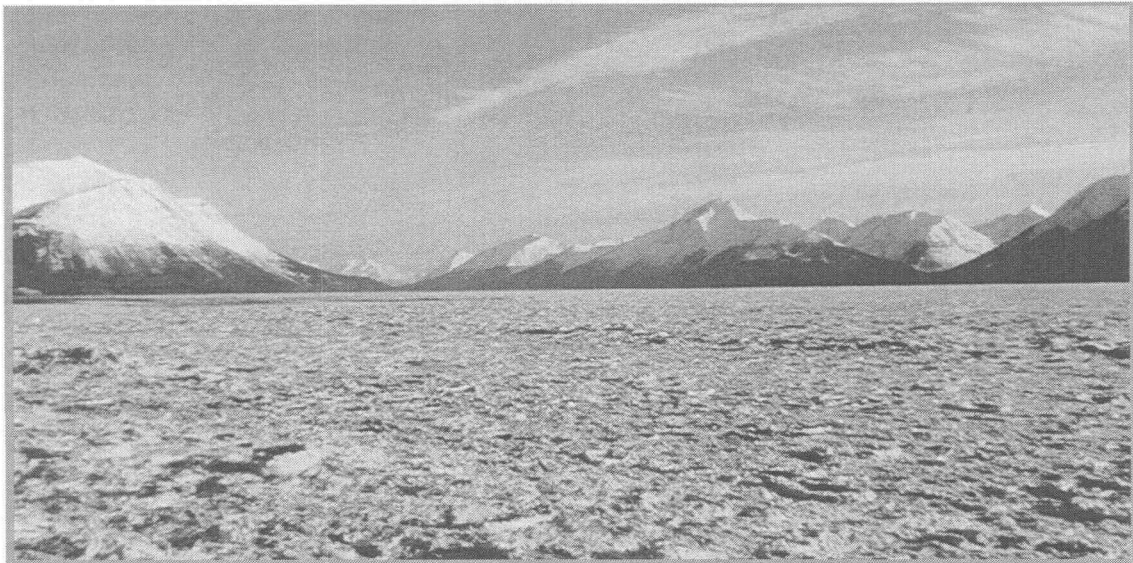


Management Unit 5 East Turnagain Arm

BACKGROUND

This management unit includes state tidelands at the head of Turnagain Arm, isolated parcels of state uplands near Girdwood and Portage, and state selected land in Bear Valley.



Tidelands along eastern Turnagain Arm

Chapter 3. Land Management Policies for each Management Unit

This management unit consists of five subunits:

- Subunit 5a** Subunit 5a includes approximately 10,000 acres of state tidelands. These tidelands are subject to very strong tidal currents and tidal bores. The extensive mudflats exposed at low tide are unstable and dangerous. Land in this subunit subsided as much as six or seven feet during the 1964 earthquake, causing much of the previous upland area to fall below sea level. Continuous uplifting since the earthquake, combined with silt deposition, has restored much of this area close to its original level.
- This subunit is used heavily for recreation by windsurfers and kayakers, and is within the viewshed of one of the most scenic and travelled roads in the state—the Seward Highway. Motorists travelling along the Seward Highway stop frequently to view wildlife, including beluga and killer whales in the waters of Turnagain Arm. This subunit is occasionally used by waterfowl hunters and trappers. Tidelands along Turnagain Arm and within the mouth of the Twentymile River are heavily used for dipnetting of hooligan smelt during May and June.
- The Seward Highway/Turnagain Arm scenic corridor and tidelands near Girdwood at the mouth of Glacier Creek have been identified as an Area Meriting Special Attention by the Anchorage Coastal Management Plan.
- This subunit also includes four parcels in the old Portage townsite. The townsite dropped below sea level after the 1964 earthquake. Even though the townsite has been uplifted over the years since the earthquake, these parcels are still periodically flooded by tidal waters.
- Subunit 5b** Subunit 5b is currently used by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) for its Girdwood maintenance yard.
- Subunit 5c** Subunit 5c is a 3.3 acre parcel straddling California Creek along Crow Creek Road in Girdwood. This parcel is currently subject to a management agreement with the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR).
- Subunit 5d** Subunit 5d is a 102 acre parcel adjacent to the Seward Highway near Virgin Creek. This parcel is currently being used by DOT&PF for material extraction, and has high gravel potential.



Courtesy Anchorage Museum of History & Art

Roof of snow shed covering railroad tracks at Milepost 75.5,
October 1919, looking east toward Portage Valley

Subunit 5e

Subunit 5e is a 320 acre state selection in Bear Valley near Portage Lake. This parcel straddles the Alaska Railroad, between the two tunnels to Whittier. The state selected land in Bear Valley because of the strategic location between the Seward Highway Corridor and Whittier. The selection includes some of the only developable land between Portage and Whittier. The parcel was selected for community expansion and recreation purposes, either to aid in improving access to Whittier, or to provide additional land to accommodate future growth as a result of improved access to Whittier.

Subunit 5f

Subunit 5f is a 197 acre parcel adjacent to the Seward Highway near Kern Creek. Portions of this parcel have been used for material extraction, and the parcel generally has limited potential for rock.

MANAGEMENT INTENT

Subunit 5a

Tidelands and submerged lands within this subunit will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use. The management emphasis for this subunit is to

- 1) protect the high scenic values of the Turnagain Arm/Seward Highway scenic corridor;
- 2) continue offering high quality recreational opportunities; and
- 3) maintain and enhance wildlife habitat.

Subunit 5a will remain open to mineral entry. It is anticipated that there will be a need to use tidelands within this management unit for highway and railroad expansion purposes. This plan does not preclude the use of tidelands in this management unit for transportation related uses.

Subunit 5b

This subunit will continue to be managed for transportation related uses.

Subunit 5c

This subunit will continue to be managed for recreation purposes. This subunit is suited for an access site for a trailhead to the California Creek Trail and the local municipal trail system.

Subunit 5d

This subunit will be managed for materials extraction while protecting, to the extent possible, the scenic values of the Seward Highway Scenic Corridor.

Subunit 5e

If the state receives ownership of this subunit, this subunit should be managed to accommodate future state needs as a result of improved access to Whittier. Public access should be provided across this subunit to US Forest Service lands. The Division of Land should resolve the location of access with the US Forest Service at the time of conveyance.

Subunit 5f

This subunit is highly visible from much of the Seward Highway Scenic Corridor. Therefore other alternative material sources should be considered before utilizing this subunit. If a comparable material source is found and made available to DOT&PF, then this subunit should be dropped as a materials source. If this subunit is to be used for materials extraction, every effort should be made to screen the activity from the highway corridor to the extent possible.

Shorelands

Some shorelands within this management unit—Portage Creek, Portage Lake, and Placer Creek—may be used by DOT&PF to facilitate the Whittier Access Project, as determined by the environmental impact statement currently being developed for the project.

Other isolated parcels

The four state-owned parcels in the old Portage townsite will be managed as part of Subunit 5a.

LAND USE SUMMARY CHART

Management Unit 5: East Turnagain Arm

Subunit	Surface Land Use Designation	Subsurface	Prohibited Surface Use	Comments
5a Tidelands 10,000 acres	Public recreation, Wildlife habitat	Open	Land disposals**	
5b DOT&PF maintenance yard 13.6 acres	Transportation	Open	Land disposals**	ILMA to DOT&PF
5c California Creek 3.3 acres	Public recreation	Open	Land disposals**	ILMA to DPOR
5d Virgin Creek 102 acres	Materials	Open	Land disposals**	Managed under ILMA to DOT&PF
5e Bear Valley 320 acres	Resource management	*	Land disposals**	State selected
5f Kern Creek 197 acres	Materials	Open	Land disposals**	

* Management decisions to be made when DNR is ready to take conveyance.

**Land disposals are disposals of state land to private ownership as authorized by AS 38.05.057 (disposals of land by lottery), AS 38.08 (homesites), and AS 38.09 (homesteads). For the purposes of this plan, land disposals do not include leasing, and do not preclude transfer of state land to another agency or municipality.