

## **Alexander Creek Management Unit**

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# 6. Alexander Creek Management Unit

## Background

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### MILES OF RIVER

This unit includes 40.2 miles of Alexander Creek from RM 3.8 to RM 44.0. The unit also includes 5.5 miles of Sucker Creek.

### RIVER CHARACTERISTICS

Alexander Creek is a slow, meandering stream that originates in Alexander Lake and flows south to the Susitna River. The terrain is generally flat to occasionally rolling. The management unit begins 3.5 miles above the confluence with the Susitna, and extends up to Alexander Lake and the surrounding uplands. The lower 5 miles of Sucker Creek are also in the unit. The Alexander Creek channel is 1 to 5 feet deep and from 50 to 200 feet wide. A typical summer flow is 271 cfs. Waters from a 100-year flood can cover a considerable area in sections of the upper and lower river because the river is slow moving and the surrounding area is relatively flat.

Around Alexander Lake the visual qualities are high with good views of the Alaska Range, including Denali. Downstream visual qualities are lower because views are confined by high banks and there are more man-made improvements.

### LAND OWNERSHIP

|                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| State                     | 19,995 acres        |
| Matanuska-Susitna Borough | 2,260 acres         |
| 74 Private Parcels        | 381 acres           |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>22,636 acres</b> |

### FISHERIES

#### *Species Present*

|                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| King Salmon    | Pink Salmon     |
| Rainbow Trout  | Coho Salmon     |
| Chum Salmon    | Arctic Grayling |
| Sockeye Salmon | Burbot          |
| Northern Pike  |                 |

All species of salmon are present throughout the management unit. The majority of king, coho, and pink salmon spawn all along the river above RM 8. Sockeye salmon spawn in the lakes and sloughs feeding Sucker Creek and Alexander Lake. Small numbers of chum salmon have been observed by local residents in the vicinity of the mouth of Pierce Creek but the spawning area has not been documented by DFG.

#### *Sport Fishing*

The peaks in recreation and fishing activity on Alexander Creek correspond with the king and coho salmon runs. These are approximately May 20 to June 25, and July 4 to August 21, respectively. Also, throughout the summer and particularly in the late summer, people fishing for arctic grayling and rainbow trout is common. The more popular fishing spots are the mouths of Pierce, Trail, and Sucker creeks. The most popular fishing area is at the mouth of Alexander Creek which is in the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge.

## **WILDLIFE**

### *Moose*

Winter densities of moose along Sucker Creek and the lower portions of Alexander Creek are very high. The extensive wetlands are important for moose calving in spring. Large numbers of moose summer on Mount Susitna and Beluga Mountain, and other adjoining areas.

### *Bear*

Brown bear and black bear are distributed throughout the unit. Brown bear concentrate on the upper creek to feed on spawning salmon when available. Black bear concentrated on the lower creek during the same period.

### *Bald Eagles*

At least one bald eagle nest is located in the unit, near Sucker Creek.

### *Trumpeter Swans*

Three swan nests are located on Alexander Lake.

### *Hunting*

Moose and bear hunting are very popular in this corridor during the fall. Alexander Creek receives some of the heaviest use by hunters of all the Recreation Rivers. The entire river is floatable and hunted from Alexander Lake to its confluence with the Susitna River. Hunters using power boats generally hunt the lower 20 miles.

### *Trapping*

Recreational trapping for otter, muskrat, marten, mink, beaver, fox, coyote, wolf, and wolverine occur in the corridor during spring and winter seasons.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

Most of the cabins and lodges on Alexander Creek are concentrated downstream of the planning area boundary, near the mouth of the creek. However, there are a number of cabins on the river below Trail Creek and around Alexander Lake.

## **ACCESS**

Most of the boat traffic on Alexander Creek is near the mouth which is outside the unit. Powerboats travel from Anchorage or Deshka Landing to access the creek. Alexander Creek is also a popular rafting trip, particularly during the salmon fishing season. Most float trips begin at Alexander Lake and last 3 to 5 days. Both float- and wheel-planes land at several places in the unit, particularly at Alexander Lake.

## Management Guidelines for the Unit

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### BOATING RESTRICTIONS

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1. *Non-motorized area* Point just above Sucker Creek (RM 23.0) to a point just below exit of Alexander Lake (RM 38.3)

Season: May 15 - August 20.

Justification: This river segment has the potential to provide high quality non-motorized recreation opportunities for which there is a high demand. This river segment is so shallow that it is seldom used by powerboaters. The restriction will be established to ensure that the opportunities for non-motorized whitewater trips are maintained, regardless of technological changes which could allow powerboat use in the future. Restrictions do not cover the motorized trail along the outlet of Alexander Lake nor the area just above the Sucker Creek confluence that contains camping areas used by powerboaters and wheelplanes.
2. *Voluntary no-wake* Mouth of Alexander Creek (northwest side of Susitna River and area from RM 0.0 - 0.2 on Alexander Creek.

Season: May 15 - August 20.

Justification: A 3.8 mile segment of Lower Alexander Creek is proposed for addition to the Alexander Creek Recreation River. See Chapter 4, *Areas Recommended for Designation as Recreation Rivers and Other Recommendations*. The voluntary no-wake area would take effect if the segment is approved by the legislature for destination. The Alexander Creek and Susitna River confluence is a highly congested area during fishing season and the intent of the no-wake area is to protect public safety.
3. *Safety Warning sign* Mouth of Pierce Creek (RM 7.4).

Season: May 15 - August 20.

Justification: Above this point Alexander Creek is narrow, shallow, and winding. Several large boats have grounded above this point. A warning sign will be placed at this point warning large boats about hazards above Pierce Creek.