

MANAGEMENT UNIT 28: Summit Lake

Background

This management unit includes state-owned land around Summit Lake and state-owned and state-selected land along the Denali Highway west of Summit Lake. The area is mostly alpine with very few trees. The elevation is generally over 3,000 feet above sea level. Summit Lake, Gunn Creek, Fish Creek, and the Upper Gulkana River are major salmon spawning and rearing areas. The unit is a popular recreation area, particularly for residents of Fairbanks and the Tanana Valley. Recreation activities include fishing, boating, hiking, climbing, snowmachining, and cross country skiing. Some private land exists near the Summit Lake Lodge, and a state subdivision was offered east of the Richardson Highway on land that overlooks the lake. The U.S. Air Force is currently evaluating an area east of Summit Lake as a possible site for an Over-the-Horizon Backscatter Radar System.

Management Intent

The unit should be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on public recreation and protection of salmon habitat. Unsold lots in the previous state subdivision may continue to be offered for private ownership. All land uses around the lake and its anadromous tributaries should occur in a manner that ensures protection of these waters for recreation and fish. Summit Lake will be managed as a recreation lake (see p. 2-41). The upper Gulkana hatchery site should be reserved (through an Interagency Land Management Agreement) for ADF&G's use. The Gulkana River, Summit Lake, the area between the south arm of the lake and Gulkana River, Fish Creek, and Gunn Creek will be closed to new mineral entry to protect salmon and resident fish habitat and populations. The TAPS right-of-way was previously closed to mineral location. The remainder of the unit remains open to mineral location.

The state should select additional federal land along the Denali Highway in T. 21 S., R. 10 E.; T. 22 S., R. 10 E.; and T. 22 S., R. 11 E., Fairbanks Meridian. These selections complement state selections filed November 12, 1986, for most of the land along the Denali Highway from Tangle Lakes west to near Cantwell. DNR will evaluate all of these selections to determine which lands it wishes to own. Lands that are conveyed to the state will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on wildlife habitat and recreation.

The Summit Lake area is identified in the Tanana Basin Area Plan as a potential State Recreation Area along with the Fielding Lake area to the northwest. Summit Lake is suitable for such designation, but is not currently recommended for legislative designation because other high value recreation areas in the basin have higher priority for action by the legislature.

Management Guidelines

Potential Gas Line Corridor. A corridor 1/4 mile wide on both sides of the TAPS line should be reserved in state ownership for a possible future gas line until a more specific route is established. The proposed route for the Yukon-Pacific natural gas line from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez passes through this unit. The route roughly parallels the TAPS line except where it diverges west of Summit Lake.

Denali Highway - Visual Impacts. The report Denali to Wrangell - St. Elias, Assessment and Management of Scenic Resources Along the Highways Between Denali and Wrangell - St. Elias National Parks, (1982), should be used when planning for land

use and management activities that will probably result in significant visual changes along this road.

Backscatter Radar. If the USAF selects a site in this area for the proposed backscatter radar facility, it should be developed to minimize impacts on fisheries and recreation resources. Access roads will be designed to minimize impacts on habitats and enhance public use of state land.

Gravel Pits. Existing gravel pits will be retained in public ownership.

Mineral Closures. Some areas will be closed to mineral location to protect salmon and resident fish spawning and rearing areas: Summit Lake; Gulkana River; Fish Lake; land within 200 feet of Gunn Creek and Fish Creek; and Gunn and Fish Creeks themselves. The area between the south arm of Summit Lake and the Gulkana River will also be closed to mineral location because water used in the Gulkana fish hatchery flows through here.

The Trans-Alaska Pipeline right-of-way will remain closed to mineral location to protect existing and future uses.

Trails. Swede Lake Trail, from the Denali Highway, gives road access to high value recreation resources. Currently under BLM management, the area is proposed for state selection. If the state receives title, DLWM should consider appropriate management guidelines at that time.

The complete set of management guidelines is presented in Chapter 2. Any of the guidelines could apply to uses within this management unit; however, guidelines that are most likely to apply are:

- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Recreation, cultural, and scenic resources

LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

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SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP (GENERALIZED)	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				PROHIBITED SURFACE USE(S)*	COMMENTS
		SURFACE		SUBSURFACE			
		PRIMARY USE(S)	SECONDARY USE(S)	LOCATABLE MINERALS	LEASEABLE MINERALS		
28A	State	Public recreation Water resources Wildlife habitat		Open to mineral entry except Summit Lake, Gunn Creek, Fish Creek, Gulkana River	Available for leasing	Land offerings* ² Remote cabins	Past land offering east of Summit Lake
28B	State	Public recreation Wildlife habitat		Open to mineral entry	Available for leasing	Land offerings Remote cabins	

*¹ Other uses such as material sales, land leases, or permits, that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement, the management guidelines of this unit, and the relevant management guidelines listed in Chapter 2.

*² Reofferings of lots in past subdivision is considered an allowed use.

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RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

Management Unit 28 - Summit Lake - Upper Gulkana

RESOURCE	SUBUNIT	
	28A	28B
Fish	salmon - s/r	salmon - s/r
Forestry	unsuitable	low
Historic-Cultural	unknown	unknown
Minerals	moderate to low	moderate
Oil and Gas	unknown	unknown
Recreation	high for Summit Lake; fishing, boating, snowmobiling, hiking	high; snowmobiling, hiking
Sand and Gravel	existing sites and potential area	existing sites
Settlement Suitability	low	low
Transportation	Richardson Hwy.	Denali Hwy.
Wildlife	A-1 habitat - caribou; B-2 habitat	B-1 and B-2 habitats

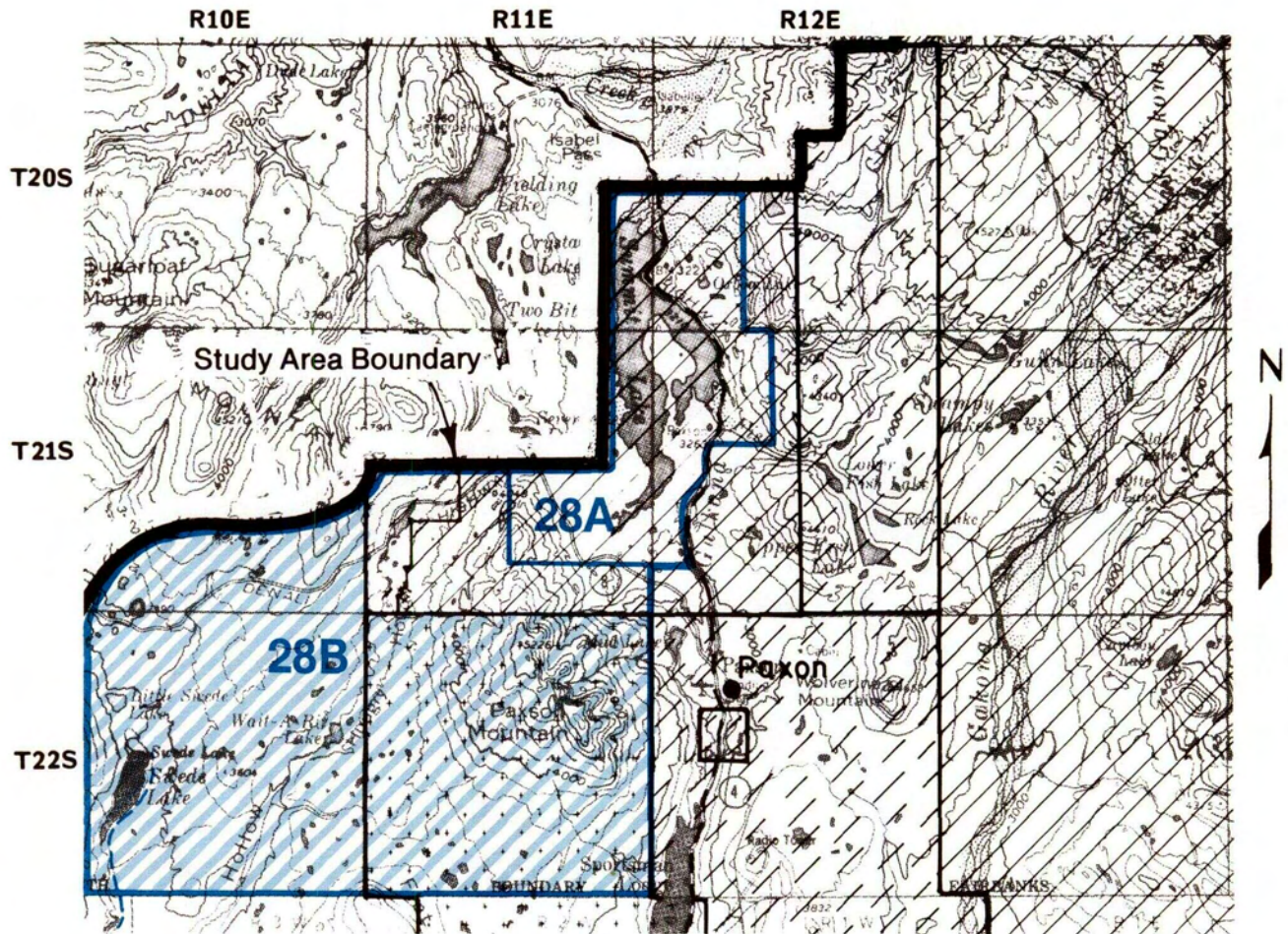
Notes: a) Future State Recreation Area at Summit Lake and Fielding Lake to the northwest is proposed in Tanana Basin Area Plan.

b) Fish hatchery site on upper Gulkana River.

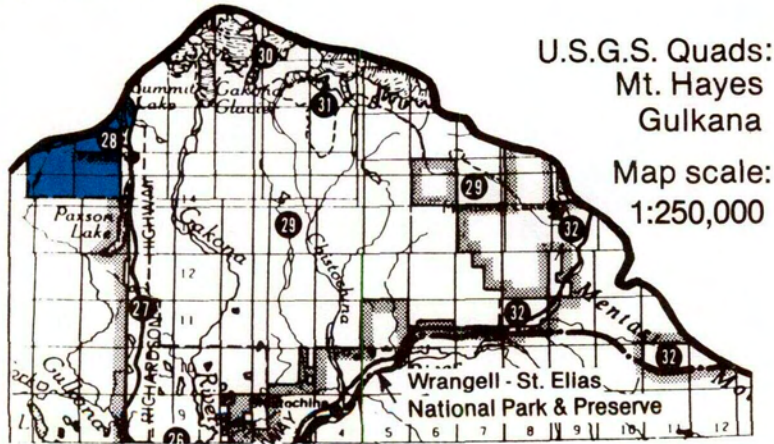
For definitions of ratings, see glossary. For more detailed information on any resources, see resource elements published under separate cover.

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





Summit Lake



Location Map



U.S.G.S. Quads:
Mt. Hayes
Gulkana
Map scale:
1:250,000

-  State Owned
-  State Selected
-  Native/Private Owned
-  Native Selected
-  Federal
-  Proposed State Selections
-  Trails on public lands

Map shows approximate location of easements to state land and major trails across state land. Portions of trails may cross private lands. See appendix D.