

## MANAGEMENT UNIT 5 – LARSON LAKE

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### MANAGEMENT INTENT

This unit extends from the Susitna River east to Larson Lake and south to Bartlett Hills and includes a portion of the Talkeetna River. It consists primarily of borough land and past state disposals with a little remaining state land along the western portion of the Talkeetna River. Borough land on the west side of Larson Lake will be sold for settlement. The remaining borough land will be designated land bank. State land along the Talkeetna River will be retained in public ownership and recommended for legislative designation as a state recreation river. All public lands in this unit are available for oil and gas leasing. Only subunit 5d will remain open to mineral location and be available for coal leasing. Subunits 5a and 5c will be closed due to existing or proposed disposals, and 5b is closed due to recreation and habitat values in the river corridor.

The management unit is divided into four subunits: private land, almost all of which is a result of past state land sales (5a); a corridor along the Talkeetna River (5b); borough land proposed for settlement around Larson Lake (5c), and other borough land to the west of Larson Lake (5d). See the map at the end of this section for boundaries of these areas and the accompanying chart for a summary of land uses in each subunit.

**Subunit 5a** is primarily private land on the south bank of the Talkeetna River. Where private land now abuts the river, the state will consider purchase of land to improve public access and to enhance public enjoyment of the river corridor. The state will not use the power of eminent domain in such cases but will purchase land only from willing sellers. Purchase is contingent upon funds being appropriated by the legislature for this purpose.

**Subunit 5b** encompasses approximately 10 miles of the Talkeetna River in a corridor of approximately 1/3 to 1 mile wide. The corridor is primarily in public ownership, although the mouth of the river is privately owned. The river corridor is exceptionally valuable for fish and wildlife and recreation and is easily accessible from Talkeetna and the Susitna River. The Talkeetna River corridor supports concentrations of black bear, provides high and moderate winter moose habitat, is one of the most popular moose hunting areas in the entire study area, and receives a great deal of river floating and sport fishing use. The river is an anadromous fish stream supporting populations of Dolly Varden, arctic char, trout, and five species of salmon. This subunit is recommended for legislative

designation as a state recreation river. The remainder of the Talkeetna River (subunit 6a, east of this area) also is proposed for legislative designation.

**Subunit 5b**, in conjunction with Management Unit 6, will be managed to provide recreation opportunities and protect scenic values. Principal recreational uses will be on and adjacent to the river. To protect these recreation opportunities, the unit should be managed to provide a visual and sound buffer from uses outside the corridor, and to protect water quality. Public recreation cabins should be developed with a coordinated river and trail access system; no roads will be permitted to these cabins. Road access to or across the corridor will be avoided. Fish and wildlife habitat will be protected, with special emphasis placed on the stream and adjacent riparian areas.

**Subunit 5c** is approximately 8,000 acres of borough land designated for settlement that surrounds Larson Lake. A preliminary development plan for the Larson Lake area was completed in June, 1984 by consultants to the borough. Their recommendation is for a four phase development of the west shore of the lake including private parcels, commercial recreation facilities, and public recreation facilities. The major intent of the plan is to provide an area for both public and private recreation. The borough established a committee which is studying the current proposal and will make recommendations on it by spring, 1985. Thus, the current development plan prepared by the consultants can be viewed as a base from which the final plan for Larson Lake will be developed. The borough is committed to protection of important fish and wildlife habitat areas and areas for public use. Under the proposed plan, 40% of the 1,870 acres in the project will be retained in public ownership as trails, open space and as a 200-300' buffer around the lake. In addition, the possibility of a fish hatchery is being considered for the southwest end of the lake.

A major aspect of designing land sales in this area is the provision of road access. The borough is proceeding with development of the road to Larson Lake from the south through Bartlett Hills. The state supports borough plans and requests that the borough work with the Department of Fish and Game and Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation in designing land sales in this area to protect the shore of Larson Lake and Larson Creek. Of particular importance is the protection of red salmon spawning areas.

**Subunit 5d** is borough land to the west of Larson Lake which will be designated borough land bank.

# LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

SUBREGION South Parks Highway

MANAGEMENT UNIT 5 -- Larson Lake

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP (GENERALIZED)	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				PROHIBITED SURFACE USE(S)*	COMMENTS
		SURFACE		SUBSURFACE			
		PRIMARY USE(S)	SECONDARY USE(S)	LOCATABLE MINERALS	LEASEABLE MINERALS		
5a Talkeetna Bluffs and Chase II Subdivision	State/ Private	Settlement (existing subdivisions)	Forestry (personal use) Public Rec. Wildlife Hab.	Closed	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Trapper Cabins Remote Cabins	One unsold surveyed lot remains available over-the-counter
5b Talkeetna River Corridor	State	Public Recreation Wildlife Habitat	Forestry	Closed	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Remote Cabins Land Disposals Grazing	Recommended for legislative designation
5c Larson Lake	Borough	Settlement	Forestry (personal use) Public Rec. Wildlife Hab.	Closed prior to disposal	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	—	Estimated net disposal area =1,870 acres
5d North Bartlett Hills	Borough	Borough Land Bank Values: Agriculture, Forestry, Public Recreation, Settlement, Wildlife Habitat		Open	Available for leasing	—	

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

## MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The complete set of areawide management guidelines is presented in Chapter 2 of this plan. All of the guidelines potentially apply to uses within the management unit; however, those that are most likely to be applicable in this unit are indicated with asterisks in the list below.

- Agriculture
- \*Fish & Wildlife Habitat
- \*Forestry
- \*Recreation
- \*Settlement
- Subsurface
- \*Transportation
- \*Instream Flow
- \*Lakeshore Management
- \*Public Access
- Remote Cabin Permits
- \*Stream Corridors
- \*Trail Management
- Wetlands Management
- Resource Management

Management guidelines that apply to this management unit only are presented below by subunit.

### **Subunit 5a (Talkeetna Bluffs and Chase II Subdivisions)**

#### **Retention of Land in Public Ownership**

All lots within the Chase I subdivision have been sold. One lot remains in the Chase II Subdivision and will continue to be available. Any other parcels of public land in this area along the Talkeetna River should be retained in public ownership to protect moose habitat and hunting areas, to provide wood lots for local use, and to provide open space and access to the Talkeetna River and other amenity features.

#### **Grazing**

Those portions of the subunit west of and including Chuniilna Creek will be closed to grazing.

### **Subunit 5b (Talkeetna River Corridor)**

#### **Retention of land in Public Ownership**

This subunit includes primarily state land along the Talkeetna River. However, pockets of private land staked under the open-to-entry program are interspersed throughout the corridor. If any of these parcels are relinquished to the state they should then be retained in public ownership.

## Oil and Gas

Oil and gas exploration and development activities will be sited and/or timed to mitigate impacts on the fish and wildlife habitat and public use values of the Talkeetna River Corridor. Specific mitigation measures necessary to protect the values for which the river corridor was established will be developed as part of the lease sale process. Mitigation measures will be developed on a case-by-case basis considering timing, topography, vegetation and other factors affecting the impact of oil and gas exploration and development activities on fish and wildlife, habitat, and public use values.

### **Management Planning and Remote Cabins**

A management plan should be prepared for subunit 5b. The management plan will determine, among other things, whether remote cabins will be a permitted use in this subunit. Remote cabin permits will not be offered until and unless areas open to remote cabins are designated by a management plan.

### **Subunit 5c (Larson Lake)**

#### **Recreation and Fish & Wildlife**

Given the existing and proposed amount of settlement in this area, demand for developed recreation areas likely will increase dramatically. For this reason, the borough should consider a developed recreation facility somewhere on or near Larson Lake during its planning for the area.

#### **Forestry**

Personal use areas or small timber sale areas to support future settlement in the area should be identified and reserved in the site plans for disposals in this subunit.

### **Subunits 5a, 5b, 5c and 5d (Talkeetna Bluffs, Chase II, Talkeetna River Corridor, Larson Lake and North Bartlett Hills)**

#### **Protection of Transportation Routes**

Chapter 4 of this plan identifies a system of possible improvements to the regional and local transportation system. Two routes pass through these subunits, one to the Larson Lake area and one north across the Talkeetna River to the Chase area. The precise location of these routes has not been determined, although a general location is shown on the maps in Chapter 4. Land use authorizations in these units such as land sales, leases, or other actions should be located so as not to preclude the option to build these roads along a feasible and efficient route.