

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	7,999 acres
5 Private Parcels	24 acres
Total	8,023 acres

WILDLIFE

Active bald eagle nests have been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit. Several trumpeter swan nests have been observed near river miles 18.5, 21, 22, 26, 26.5 and 27 on the oxbow lakes and sloughs. High concentrations of black bears occur along the river during salmon season.

CAMPING

There are numerous campsites that are used, the following have been identified:

Primary campsites	5
Secondary campsites	54
Marginal campsites	8

DEVELOPMENT

Two lodges and three private cabins are located at the midpoint (RM 20). Lodge and cabin owners store boats and boat-related equipment along the river. One of the lodges has a drinking water uptake pipe and filter in the river. There is an unauthorized cabin on state land near the RM 6 on Talachulitna Creek.

ACCESS

Most of the trails in the subunit are in the immediate vicinity of the existing lodges 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 lodges is a floatplane landing area (RM 19). Some floaters from Judd Land end their trip here. Boats and floatplanes are stored at the south end of this floatplane landing area. Powerboats are used to shuttle clients and local residents upstream to the cabins and lodges. During high water, floatplanes can taxi and land in front of the lodges. There is also a primitive landing area in a swamp behind the Talaheim Lodge used by the lodge owner. In addition, Talaheim Lodge uses a helicopter and stores it between the lodge and the river. At RM 32 there is a primitive landing area on a river bar. Hiline Lake (adjacent to and east of the corridor) is used by floatplanes to access private land around the lake.

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

HERITAGE RESOURCES

The heritage site potential is high for this area.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Timber has been harvested adjacent to all the cabins and the lodges at the midpoint for houselogs, firewood, and milled wood.

Management Intent

Class I. Because of the overlapping use between floaters and powerboaters, this subunit receives higher use than adjacent subunits. This subunit features high quality fishing and camping opportunities for floaters and lodge-based powerboaters. The area is moderately developed with commercial lodges located to take advantage of the remote, primitive setting. The subunit contains important salmon spawning habitat. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance

these recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. While existing development at moderate levels is consistent with this intent, new development on state lands will be minimized. Maintaining public use sites will be a high priority. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit. The management intent for the special management area location in this subunit is described below.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None

Boat Storage. A public boat storage area should be designated near the cluster of private land in

this subunit and the floatplane landing area at RM 19. See *Shoreline Development, Boat Storage* in Chapter 2.

Special Management Areas

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 in this area. As many as four lodges have operated 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.

Public Use Sites

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

- 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.