres

12
13 **River Characteristics**

14
15 The Talachulitna River begins in the Beluga Mountains and runs 65 miles to join the
16 Skwentna River. Talachulitna Creek is the main tributary of the Talachulitna River. The
17 lower half-mile of the following major tributaries are also included in the Recreation River:
18 Grayling, Friday, Deep, and Thursday creeks. The management unit also includes about
19 3 miles of the Skwentna River. Important lakes include Judd, Talachulitna, and Wolf lakes.
20 Multiple measurements were made from 1989 to 1992 and found discharges as low as 83 cfs
21 in the winter as well as discharges that can exceed 2000 cfs in the summer.

22
23 The clear water of Talachulitna Creek, good views of the Alaska Range and Beluga
24 Mountain, and the steep-walled canyon of the Talachulitna River make this unit very scenic.
25 The limited number of man-made improvements detract only slightly from the visual
26 character.

27
28 **Fisheries**

29
30 *Species Present*

31

Arctic grayling	Pink salmon
Chinook salmon	Rainbow trout
Chum salmon	Sockeye salmon
Coho salmon	

32
33 Chum, coho, and pink salmon begin spawning at the mouth, and reach as far up as RM 39,
34 the confluence of Talachulitna Creek and Talachulitna River. Sockeye salmon mostly spawn
35 in Judd Lake and also reach Talachulitna Lake. Chinook salmon migrate most of the way up
36 the Talachulitna River, and as high as Judd Lake on Talachulitna Creek and to the

1 headwaters of the Talachulitna River. Rainbow trout and grayling are found throughout the
2 management unit.

3
4 *Sport Fishing*

5
6 The peaks in recreation and fishing activity on the Talachulitna River correspond with the
7 Chinook and coho salmon runs. These are approximately June 20 to July 4, and August 1 to
8 August 21, respectively. The more popular fishing areas are the mouth, tributary junctions,
9 the confluence with Talachulitna Creek, and the outlet of Judd Lake. Float trips from Judd
10 Lake to the mouth are common for rainbow trout and Arctic grayling.

11
12 *Special Regulations*

13
14 The Talachulitna River is designated as a catch-and-release special management area for
15 rainbow trout. Sport fishing is by unbaited, artificial lure, single hook only.

16
17 **Development**

18
19 There are four lodges operating along the river. Most private cabins and commercial lodges
20 are around Judd Lake, at RM 20, and near the mouth. Water-dependent improvements such
21 as docks, stairs, and storage sheds are associated with most of these lodges and cabins. There
22 is one private airstrip near the mouth.

23
24 **Wildlife**

25
26 *Moose*

27
28 Moose are generally distributed throughout the unit. Fall moose hunting occurs along the
29 upper and middle reaches of the unit. There are significant fall concentrations of moose in the
30 upper reaches of the Talachulitna Creek below Judd Lake. Hunters fly in and float the river
31 to a lower pick-up point.

32
33 *Bear*

34
35 Guided brown and black bear hunting occurs along the upper river. During the salmon
36 spawning season, black bear concentrate on the Talachulitna River between the confluence
37 with the Skwentna River and Talachulitna Creek.

38
39 *Bald Eagles*

40
41 Bald eagle nests have not been observed in recent surveys. However, bald eagles are known
42 to roost along the river and feed on salmon when available.

1 *Trumpeter Swans*

2
3 Trumpeter swans are known to nest within the corridor and have been documented in recent
4 surveys. Lakes with suitable nesting habitat also occur adjacent to the corridor.

5
6 *Hunting*

7
8 The Talachulitna River and Creek are important for moose and bear hunting from Judd Lake
9 to the Skwentna River confluence. Most of the hunting occurs from rafts or boats or from
10 tree stands along the river.

11
12 *Trapping*

13
14 Trapping for beaver, coyote, fox, mink, muskrat, otter, wolf and wolverine occur in the
15 corridor during spring and winter seasons.

16
17 **Subsistence**

18
19 Residents of Skwentna utilize the area around the Talachulitna River for subsistence. There is
20 a Tier II moose hunt within Game Management Unit 16B which takes place in an area
21 encompassing the Talachulitna River. The area is also utilized for subsistence harvest of
22 small mammals and furbearers as well as upland game.

23
24 **Camping**

25
26 The Talachulitna River receives mostly overnight use. Camps mostly occur at sites identified
27 by the plan as the public use sites on the upper river. Camping is also common at the mouth.

28
29 **Access**

30
31 The river mouth is accessible to powerboaters traveling up the Skwentna River, and by
32 floatplanes and wheelplanes. The airstrip is in private ownership. ORV use is primarily by
33 private landowners. The middle river is accessible by floatplanes, wheelplanes, and
34 powerboats. Judd Lake supports frequent floatplane traffic associated with lodges and float
35 trips. Small jets boats are also used on the lake and along the river. Float trips typically start
36 at Judd Lake and end at RM 19 or at the Skwentna River. Travel within the corridor by
37 helicopter also occurs. Winter travel is limited primarily to local residents because of the
38 area's distance to the railbelt.

39
40
41

1 **Management Guidelines for the Unit**

2
3
4

Boating Restrictions

- 1. *Non-motorized area* Talachulitna Creek mouth to exit of Judd Lake (RM 0.0-17.1)

Season: June 15 - August 20.

Justification: This segment is rarely used by powerboaters. This river segment provides high quality float trips. This restriction will protect high quality float trips from future technologies which could allow powerboat access, resulting in conflicts. Restrictions were not proposed for the mouth or the middle portion of the Talachulitna River because of frequent use by powerboats and private property. The Talachulitna River above the forks has no restrictions because it is used infrequently by powerboaters but is inaccessible to floaters.

- 2. *Non-motorized area* From the Talachulitna River confluence with Thursday Creek to Hell’s Gate (RM 9.0 to 18.0)

Season: June 15 - August 20.

Justification See justification above.

5
6

7 **5a. Mouth of Talachulitna River Subunit**

8
9

Background

10 Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 0 to RM 2.8

11
12
13 This reach extends from the confluence of the Talachulitna and Skwentna rivers to the
14 bottom of the Talachulitna River canyon. The river here is from 75 to 120 feet wide. Upland
15 areas contain few wetlands: 10 percent contiguous, and 5 percent non-contiguous. The
16 subunit also includes 3 miles of the Skwentna River.

17
18 **Land Ownership**

State	2,649 acres
Private & Other	70 acres
Total	2,719 acres

19
20
21 **Fisheries**

22
23 This is a very popular fishing area.

1 **Wildlife**

2
3 Bears concentrate near the mouth during the summer. Active bald eagle and trumpeter swan
4 nests have not been sighted in recent surveys in this subunit.

5
6 **Development**

7
8 Private cabins are located near RM 3 and RM 0.4. ADF&G has a cabin on the east side of the
9 river at RM 0.5. There are various improvements along the river associated with the lodges
10 including steps, ramps, equipment storage, and platforms. They are particularly prevalent on
11 the east side of the river where banks are steep and improvements were needed to access
12 private uplands. Boats are stored adjacent to each lodge. The US Geological Survey (USGS)
13 maintains a gauging station on the Skwentna River. The Alaska Department of Natural
14 Resources has also installed a temporary river gauge near the mouth. Boats are stored by the
15 public at the mouth of the Talachulitna River and at the mouth of Shell Creek. Floatplanes
16 have established primitive tie-ups on a beach on the north side of the Skwentna River near
17 the USGS gauging station.

18
19 **Access**

20
21 There are several local foot trails associated with the lodges and cabins, including trails
22 connecting lodges on either side of the Talachulitna River. There is one private airstrip near
23 the river mouth that is not open to the public. The other landing area is on a bar at the mouth
24 of Shell Creek at low water. Floatplanes also land adjacent to the USGS gauging station on
25 the Skwentna River and near the mouth of the Talachulitna River. In the winter, the mouth of
26 the river is used primarily by local residents for snowmachining. Recreation use is low
27 because of its distance from Skwentna and the railbelt.

28
29 **Heritage Resources**

30
31 The heritage site potential is high because several ancient house pits have been found in the
32 area.

33
34 **Other Activities**

35
36 There are some mining claims on the north side of the Skwentna River outside of the river
37 corridor.

38
39
40 **Management Intent**

41
42 **Class II.** Because of its relatively remote setting, this subunit receives only moderate use by
43 recreationists during the snow-free seasons. This subunit features high quality bank and boat
44 fishing for lodge-based users and powerboat users in a scenic, natural setting. The area also
45 features camping opportunities and important take-out points for float trips. The area has

1 some development with a few commercial recreation lodges located to take advantage of the
2 remote, wilderness setting of adjacent areas. This subunit receives higher use than other areas
3 along the Talachulitna River. The subunit contains salmon spawning and moose wintering
4 habitat. It will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, and fish and
5 wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private lands. Maintaining public
6 use sites will be a high priority. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

7
8
9 **Management Guidelines**

10
11 **Boating Restrictions.** None.

12
13 **Iditarod National Historic Trail.** The primary trail and a connecting trail passes through
14 this subunit paralleling the north side of the Skwentna River. See guidelines in Chapter 2,
15 *Heritage Resources, Iditarod National Historic Trail.*

16
17
18 **Public Use Sites**

19
20 See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown
21 on maps at the end of this unit.

22
PU 5a.1 Skwentna Canyon (USGS Gaging Station). A small bar across from this
station on the Skwentna River is frequently used by floatplanes to pick up
floaters. The river adjacent to the site is straight and deep, and some pilots
prefer landing there rather than at the mouth of the Talachulitna River.
ADNR is working to organize a boat storage area at this site.

PU 5a.2 Mouth of the Talachulitna River (RM 0.0). This site is frequently used for
fishing and camping. During late season when the river is low, the banks and
trails along the banks are frequently used because the river is too low to
navigate. Multiple lodges are located upstream of site.

PU 5a.3 Exit of Canyon (RM 2.9). This site is used by people who walk and boat up
from the river mouth and from lodges.

23
24
25 **5b. Talachulitna River Canyon Subunit**

26
27 **Background**

28
29 Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 2.8 to RM 18.3

30
31 This subunit extends the length of the Talachulitna River canyon. The channel width is 40 to
32 60 feet, and the current is relatively swift. The uplands include steep hillsides and cliffs. Less
33 than five percent of the subunit is wetlands.

1 **Land Ownership**

2

State	10,688 acres
Private & Other	5 acres
Total	10,693 acres

3
4 **Wildlife**

5
6 Black bears concentrate along the river throughout this subunit during salmon season. Bald
7 eagle nests have not been observed in recent surveys. Trumpeter swans and their young have
8 been observed in recent surveys of the subunit.

9
10 **Camping**

11
12 The canyon is a frequent overnight stop-over point for float trips. However, there are fewer
13 campsites than on the upper segments, because of the steep walls of the canyon.

14
15 **Access**

16
17 There is one off-road vehicle trail in this subunit around Dog Lake (RM 5). There is also a
18 foot trail from Lake 430' (RM 3) to the river at RM 2.8. Because of the Class III rapids, boat
19 use is primarily by raft or kayak. Dog Lake (RM 5) is used by floatplanes. A lake at RM 3,
20 adjacent to the subunit, is used by floatplanes to access private cabins. A small landing area
21 at RM 6.8 is used to access private land and fishing areas. Helicopters are also used for
22 access within this subunit.

23
24
25 **Management Intent**

26
27 **Class I.** Because of its remote setting and difficult access, this subunit receives only
28 moderate use by floaters during the snow-free season. This subunit features scenic floating,
29 fishing, and camping opportunities. There is also potential for an adventurous powerboating
30 opportunity during periods of high water. The area is remote, undeveloped, and has important
31 wilderness, and fish and wildlife values. Two sets of Class II-III rapids enhance risk values
32 associated when floating the river. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance
33 recreation opportunities and fisheries values while protecting the primitive qualities of the
34 area. Maintaining an essentially unmodified natural environment will be the focus of
35 management attention. Social interaction levels will also be managed for low encounters to
36 protect the quality of users' experiences. Maintaining public use sites will be a high priority.
37 There are seasonal motor restrictions in the southern part of this subunit to provide a
38 nonmotorized experience.

39
40
41

1 Management Guidelines

2
3 **Boating Restrictions.** See management guidelines for the Talachulitna River Management
4 Unit described earlier in this section.

5
6 **Landing Area in Canyon.** A large gravel bar at RM 6.8 is used by wheelplanes for landing.
7 This landing area should remain unimproved and continue to be available for wheelplane
8 access.

9
10 **Standards for Interaction Impacts.** The non-motorized sections of the Talachulitna Creek
11 and Talachulitna Canyon subunits have seen an increase in use levels in recent years due to
12 opportunities to fish for Chinook salmon and improved access via helicopter. They also offer
13 one of the most remote, wilderness-oriented float trips in the planning area. The cost,
14 logistics, and technical skill required to float the river limits use to experienced whitewater
15 floaters. Among these users, there is strong consensus about the type of experience offered
16 on Talachulitna Creek and in the canyon, the impact levels acceptable for that experience,
17 and the need for a permit system if impacts rise above those defined levels.

18
19 Key indicators for the type of experience desired by these floaters include camp encounters
20 (or camp sharing – the percentage of nights camping within sight or sound of another party)
21 and river encounters (the number of other parties seen on the river). Users define the
22 Talachulitna as a remote, wilderness-like, whitewater float trip. Excessive river and camp
23 encounters would detract from this experience.

24
25 In order to provide for the type of experience Talachulitna floaters currently receive and
26 prefer, prescribed standards for these impacts are:

- 27
28 1. No camp encounters on Talachulitna Creek (Subunit 5d) and in Talachulitna Canyon
29 (Subunit 5b).
30 2. Less than three river encounters per day in the above two subunits.

31
32 Monitoring these impacts, and establishing a relationship between them and use levels, can
33 be administratively difficult. However, through a monitoring program, it is possible to
34 generate the necessary information.

35
36 At current use levels, these standards are rarely exceeded. However, if use increases,
37 competition may be anticipated in the future. If this occurs, and the users are forced to share
38 camps or more than three groups per day on more than twenty percent of trips, a use limit
39 system may be developed and implemented.

40
41 **Voluntary Trip Scheduling Program.** For most users, current use levels do not cause
42 impacts greater than the standards described above. However, a minority of trips experience
43 greater impact levels than users consider acceptable, particularly at public use sites. If use
44 increases, this problem could continue until a use limit is developed. To prevent the
45 mandatory trip scheduling associated with a use limit, a voluntary trip scheduling program

1 administered by ADNR may be implemented for the Talachulitna Canyon (Subunit 5b) and
2 Talachulitna Creek (Subunit 5d) before limits are implemented.

3
4 Commercial and private trip leaders will be encouraged to register proposed trips as soon as
5 they have been planned. ADNR will maintain a list and notify trip leaders when more than
6 one trip has been scheduled for the same day (experience indicates that paired launches result
7 in unacceptable impacts). It will be the trip leaders' responsibility to reschedule or otherwise
8 alter trips if they so desire.

11 **Public Use Sites**

12
13 See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown
14 on maps at the end of this unit.

15
PU 5b.1 Landing Area (RM 6.8). The natural gravel bar at this site is flat and frequently used by pilots as a landing strip. The landing area should continue to be available for public use. This site is at the same location as SMA 5b.1.

PU 5b.2 Thursday Creek Junction (RM 9). This site receives high public use for camping and fishing. It is a well-known destination point for float trips down the river.

PU 5b.3 Deep Creek Junction (RM 14). This site receives high public use for camping and fishing. It is a well-known destination point for float trips down the river.

PU 5b.4 Friday Creek Junction (RM 16). This site receives high public use for camping and fishing. It is a well-known destination point for float trips down the river.

PU 5b.5 Fishing Hole (RM 16.5). This site includes a popular fishing hole.

PU 5b.6 Hell's Gate (RM 18). This rapid is usually portaged all season because of the large, narrow drop. The site is highly scenic with high walls and large rapids. A portage trail follows the west bank. Floaters camp both above and below the drop. Powerboaters tie up just above the drop and walk down to Friday Creek to fish.

18 **Special Management Area**

19
20 See *Special Management Areas* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations
21 of sites are shown on the map at the end of this unit.

22
SMA 5b.1 Primitive Landing Area (RM 6.8). This area includes a primitive landing area used by wheelplanes to access private land and by the public to access fishing areas. Extensive camping also occurs in the area. The Special

Management Area will be managed as a Class II area. Class II area management intent and guidelines will apply. The area will be managed to accommodate uses associated with private lands in the SMA while providing for and enhancing public recreation opportunities and fish and wildlife habitat.

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5c. Middle Talachulitna River Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 18.3 to RM 32.5

This subunit extends from the top of the canyon up to the junction of the Talachulitna River and Creek. The river is winding and slower-moving, with oxbow sloughs. The river here is 40 to 60 feet wide. Contiguous wetlands encompass less than 5 percent of the corridor below RM 20, and about 50 percent from RM 20 to RM 32.5. Several oxbow lakes are adjacent to the river.

Land Ownership

State	8,195 acres
Private & Other	24 acres
Total	8,219 acres

Wildlife

Active bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit. Several trumpeter swan and their young have been observed along the river corridor and on the oxbow lakes and sloughs. High concentrations of black bears occur along the river during salmon season.

Development

A few private cabins are located at the midpoint (RM 20). There is also a commercial lodge located on state land under lease near this location. Lodge and cabin owners store boats and boat-related equipment along the river.

Access

Most of the trails in the subunit are in the immediate vicinity of the existing lodge and cabins. They are used to access the river, a primitive landing area, woodlots, and adjacent cabins. There are also trails used in the winter by local residents that parallel the river. Fishermen also walk up tributaries on primitive trails or on river bars. Just downstream of the midpoint lodge is a floatplane landing area (RM 19). Some floaters from Judd Land end their trip here.

1 Boats and floatplanes are stored at the south end of this floatplane landing area. Powerboats
2 are used to shuttle clients and local residents upstream to the cabins and lodges. During high
3 water, floatplanes can taxi and land in front of the lodge. There is also a private airstrip in a
4 swamp behind the lodge used by the lodge owner. In addition, the lodge uses a helicopter and
5 stores it between the lodge and the river. Hiline Lake (adjacent to and east of the corridor) is
6 used by floatplanes to access private land around the lake.

7
8 Winter access is mostly by local residents who live at the midpoint of the river. There is
9 some trapping in the winter. Residents on adjacent lakes such as Trinity and Hiline lakes also
10 use snowmachines. In the past heavy equipment has been transported to Coal, Friday, and
11 Saturday creeks.

12 13 **Heritage Resources**

14
15 The heritage site potential is high for this area.

16 17 **Other Activities**

18
19 Timber has been harvested adjacent to all the cabins and the lodges at the midpoint for
20 house logs, firewood, and milled wood.

21 22 23 **Management Intent**

24
25 **Class I.** Because of the overlapping use between floaters and powerboaters, this subunit
26 receives higher use than adjacent subunits. This subunit features high quality fishing and
27 camping opportunities for floaters and lodge-based powerboaters. The area is moderately
28 developed with commercial lodges located to take advantage of the remote, primitive setting.
29 The subunit contains important salmon spawning habitat. The subunit will be managed to
30 provide and enhance these recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. While
31 existing development at moderate levels is consistent with this intent, new development on
32 state lands will be minimized. Maintaining public use sites will be a high priority. There are
33 no non-motorized areas in this subunit. The management intent for the special management
34 area location in this subunit is described below.

35 36 37 **Management Guidelines**

38 39 **Boating Restrictions.** None

40
41 **Boat Storage.** A public boat storage area should be designated near the cluster of private
42 land in this subunit and the floatplane landing area at RM 19. See *Shoreline Development,*
43 *Boat Storage* in Chapter 2.

1 **Special Management Area**

2
3
4
5

See *Special Management Areas* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations of sites are shown on the map at the end of this unit.

SMA 5c.1 Private Lands (RM 20). There are several private parcels and a state lease with a commercial lodge in this area. Floatplanes, wheelplanes, and helicopters land in the area. There are also a number of boats and planes moored on the banks in the summer. The Special Management Area (SMA) will be managed as a Class II area. Class II area guidelines will apply. This area will be managed to accommodate uses associated with private lands in the SMA while providing for and enhancing recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat.

6
7
8
9

Public Use Sites

PU 5c.1 Grayling Creek Junction (RM 25.5). This site is a frequent destination point for floaters and powerboaters. The site is a well-known fishing hole. There is a prominent, sheltered campsite nearby and gravel for campsites immediately downstream of the confluence.

PU 5c.2 The Forks (RM 32.5). This site is a popular destination point for floaters and powerboaters. The site is a well-known fishing hole. There is also a large gravel bar used for camping.

10
11
12

5d. Talachulitna Creek Subunit

13
14

Background

15
16
17

Miles of River/River Characteristics, Talachulitna Creek, RM 0 to RM 17

18
19
20
21

This subunit extends from the confluence of Talachulitna Creek and the Talachulitna River, up Talachulitna Creek to a point just below Judd Lake. Talachulitna Creek is clear and shallow, and about 20 to 30 feet wide. The corridor contains about 60 percent contiguous wetlands and 5 percent non-contiguous wetlands.

22
23
24

Land Ownership

State	9,542 acres
Private & Other	5 acres
Total	9,547 acres

25
26

1 **Fisheries**

2
3 Chinook salmon fishing occurs within the subunit from mid-June through season closure in
4 mid-July. Fishing for Coho salmon occurs mid-August through mid-September.

5
6 **Wildlife**

7
8 Trumpeter swans and their young have been observed along the river corridor and in ponds
9 located in the subunit. Active bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys of this
10 subunit.

11
12 **Development**

13
14 There is an abandoned caterpillar on the south bank of the river at RM 7.0. This vehicle was
15 being transported from upper Saturday or Friday Creek to upper Coal Creek when it broke
16 down and was abandoned. There is one cabin on private land in this subunit on the north
17 bank of the Creek at RM 6.8.

18
19 **Access**

20
21 Primitive trails exist from the lodge to points downstream. A loop trail has been cut on the
22 north side of the river. There is evidence of heavy off-road vehicle use between the cabin at
23 RM 6.8 and the cabins on the east side of Trinity Lakes. Off-road vehicle trails between
24 RM 6 and RM 9 also parallel the river on the north side. Access within the subunit via
25 helicopter has increased. Winter access to Trinity Lakes and Judd Lake is limited to
26 snowmachines. Winter use is low but increasing and guided tours are being lead in this area
27 onto Beluga Mountain. Some winter trapping and spring bear hunting occurs in the area.

28
29 **Heritage Resources**

30
31 The heritage site potential is high in this subunit.
32
33

34 **Management Intent**

35
36 **Class I.** Because of its remote setting, this subunit receives only moderate use by floaters
37 who start their trips at Judd Lake and by bank fishermen who walk downstream from Judd
38 Lake. This subunit features high quality floating, fishing, and camping opportunities. The
39 area is remote, undeveloped, and has high wilderness and wildlife values. Sweepers and other
40 hazards present risk values associated with floating the river. The river contains important
41 spawning habitat. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation
42 opportunities, wilderness, fish, and wildlife qualities of the area. Maintaining an essentially
43 unmodified natural environment will be the focus of management attention. Maintaining
44 public use sites will be a high priority. Social interaction levels will also be managed for low

1 levels to protect the quality of users’ experiences. There are seasonal motorized restrictions
2 in this unit to provide a non-motorized experience.

3
4
5 **Management Guidelines**

6
7 **Boating Restrictions.** See management guidelines for the Talachulitna River Management
8 Unit described earlier in this section.

9
10 **Standards for Interaction Impacts.** See Subunit 5b, Talachulitna River Canyon.

11
12 **Voluntary Trip Scheduling Program.** See Subunit 5b, Talachulitna River Canyon.

13
14
15 **Public Use Sites**

16
17 See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown
18 on maps at the end of this unit.

19
20 **PU 5d.1 Trinity Creek Junction** (RM 4.5). This site is popular for fishing and
camping.

21 **PU 5d.2 Unnamed Campsite** (RM 14). This site is frequently used for fishing and
camping.

22 **PU 5d.3 Unnamed site** (RM 16.5). This site is a popular fishing area used by clients
who walk down from the lodge on Judd Lake. ADF&G has a 4.99-acre
parcel, which provides public access to the outfall of Judd Lake and the
Talachulitna River.

23
24 **5e. Judd Lake Subunit**

25 **Background**

26 Miles of River/River Characteristics, Talachulitna Creek RM 17 to RM 22

27
28 This subunit includes Judd and Talachulitna lakes. Less than 10 percent of the area around
29 the lakes is contiguous wetland.

30
31 **Land Ownership**

State	3,110 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	917 acres
Private & Other	43 acres
Total	4,070 acres

1 **Fisheries**

2
3 The Talachulitna Creek inlet and outlet on Judd Lake are popular fishing areas.
4

5 **Wildlife**

6
7 Trumpeter swans have been documented by USFWS near Talachulitna Lake and the
8 surrounding wetlands. Bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys of this
9 subunit.
10

11 **Camping**

12
13 The most heavily used campsite is at the inlet to Judd Lake.
14

15 **Development**

16
17 There are nine cabins on Judd Lake. A lodge has a large dock, an airstrip and several other
18 structures at the creek outlet. ADF&G manages 5 acres of land at the outlet of Judd Lake.
19 This parcel is the location of an ADF&G cabin that it utilized during the operation of the
20 Judd Lake weir. This parcel also provides public access.
21

22 **Access**

23
24 Judd Lake is accessible in summer by floatplane or via a private airstrip adjacent to the
25 lodge. The lake is the primary put-in for float trips down the river. The lodge has brushed a
26 foot trail from the west end of the lake along the creek to Talachulitna Lake. The lodge has
27 also cut a loop trail that extends approximately two miles downriver. There are also foot
28 trails around the lake associated with the private cabins and the lodge and some short foot
29 trails associated with the sandy area at the inlet to the lake.
30

31 **Heritage Resource**

32
33 There are a couple known heritage sites in this subunit and the potential for more is high.
34
35

36 **Management Intent**

37
38 **Class II.** This subunit features high quality fishing, hunting, and camping opportunities for
39 lodge-based or airplane-based users in a scenic setting. The lake is also a staging point for
40 Talachulitna River float trips. One lodge and a few private cabins sited in the lake area take
41 advantage of the remote, primitive setting. Both Judd Lake and Talachulitna Lake contain
42 salmon spawning habitat. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation
43 opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. Maintaining moderate levels of development in a
44 natural environment will be the focus of management attention. Maintaining public use sites
45 is a high priority. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

1 **Management Guidelines**

2
3 **Boating restrictions.** None.

4
5 **Public Information.** A kiosk which provides information on the Recreation Rivers may be
6 established at a prominent location on Judd Lake. A sign may be established at the outlet of
7 the lake identifying the Talachulitna River as a Recreation River.

8
9
10 **Public Use Site**

11
12 See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown
13 on maps at the end of this unit.

14
 PU 5e.1 Judd Lake (RM 18). Public lands near the inlet are a drop-off point for float
trips. Most of the land directly surrounding the inlet is in private or borough
ownership and is the location of a private cabin. The public use site is the
shorelands and water column only directly south of the inlet and extends back
along Talachulitna Creek to the west. The inlet is mostly wetlands. This site
is also used for fishing.

15
16
17 **5f. Upper Talachulitna River Subunit**

18
19 **Background**

20
21 Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 32.5 to RM 64.5

22
23 The river in this subunit is shallow, meandering, and less than 20 feet wide. There are several
24 beaver dams across the main channel. There is a narrow, steep gorge with a waterfall at
25 RM 38. The terrain is flat to rolling except at its headwaters on the shoulder of Beluga
26 Mountain. Thirty to 50 percent of the area is contiguous wetland.

27
28 **Land Ownership**

29
30 There are 17,550 acres of state land.

31
32 **Wildlife**

33
34 Trumpeter swan have been observed in recent surveys of this subunit. Active bald eagle nests
35 have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit.

1 **Camping**

2
3 The use of this subunit is limited with little access to the area. Moose hunters are known to
4 camp at Wolf Lakes.

5
6 **Access**

7
8 There are off-road vehicle trails between RM 46 and RM 54, on the east and south sides of
9 the river. The largest of the Wolf Lakes, at the headwaters of the river, is used by floatplanes
10 during hunting season. This subunit is used for snowmachining by a local trapper and
11 residents along the Talachulitna River. To the east is Beluga Mountain which prevents access
12 from Alexander Creek.

13
14
15 **Management Intent**

16
17 **Class I.** This subunit receives minimal summer public use because of its distance from the
18 railbelt and has minimal boat or plane access. It is used infrequently by airplane-based
19 hunters in fall and powerboat-based hunters during periods of high water. The subunit will be
20 managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. Little
21 active management is expected in this subunit. There are no non-motorized areas in this
22 subunit.

23
24
25 **Management Guidelines**

26
27 **Boating Restrictions.** None.

28
29
30 **Public Use Site**

31
32 See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown
33 on maps at the end of this unit.

34
35 **PU 5f.1 Wolf Lakes** (RM 64). There are only a few campsites adjacent to the lakes.
36 These are used during the moose hunting season.

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Location Map: Talachulitna River Management Unit

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Map 1: Talachulitna River

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Map 2: Talachulitna River

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Map 3: Talachulitna River

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Map 4: Talachulitna River

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Map 5: Talachulitna River

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Map 6: Talachulitna River

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Map 7: Talachulitna River

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