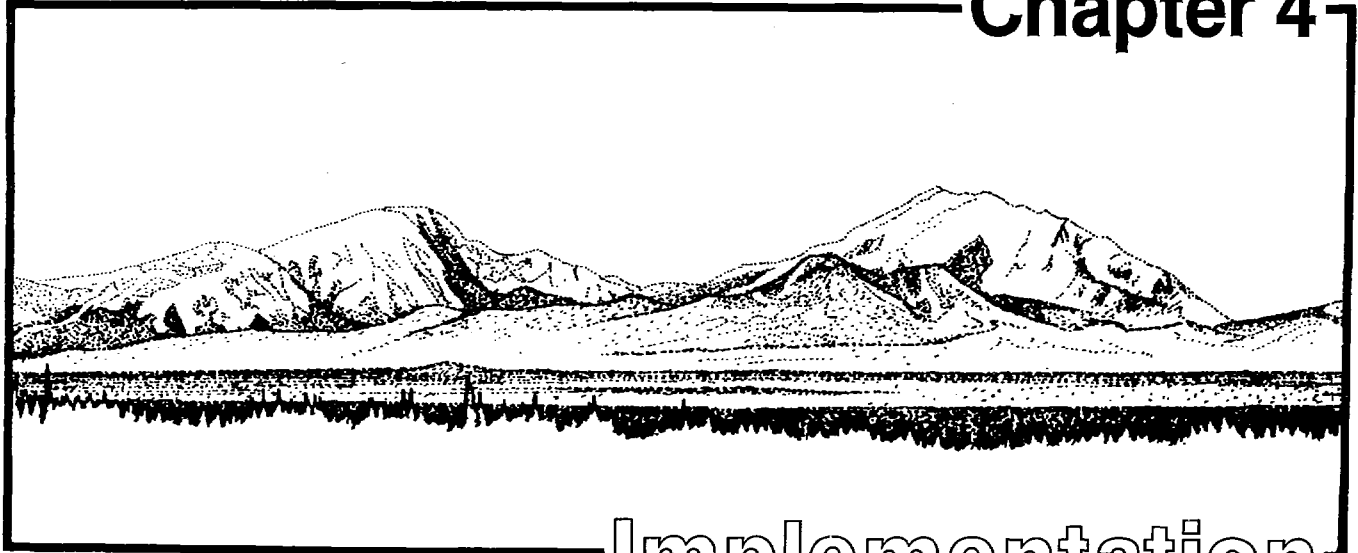


Chapter 4



Implementation

CHAPTER 4

Implementation

Introduction

This chapter describes the actions necessary to implement the land use policies proposed by this plan. Included are proposed selections, relinquishments, and exchanges; proposed cooperative agreements; land use classifications; management planning priorities; recommendations for legislative designations; and procedures for plan modification and amendment.

Proposed Selections, Relinquishments, and Exchanges

The Copper River Basin Area Plan identifies several areas within the basin for future state selections, relinquishment of selections, or land exchanges. This section provides details of these selections and relinquishments and also discusses other land ownership issues. The maps on pages 4-3 and 4-5 delineate these selections and relinquishments.

ADDITIONAL STATE SELECTIONS

The state is entitled to select additional lands for state ownership from vacant, unappropriated, and unreserved public lands. In the Copper River Basin, there are over 1 million acres of federal lands that the state could still select. Most of this land is in the Tielkel Block, Denali Block, or near Slana.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Tielkel Block. This area, approximately 500,000 acres, has been considered for state selection in the past, but was rejected due to limited resource values and because BLM's management objectives for most of these lands are similar to those of the state. Primary resource values are fish and wildlife habitat. Some forestry, recreation, and mineral potential exists on this land. The Richardson Highway traverses part of this area, but is presently withdrawn from state selection. Three specific parts of the Tielkel Block are proposed for state selections; the state is not interested in selecting the entire Tielkel Block as proposed by BLM.

- a. **Proposed Thompson Pass - Mt. Billy Mitchell Selection.** The state owns the Thompson Pass and Worthington Glacier area. The area to the east of the pass along the Richardson Highway also includes spectacular scenery with excellent recreation opportunities. This area includes the lower Tsina River, and the middle section of the Tielkel River, and Mount Billy Mitchell. It should be selected by the state to be managed for recreation and included in any future recreation area.

The federal BLM manages the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Utility Corridor that was withdrawn from state selection by Public Land Order (PLO) 5150. Part of the proposed selection lies within PLO 5150. The state has requested that the Secretary of the Interior remove this withdrawal. To date, the secretary has not

honored the state's request. This withdrawal in the Copper River Basin includes all federal land along the Richardson Highway from Sourdough to Paxson Lake and from Tonsina to the Tsina River.

Most of the area is alpine; most good forest lands along the Tiekel River are north of this selection (see area "c"). The proposed selection encompasses approximately 46,000 acres.

Legal Description: T. 7 S., R. 1 E., Sections 13-36; T. 7 S., R. 1 W., Sections 13-36; T. 8 S., R. 1 E., Sections 1-18; T. 8 S., R. 1 W., Sections 1-18. All CRM.

- b. **Tonsina Plateau Area.** The state should select approximately 7,000 acres of land located east of the Richardson Highway and west of Bernard Creek. A gravel road passes through the western part of this tract. The road is in good condition from the south, but impassible to most vehicles at its northern end due to landslides. The land is well drained with mixed deciduous and coniferous tree cover and is on a plateau (elevation 2,100 to 2,400 feet) above the Tonsina River valley. The land has potential for low density settlement and, if acquired by the state, will be offered for private ownership. The land is outside PLO 5150. A small part of the Bernard Creek Valley is included in the selection. The Bernard Creek valley would be retained in state ownership because of its fish and wildlife values and to protect an important trail to Kimball Pass.

Legal Description: T. 3 S., R. 1 E., Sections 1, 11-14, 23-26; T. 3 S., R. 2 E., Sections 6, 7, 18, 19. All CRM.

- c. **Richardson Highway Corridor from Tonsina to Tsina River.** Land along the Richardson Highway has some settlement and forestry potential and is an important transportation and utility corridor. In addition to the highway, the Trans-Alaska oil pipeline and Valdez-Copper River electric intertie follow this route. The draft plan identifies several areas suitable for land offerings in this corridor.

The state should select the entire highway and utility corridor. Land west of the corridor, between state land near Tonsina Lake and the corridor (65,000 acres), should not be selected by the state because it is mountainous terrain with limited resource values.

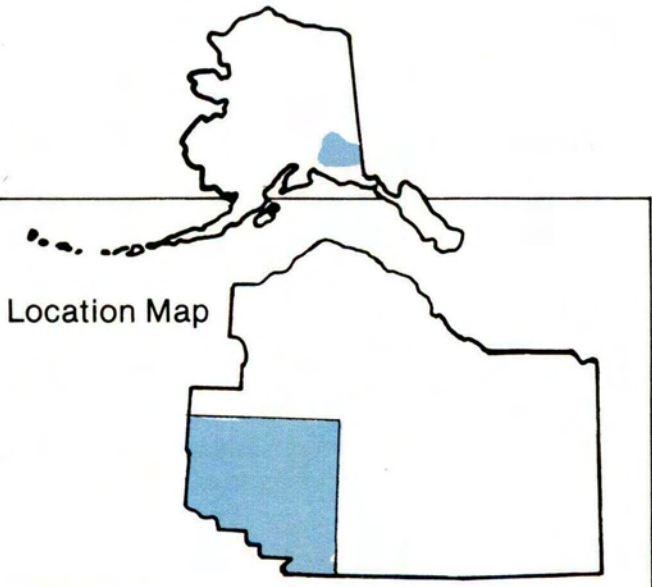
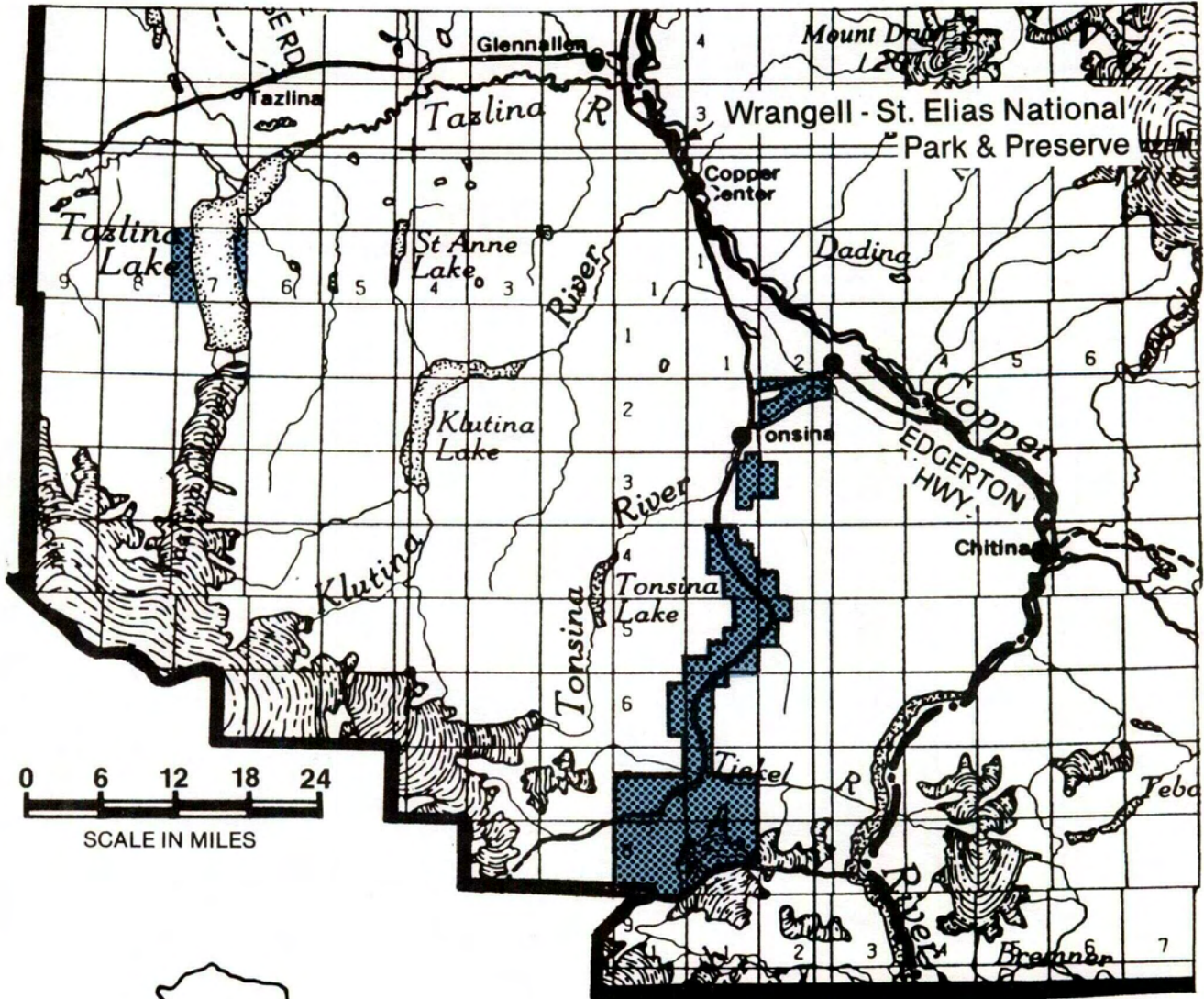
The corridor is temporarily withheld from state selection by PLO 5150 [see description in 1(a)].

Total selections would be approximately 49,920 acres.

Legal Descriptions: T. 4 S., R. 2 E., Sections 30, 31; T. 4 S., R. 1 E., Sections 3-10, 14-36; T. 5 S., R. 2 E., Sections 5-8, 18-19; T. 5 S., R. 1 E., Sections 1, 2, 11-14, 22-28, 31-36; T. 6 S., R. 1 E., Sections 4-8, 17-20, 29-32; T. 6 S., R. 1 W., Sections 13, 24, 25; T. 7 S., R. 1 E., Sections 5-8. All CRM.

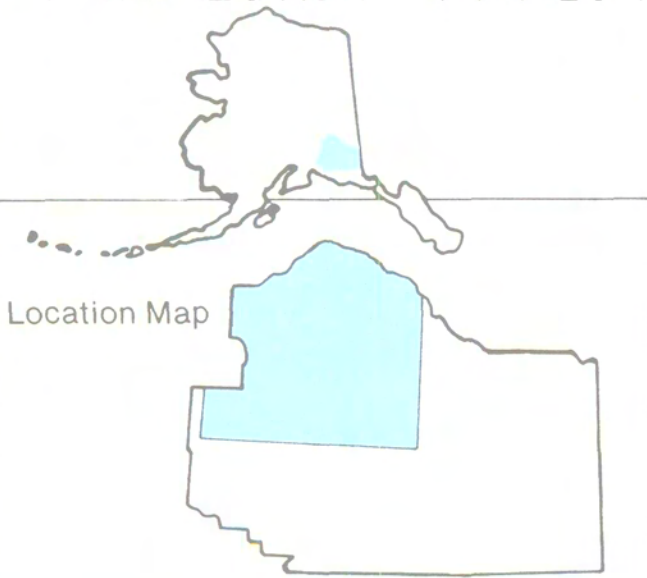
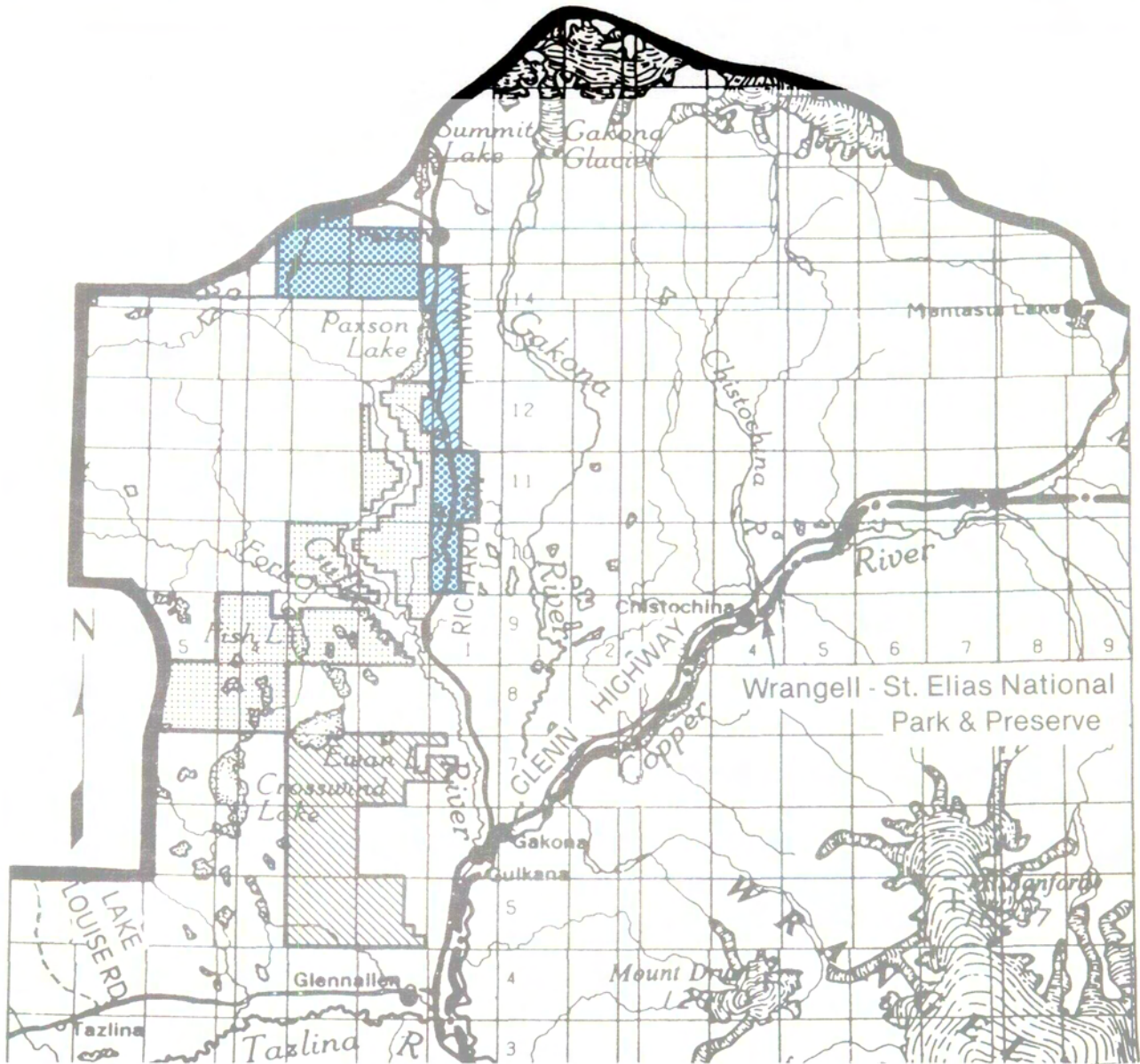
North Richardson Highway Corridor. The land ownership pattern along the Richardson Highway from Sourdough to Paxson is confusing. Several federal land withdrawals and state selections made at different times affect land in this area. Most of this area lies within the area withheld by PLO 5150 [see description under 1(a)].





SELECTIONS & RELINQUISHMENTS



 New Selections

SELECTIONS & RELINQUISHMENTS



-  New Selections
-  Suspended Selections
-  Relinquishments
-  Possible Relinquishments

ACE 6329590

A few of these areas are already selected by the state; however, most selections will not become valid until PLO 5150 is lifted. Much of this land meets the criteria for state selection because of its recreation, transportation, wildlife, and settlement values. The land is also used for access to other state-owned land to the east.

The state should acquire most land within the utility corridor and the area outside the corridor that surrounds Paxson at the junction of the Denali and Richardson Highways. Land near Paxson and Meiers Lake has settlement potential. Some areas around Meiers Lake are used as camping areas. The Hogan Hill area offers excellent views of the Wrangell mountains and has been proposed as the location for a scenic pullout. The state would select about 60,000 acres of land in this area and may need to reassert other selections in the area when PLO 5150 is revoked. Land surrounding Paxson Lake is withdrawn by BLM for public recreation through PLO 225.

Legal Description: T. 10 N., R. 1 W., CRM. Section 4-9, 16-21, 28-33 (all in PLO 5150); T. 11 N., R. 1 W., CRM Sections 3-10, 15-22, 27, 28, 30-34 (all in PLO 5150); T. 22 S., R. 12 E., F.M., Sections 1-36. CRM.

Denali Highway. On November 12, 1986, the state filed selections on over 2 million acres of federal land along the Denali Highway. These selections border the Copper River Basin area. The purpose of these selections was to give the state the option of receiving title to high value recreation, habitat, and mineral lands along the Denali Highway. The state should select the remaining land between Paxson and these selections to the east because their resource values are similar to lands selected on November 12. DNR will evaluate these selections to determine which land the state desires to receive title to: the township including Swede Lake, the township including Paxson Mountain, and part of the township west of management unit 28B that includes the Denali Highway. This block of land is incorporated in management unit 28B.

Legal Description: T. 22 S., R. 10 E.; T. 21 S., R. 10 E; T. 22 S., R. 11 E. FM.

Edgerton Highway Area and Tonsina River. Land along the Edgerton Highway between Kenny Lake and the Richardson Highway has been identified as a potential land offering. Land along the Tonsina River south of the Edgerton Highway has high recreation and habitat values. The land is Native selected; however, if it is not conveyed to Ahtna, Inc., the state should acquire this land. The state should top-file a selection on this area. The area encompasses approximately 4,500 acres:

Legal description: T. 2 S., R. 2 E., Sections 1 - 10 (parts). CRM.

OTHER LAND CONSIDERED FOR STATE SELECTION

BLM land in the Slana Area - Mentasta Mountains. Several isolated blocks of BLM land (less than 100,000 acres), some of which have also been selected by Native corporations, were previously not selected by the state because of their limited resource values. Some of these BLM lands have been made available for settlement by the federal government and are no longer available for state selection. The Copper River plan currently proposes no new state selections in this area.

STATE SELECTIONS - PRIORITIES FOR ADJUDICATION AND CONVEYANCE

The state annually submits to BLM a list of lands it wants to receive conveyance on. This action lets the state receive title to higher quality land according to the state's priorities. The list should include, but is not be limited to, several areas in the Copper River Basin:

Klutina Lake Area (MU 12A)
Tazlina Lake Area (MU 8A and 8B)
Tonsina Lake Area (MU 14A and 14B)
Porcupine Creek Area (MU 32B)
Edgerton Highway - Kenny Lake Area (MU 18A, 18B, and 18C)
Slate Creek Area (MU 31)

Two areas will be added to the priority list for tentative approval after the new selections are filed with BLM:

Tiekel Selections (MU 16 and 17)
Sourdough - Paxson Selections (MU 27)

STATE SELECTIONS PROPOSED FOR RELINQUISHMENT

As land-ownership patterns become more certain, some tracts of state-selected lands become isolated or cut-off from larger blocks of state land which makes them difficult to manage. Further resource inventory may also indicate that the resource values original selections were based on are lower or lacking altogether. Because the state has selected more land than it will receive from the federal government, the state should reevaluate remaining selected lands within the basin to determine if some of these no longer meet state selection guidelines or are of lower value than state-selected land elsewhere and should thus be relinquished. Several areas are identified for relinquishment. Approximate acreage of all these areas totals 151,000 acres. Relinquishments should wait until the BLM honors the right of the state to select within the utility corridor (PLO 5150).

West of Gulkana River Area. Two blocks of state-selected lands west of the Gulkana River are cut off from remaining state lands and the river by the Gulkana Wild and Scenic River corridor. These lands would be inefficient for DNR to manage, are not readily accessible, and the state's management objectives can be met by BLM ownership. The land is adjacent to the BLM Denali Block. Approximately 24,000 acres of selections would be relinquished.

Legal Description: T. 9 N., R. 2 W., Sections 5-6; T. 9 N., R. 3 W., Sections 1, 2; T. 10 N., R. 2 W., Sections 31-32; T. 10 N., R. 3 W., Sections 2-10, 15-23, 25-36. All CRM.

Fish and Ewan Lakes and West Fork - Gulkana River. The state has selections (some in conflict with Ahtna, Inc., selections) on over 220,000 acres of land around Ewan and Fish Lakes and east of the Gulkana River below Paxson Lake. These lands have some settlement values, but are considered to have high habitat values for nesting trumpeter swans. The large lakes are also good for sport fishing. Most of the area is relatively flat, wet, and primarily covered by sedges, brush, or open water.

The state will relinquish 86,000 acres of land near Fish Lake. Those lands not conveyed to Ahtna, Inc., would be managed by the BLM as part of the adjacent Denali Block or Gulkana Wild and Scenic River corridor. The state and BLM should have a cooperative agreement to ensure protection of trumpeter swan nesting habitat in this area or any other swan habitat area before relinquishment.

Legal description of land to be relinquished: T. 8 N., R. 4 W., entire township; T. 8 N., R. 5 W., Sections 1-4, 9-17, 26, 36; T. 9 N., R. 2 W., Sections 7, 16-22, 27-35; T. 9 N., R. 3 W., Sections 8-36; T. 9 N., R. 4 W., entire township;

The plan defers a decision on relinquishments in the area south of Ewan Lake and east of Crosswind Lake until Native land selections in the area are conveyed, relinquished, or rejected. Most of this area has been selected by the state and Ahtna, Inc. Should Ahtna receive title to all or most of these selections, the state should acquire any small remaining tracts of land that would abut state land. If a large part of this area is not conveyed to Ahtna, Inc., the state should acquire any land that abuts existing tracts of state land and that does not abut BLM land. Such areas would be inefficient for BLM to manage. Where large blocks of land adjoin BLM land (such as near Ewan or Fish Lakes), these lands should be managed by BLM and the state should relinquish these selections.

Legal description of lands where decision should be deferred: T. 6 N., R. 3 W., entire township; T. 7 N., R. 1 W., Sections 5, 6, 16-20; T. 7 N., R. 2 W., Sections 1-11, 14-24, 27-34; T. 7 N., R. 3 W., entire township, all CRM.

Any lands in this area that are not relinquished but have high concentrations of nesting swans will be managed subject to the guidelines for "Documented High Value Trumpeter Swan Nesting and Concentration Areas," on page 2-10.

Land Between Gulkana River and Richardson Highway. The state will relinquish another 41,000 acres between the Richardson Highway and the Gulkana River. This land is swampy and unsuitable for transportation or settlement. The land is important caribou habitat and is adjacent to the Gulkana Wild and Scenic River. BLM management can protect these public values.

Legal description: T. 9 N., R. 2 W., Sections 1-3, 10, 11; T. 10 N., R. 2 W., entire township;* T. 10 N., R. 3 W., Sections 12, 13;* T. 11 N., R. 2 W., Sections 1, 2, 11-14, 24-26, 33-36;* T. 12 N., R. 2 W., Sections 1-4, 8-11, 14-17, 21-23, 25-28, 34-36. All CRM.

* combined with relinquishments in the area west of the Gulkana River above, the state would relinquish the entire township.

STATE LANDS - CANDIDATES FOR LAND EXCHANGE

Land or interests in land may be transferred by exchange. Under state law, DNR can trade state land for other land of equal appraised value when it is in the state's best interest to do so. Any exchange of unequal value requires legislative approval.

The National Park Service is interested in land exchanges in the Copper River Basin to acquire certain state-owned lands within Wrangell - St. Elias National Park and Preserve.

Land exchanges may be pursued to consolidate state land holdings and create land ownership and use patterns that would result in more effective management of state land and would facilitate the objectives of state programs or other public purposes. For example, land exchanges can be pursued to improve access, make better land available for sale or development, or protect important natural resources. The following are state lands that other parties have expressed interest in acquiring or are private lands that the state may wish to consider acquiring through exchange or some other method. In all cases, only the land that the state or another party wishes to acquire is mentioned; the reciprocal part of an exchange is not identified. Lands suitable for exchange are not limited to those identified here; other state lands may be considered for exchanges. Any exchange would require public review and a determination that the exchange is in the state's best interest.

Land exchanges discussed in the area plan identify possible trading lands and may initiate discussions between the owners. These will not be mandates for exchanges; individual exchanges require extensive negotiations between the concerned parties, who in the end may or may not agree to the exchange. The objectives of the state may also be achieved through cooperative agreements rather than land exchanges.

McCarthy Area. The state has patent to over 18,000 acres of land near McCarthy within the boundary of the Wrangell - St. Elias National Park and Preserve. This land is in two large blocks, one west of McCarthy along the Chitina-McCarthy Road and the other south and east of McCarthy along the Nizina River. In 1981 and 1982, the National Park Service (NPS) and the state conducted extensive negotiations for an exchange that would have resulted in NPS's acquisition of 14,200 acres of this land. However, the state dropped its interest in the exchange because of public opposition to parts of the exchange. The draft general management plan for the National Park calls for a cooperative agreement between the state and NPS for these lands and expresses interest in an exchange or acquisition by other means if the agreement cannot "provide adequate long term protection of park/preserve values." Although the draft plan proposes that the state retain title to its McCarthy area land, a land exchange could still be considered if later determined to be in the state's interest.

Copper River at Chitina. Access to the Copper River at Chitina is limited to an easement on a 1-acre site (established under Section 17(b) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act), a DOT/PF wayside, and other locations where the old Copper River and Northwestern Railroad right-of-way runs to the river. Much of the intensive recreational activity by the public occurs at a site further downstream where no easement is reserved. Recent conveyances to the Chitina Native Corporation have created the potential for trespass by traditional recreational and subsistence fisheries users and campers along the river. A land exchange with the Native corporation is one option whereby the state could acquire land to provide for more access to the river and adjacent uplands.

STATE LANDS - CANDIDATES FOR COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS

Cooperative management agreements are intended to ensure compatible land use and management between various land owners. In many cases, cooperative management agreements can achieve purposes similar to land exchanges. The following areas have been identified as potential areas for cooperative management agreements.

Cooperative agreements listed in the plan are intended to identify areas where such agreements may be pursued in the future. These are not mandates for agreements; any cooperative agreement would require additional negotiations between the concerned parties.

State land within Wrangell - St. Elias. The state has patent, tentative approval, or valid selections to over 40,000 acres of land east of the Copper River near Glennallen and Copper Center. The National Park Service has proposed that these lands be managed under a cooperative agreement to maintain uses compatible with adjacent NPS lands and to preclude incompatible activities.

Submerged lands under navigable waterways within the Wrangell - St. Elias National Park and National Wild and Scenic River corridors. The state owns the submerged lands under navigable waterways. The Wrangell - St. Elias general management plan proposes a cooperative agreement that would close these stream beds to mining and mineral entry. The management of this land is described in management unit 33. A cooperative agreement already exists for management of the Gulkana Wild and Scenic River.

Gulkana River Management. DNR, DOT/PF, and BLM should develop a more detailed cooperative agreement to assign BLM the responsibility for managing recreation on the Gulkana River. This agreement should also specify who should manage the three trail easements and the three 1-acre-site easements reserved on Ahtna, Inc., land on the river below Sourdough; it should specify the location and management of a pull-out for river floaters at the Richardson Highway bridge at Gulkana; and it should address management of state-owned shorelands.

CONFLICTING LAND SELECTIONS

Certain land in the planning area was selected by various Native corporations under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Most of the planning region is located within the Ahtna Region. All but one of the village corporations in the Ahtna Region have merged with the regional Native corporation, Ahtna, Inc. The Chitina Native Corporation remains independent and will retain ownership of the surface estate on 115,200 acres (when conveyed) and Ahtna, Inc., will own the subsurface on these lands. The remaining villages have a combined entitlement of 576,000 acres; the regional corporation has an entitlement of 992,031 acres. Although approximately 1.5 million acres of these lands have been conveyed to Ahtna, Inc., the corporation maintains extensive additional land selections in the region. Many of these over-selections conflict with state selections, particularly around Tonsina, Tazlina and Ewan Lakes, and north of the Glenn Highway from Gakona to Mentasta Summit (including land desired for inclusion in the Porcupine Creek State Recreation Site). BLM data from 1984 indicate that Ahtna, Inc., has overselections of 782,000 acres under 12(c); and Ahtna and Chitina have combined overselections of 274,000 acres under 12(a) and 263,000 acres under 12(b). With such extensive overselections, a majority of the conflicting land selections will become state owned land.

Unless discussed under relinquishments, the state should retain its selections on these lands. The plan specifies how the state will manage these lands if conveyed to the state.

Land Use Classifications

The plan establishes primary and secondary land use designations for state land in the region. For the plan to be implemented on state land, DNR must classify land in the categories that reflect the intent of the plan. These categories are in 11 AAC 55. Land classification is the formal record of the primary uses for which each parcel of state land will be managed. Classifications are recorded on the state status plats.

The conversion of primary use designations (described in Chapter 3) to classifications is shown in the following table.

<u>PRIMARY USE DESIGNATIONS</u>	<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>
Wildlife Habitat	Wildlife Habitat Land
Public Recreation	Public Recreation Land
State Recreation Site	Public Recreation Land
Wildlife Habitat, Public Recreation	Wildlife Habitat Land, Public Recreation Land
Wildlife Habitat, Public Recreation	Wildlife Habitat Land, Public Recreation Land
Geothermal	
Wildlife Habitat, Forestry	Wildlife Habitat Land, Forest Land
Wildlife Habitat, Public Recreation, Forestry	Wildlife Habitat Land, Public Recreation Land, Forest Land

Mining, Habitat
 Existing Gravel Pit
 Resource Management
 Wildlife Habitat, Public Recreation,
 Forestry, Heritage Resources
 Settlement, Land Offerings
 Agriculture
 Settlement, Agriculture, Mixed
 Settlement, Forestry, Transportation

 Settlement, Transportation, Wildlife
 Habitat
 Transportation, Wildlife Habitat

 Wildlife Habitat, Public Recreation,
 Water Resources
 Past Land Offering

Mineral Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
 Material Land or Reserved Use Land
 Resource Management Land
 Heritage Resource Land

 Settlement Land
 Agricultural Land
 Agricultural Land, Settlement Land
 Forest Land, Settlement Land,
 Transportation Land
 Settlement Land, Transportation Land,
 Wildlife Habitat Land
 Transportation Land, Wildlife Habitat
 Land
 Wildlife Habitat Land, Public Recreation
 Land, Water Resources Land
 Classifications generally not changed by
 plan

Management Plan Priorities

The Copper River Basin Area Plan provides an adequate level of detail to guide most land management decisions in the Copper River Basin. The existing administrative processes used by DNR for land offerings, oil and gas lease sales, and other actions can adequately deal with most site specific planning issues. Three areas where more detailed interagency planning may be needed are described below.

Thompson Pass Area. A management plan will be prepared for this area if the legislature establishes it as a recreation area.

Kettlehole Lakes - Mendeltna Creek Area. A management plan will be prepared for this area if the legislature establishes it as a recreation area.

Klutina Lake and Klutina River. This area has been identified as having high values for public use and private recreation development. The entire lakeshore is privately owned or has been selected by the state and Native corporations. The entire river corridor below the lake is privately owned, although the river itself is state owned. The river and lake have high recreation potential. Once land ownership patterns are better established and if the state acquires title to a sufficient amount of land around the lake, DNR should work with Ahtna, Inc., to develop a plan for this area. Land ownership patterns around the lake will not be settled until Ahtna, Inc., is conveyed more of their entitlement or relinquishes some of their selections around the lake.

Nelchina, Little Nelchina, and Tazlina Rivers. A management plan that deals with recreation facility development including protection of cultural sites and recreation use management will eventually be needed because of increased recreation use of this river system. More active management of this area and a management plan will eventually be needed.

River Management Plan. As recreation use of numerous rivers increases and as land status patterns along certain rivers become settled, site-specific planning to identify and reserve access and campsites may be required. Such site specific management plans may be needed for the Klutina River, Tonsina River, and Copper River.

Richardson Highway Corridor Land Offerings. Before land offerings along the Richardson Highway in the Tielke area (Little Tonsina to Tsina River) and the Meiers Lake to Paxson area, more detailed planning may be needed. Issues that may need to be addressed include protection of scenic resources, avoiding hazardous areas (avalanche zones), retaining adequate land for a possible natural gas line, retaining access to adjacent public land, providing for any realignments of the Richardson Highway, and designing safe access off the Richardson Highway.

Recommendations for Legislative Designations

Several areas within the Copper River Basin are proposed by the plan for legislative designation. This means that, in certain areas with outstanding resource or public use values, the plan recommends the legislature designate state lands for long term retention and specify management of these areas. The plan can only recommend these areas be established; the final decisions are made by the legislature.

Legislative designation results in a much greater likelihood of retention in permanent public ownership than occurs under administrative land classification. Other results of legislative designation vary greatly depending on the language that establishes an area. Where the goal is maximum protection of natural resource values (for example, in an area that is critical to trumpeter swans), legislative designation can help achieve this by allowing more restrictive land management practices than are permitted under the state's multiple use mandate. Legislative designation can have a different effect in areas where the intent is to expand public use (for example, in a heavily used recreation area). In these areas, legislative designation can lead to increased public use by increasing investment in facilities (such as campgrounds, roads, or boat launches).

RECREATION AREAS

Four areas within the Copper River Basin are suitable for designation by the Alaska Legislature to protect and enhance their recreation values. The legislature should consider setting aside these areas for long term retention by the state, management in accordance with this plan, and provide appropriate funding.

Guidelines for all recreation proposals. DPOR will be responsible for preparing the legislative proposals for these areas, including management guidelines. DPOR will also create advisory groups for each area composed primarily of local residents. The advisory groups, with assistance from local-agency field staff, will formulate management guidelines and proposals. Management intent for each of these areas is outlined in Chapter 3.

DLWM will have management responsibility for the recreation areas under consultation with DPOR. The areas will be managed consistent with the guidelines stated above and the section of Chapter 3 in the plan that addresses these management units. The boundaries of the area subject to these guidelines can be found in this plan or on 1:63,360 scale maps available at public meetings or in DNR offices in Anchorage and Tazlina.

Thompson Pass (Management Unit 15A). This proposed area includes mountain peaks, glaciers, and the deep, glacier-carved valley of the Tsina River. The Richardson Highway runs through the Tsina Valley and Thompson Pass. The entire area has spectacular alpine scenery. Worthington Glacier is the most accessible glacier in the state and the most popular tourist attraction in the Copper River Basin. Summer recreation activities such as hiking and camping are popular. In the winter, cross country skiing, downhill skiing, and snow machining are popular. The pass receives

the heaviest recorded snowfall in Alaska, and the area is prone to powerful avalanches.

The Trans-Alaska Pipeline, Valdez to Copper Basin electric intertie, and proposed routes for an Alaskan natural gas line all run through this area.

A study entitled 'Master Plan for the Proposed Keystone Canyon State Park' was prepared by Joseph Hoffman of the University of Alaska Institute of Social, Economic, and Government Research in October 1970. This proposal included the Thompson Pass area and provides a thorough description of resources in the area and possible options for management of the area.

The Thompson Pass - Tsina River area, including Blueberry Lake, (see map, management unit 15) should be actively managed for recreation. Camping facilities should be expanded, and hiking and interpretive trails should be established. Certain recreation activities also need more active management for public safety and to avoid conflicts between users. Most of these safety and user conflicts are associated with winter sports in the area. Establishment of a recreation area and subsequent development of facilities in the area would encourage visitors to spend more time in the area, which would help the local economy.

The local advisory group can make recommendations to the legislature on what specific types of legislation will be most appropriate to implement management intent as outlined in Chapter 3. The advisory group can also make a final determination of the boundaries of the Thompson Pass Recreation Area, which includes approximately 80,000 acres.

Kettlehole Lakes - Mendeltna Creek Area (Management Units 5C and 5F). This area, located just north of the Glenn Highway, extends west from the Lake Louise Road to Mendeltna Creek and includes a series of small lakes north of the road (see map - management unit 5). The Kettlehole Lakes area, located along the old Lake Louise Road, offers excellent sites for camping and picnicking and affords exceptional views of Tazlina Lake, Tazlina Glacier, and the Chugach Mountains. Mendeltna Creek, from the oil well road to the Glenn Highway, has good fishing and is good for a day-long canoe or float trip.

The state should develop a campground and possibly a trail system along the old Lake Louise Road. The oil well road would be maintained as part of this facility and a put-in and possibly a campground would be built on Mendeltna Creek. The area also needs more active management to pick up trash and deter unauthorized use. The recreation area would be kept open to hunting and fishing and would be closed to new mineral entry.

When a campground is developed at this site, DPOR intends that the small campground at Tolsona Creek be closed or converted to day use. This facility is small with no room for expansion.

The area proposed for legislative designation is approximately 35,200 acres. The legislation should specify that the area remain open to fishing and hunting subject to regulations to ensure public safety.

Nelchina, Little Nelchina, and Tazlina Rivers (Management Unit 1). This area, proposed for legislative designation, consists of a corridor of state-owned land along the Little Nelchina, Nelchina, and Tazlina Rivers and the north shore of Tazlina Lake. Tazlina River is navigable from Tazlina Lake to the Copper River; therefore, the state owns the entire watercourse, including the portion that runs

through Native lands. The land is now used for hunting and river oriented recreation. A few remote parcel entries are on the south side of the Nelchina River.

The rivers from the Glenn Highway bridge (over the Little Nelchina River) to the Richardson Highway bridge (over the Tazlina River) are an excellent float trip that should receive increased use in the future. DPOR maintains a small recreation site north of the old bridge over the Little Nelchina River that serves as the starting point for many river trips. It is also possible to float down Mendeltna Creek into Tazlina Lake.

This long river corridor provides one of the few opportunities in the state for a road accessible float trip with true wilderness qualities. It will undoubtedly receive more use in the future. The area must be carefully managed to preserve its special qualities. A legislative designation will ensure its status as a recreation river. Funding will be needed to provide public campgrounds, public-use cabins, better access at the Little Nelchina River and at the Richardson Highway at Tazlina, and protection of cultural resources along Tazlina Lake.

Gulkana River (Management Unit 27C). The state owns shorelands under the Gulkana River, including the West Fork and Middle Fork, through most of the area designated by the U.S. Congress as a National Wild and Scenic River. The state also owns shorelands under the Gulkana River from below Sourdough (the lower end of the federal designation) to its confluence with the Copper River. The decision on the navigability and ownership of the lower river is currently under appeal by Ahtna, Inc. The entire Gulkana River would be suitable for the legislature to designate as a state recreation river.

Monitoring Other High Value Recreation Resources. Several locations in the basin have exceptional scenic and recreation values that are designated for recreation by this plan. In the near term, these areas are suitable for dispersed recreation; in the long term, however, more active management may be needed.

DPOR should monitor five areas and at the time of plan revision (every 5 years) make recommendations for additional management guidelines:

1. Klutina River and Klutina Lake (MU 12)
2. Tonsina River and Tonsina Lake (MU 14)
3. Mt. DuRelle and Mt. DuRelle Lake (MU 19)
4. Tazlina Lake, Tazlina River, and Tazlina Highlands (MU 8)
5. Summit Lake (MU 28)

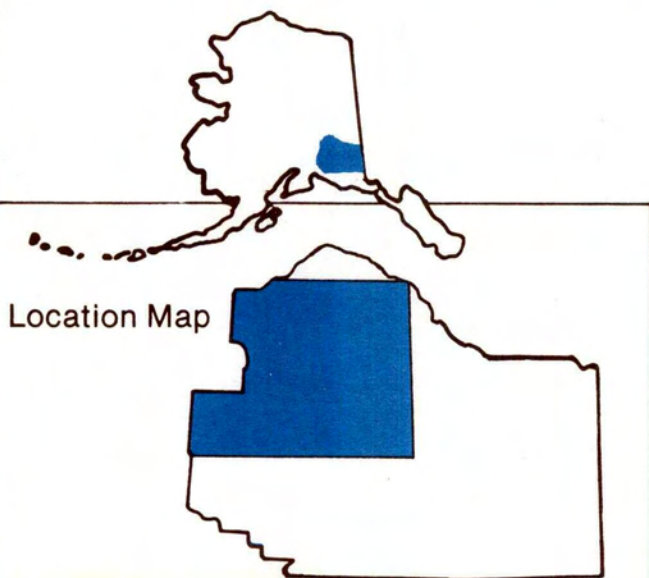
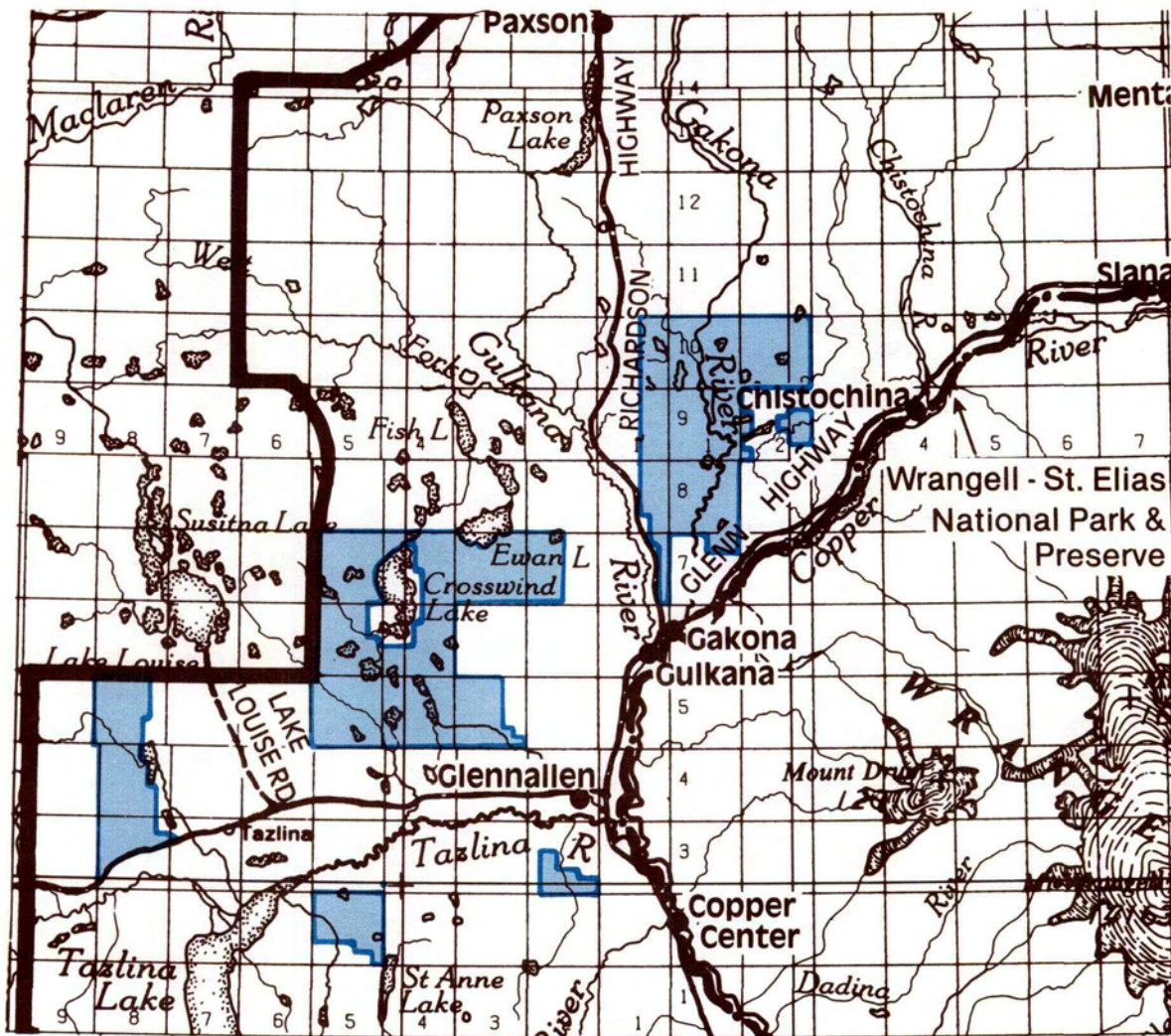
TRUMPETER SWAN NESTING AREA

Gulkana Trumpeter Swan Nesting Area. One quarter of the world's population of trumpeter swans nest in the Copper River Basin. Swans are sensitive to disturbances caused by human activities in their nesting areas. The Copper River Basin Plan provides for the protection of swans by requiring land uses minimize disturbance to swans. For the near term, the plan can provide adequate protection to trumpeter swans and their habitat. To ensure that trumpeter swan nesting areas are retained in state ownership and to provide ADF&G with some management authority over swan nesting habitat, the state legislature should consider designation of these lands as a State Critical Habitat Area. The area (excluding proposed relinquishments previously described in this chapter) includes approximately 400,000 acres of state-owned or state-selected land and is shown on the map on page 4-17. Any legislative proposal should evaluate for designation trumpeter swan habitat on state land in the Lake

Louise area of the Susitna Area Plan (DNR, Susitna Area Plan, 1985, p. 320, 321, and 327).

ADF&G will be responsible for preparing the legislative proposals for these areas.
ADF&G will prepare management guidelines in conjunction with DNR and with public review.

SWAN NESTING & CONCENTRATION AREAS



 TRUMPETER SWAN
 NESTING AND
 CONCENTRATION AREAS
 ON STATE LAND

Procedures for Plan Modification and Amendment

The land use designations, policies, implementation actions, and management guidelines of this plan may be changed if conditions warrant. The plan will be updated periodically as new data and new technologies become available and as changing social or economic conditions place different demands on state land.

Periodic Review. The plan will be reviewed at least once every 5 years to determine if revisions are necessary. An interagency planning team will coordinate this review at the request of the Commissioner of DNR. The plan review will include meetings with all interested groups and the general public.

Amendments. The plan may be amended. An amendment adds to or modifies the basic intent of the plan. Changes to allowed or prohibited uses, policies, guidelines or certain implementation actions constitute amendments. Amendments must be approved by the Commissioner of DNR. Amendments require public notice and consultation with affected agencies. Amendments may require public meetings if the Commissioner decides the level of controversy warrants it. Amendments may be proposed by DNR, other agencies, or the public. Requests for amendments are submitted to the Anchorage office of the DNR Division of Land and Water Management.

The following actions are examples of changes that would require an amendment:

- A proposal to close an area to new mineral entry
- Allowing a use in an area where it is currently prohibited
- A land offering in an area designated for retention

The Director of DLWM determines what constitutes an amendment or just a minor change.

Minor Changes. A minor change is one that does not modify or change the basic intent of the plan. Minor changes may be necessary for clarification, consistency, or to facilitate implementation of the plan. Minor changes are made at the discretion of the Director of DLWM and do not require public review. Minor changes may be proposed by agencies or the public. Requests for minor changes are submitted to the Southcentral Regional Office of DLWM. The Director will notify other agencies when minor changes are made. Affected agencies will have the opportunity to comment on minor changes following notification; the comment period may be provided through existing interagency review processes for associated actions.

Special Exceptions. Exceptions to the provisions of the plan may be made without modification of the plan. Special exceptions shall occur only when complying with the plan is excessively difficult or impractical and an alternative procedure can be implemented that adheres to the purposes and spirit of the plan.

DNR may make a special exception in the implementation of the plan through two procedures:

1. A Regional Manager of DLWM shall prepare a finding that specifies the following:
 - The extenuating conditions that require a special exception.
 - The alternative course of action to be followed.

- How the intent of the plan will be met by the alternative.

2. Agencies that have responsibility for land uses with primary or secondary designations in the affected area will be given an opportunity to review the findings. If the agencies disagree with the Regional Manager's decision, the decision may be appealed to the Director of DLWM, and the Director's decision may be appealed to the Commissioner of DNR. If warranted by the degree of controversy, the Commissioner may hold a public meeting before making a decision.