

## 6a. Lower Alexander Creek Subunit

### Background

#### MILES OF RIVER/RIVER CHARACTERISTICS, RM 3.8 to RM 19.8

This subunit extends from Granite Creek to just above the mouth of Sucker Creek. Alexander Creek is 50 feet wide, widening to 150 feet towards the downstream end of the subunit. Contiguous wetlands make up 20 percent of the area, non-contiguous another 10 percent.

#### LAND OWNERSHIP

State	6,588 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	2,260 acres
63 Private Parcels	315 acres
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,163 acres</b>

#### WILDLIFE.

Lower Alexander Creek has some of the highest winter and spring densities of moose in the planning area. Active bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit.

#### CAMPING

The following undeveloped campsites were identified:

Primary campsites	none
Secondary campsites	18
Marginal campsites	13; also 2 miles of river with continuous marginal campsites

#### DEVELOPMENT

The subunit includes 11 cabins. Two of these cabins are used commercially as fishing lodges. One is located just below Trail Creek at RM 10.5. The other is located at RM 15.5. Private landowners just west of the subunit use a trail and dock at RM 4.6 to access the creek. There are also numerous cabins outside the subunit around Otter and Weenie lakes.

#### ACCESS

A prominent summer trail near RM 12 parallels Trail Creek for at least one mile. A section line on the east side of the subunit and parallel to river appears to be receiving heavy summer use and connects a block of private land at RM 5 with an airstrip. Another airstrip lies west of RM 18. There is a dock and major trail at RM 4.6 on the west side of the river that is used by private landowners west of the subunit.

There is extensive winter travel along Alexander Creek below Sucker Creek. Snowmachine use is by both recreational users and private property owners. The Beluga gas line from the Knik Road is occasionally used by trucks to access Alexander Creek in winter. Snowmachines also travel to lower Alexander Creek from the Iditarod race trail and from Doshka Landing. In previous years, the Iditarod race has run through this subunit on a trail paralleling the river just west of Otter Lake.

#### HERITAGE RESOURCES

The heritage site potential is high due to historic subsistence use, and the proximity to the village of Alexander near the mouth.

### Management Intent

**Class II.** Most recreation use in this subunit occurs during the king and silver salmon runs. Because of strong salmon runs, relatively inexpensive air access from the railbelt, and the placid nature of the river, the subunit receives heavy use by both powerboaters and floaters. The subunit

provides high quality opportunities for boaters in a relatively remote, undeveloped setting. The subunit also contains salmon spawning and winter moose habitat. The mouth, which is proposed as an addition to the Recreation Rivers, receives similar use but in greater numbers because of

lodges and numerous parcels of private land located there. The subunit and the proposed addition (if it becomes part of the Alexander Creek Recreation River), will be managed to provide and enhance recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private lands. Some temporary camps will be allowed. Because of high public use, amount of private land, and the absence of state uplands, temporary camps will not be allowed below RM 4 if the mouth is added to the Recreation Rivers. Maintaining public use sites is a high priority. The

subunit will be managed to provide opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities. There is a proposed voluntary no-wake area at the mouth to protect public safety in this congested area. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit. A sign will be posted above Pierce Creek warning large boats about navigation hazards.

**Borough Lands.** Borough land in this subunit is classified "Borough Land Bank." For management intent on borough lands, contact the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

## Management Guidelines

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**No-wake Area.** See management guidelines for the Alexander Creek Management Unit described earlier in this section.

**Temporary Camps.** Up to three temporary camps may be permitted in this subunit. They will not be authorized in public use sites nor below RM 4 if the river mouth is added to the Recreation Rivers.

**Addition to the Recreation River.** Because of their high use for recreation, the shorelands and the water column from the confluence of the Susitna River to the current southern boundary of Alexander Creek Recreation River is proposed for addition to the Recreation Rivers. This includes

approximately 115 acres of state shorelands. If added, this area will be managed consistent with this subunit. Also see *Areas Recommended for Designation as Recreation Rivers* in Chapter 4. Because of its high recreation values and the concentrated sport fishing that occurs there, the confluence of Alexander Creek and the Susitna River (320 acres) may also be considered for recommended designation when the plan is updated. Also see *Other Recommendations, Future Additions* in Chapter 4.

**Public Information.** A sign should be placed at the south boundary of the Alexander Creek corridor identifying it as a Recreation River.

## Public Use Sites

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

- PU 6a.1 **Alexander Creek Mouth (0.0).** If the lower section of the river is added to the Recreation Rivers, the mouth should be designated a public use site. The gravel bar at the mouth is heavily used for wheelplane landing and storage of boats and equipment. It is flooded yearly so it is unsuitable for any year-round use.
- PU 6a.2 **Granite Creek (RM 3).** This is a popular fishing area. If the lower section of the river is added to the Alexander Creek Recreation River, this site should be designated as a public use site.
- PU 6a.3 **Pierce Creek (RM 7.4).** This is a popular fishing and camping area.
- PU 6a.4 **Trail Creek (RM 12.2).** This is a popular fishing and camping area.