

Region 8

Upper Kachemak Bay and Fox River Flats

Summary of Resources and Uses in the Region

Background

This region encompasses the upper Kachemak Bay and the drainages flowing into it, including the Martin, Bradley, and Fox rivers.

State lands

Most of the uplands in the unit are in state ownership. The private lands in the region are derived from state land sales and U.S. surveys. Past state land sales in the area include the South Caribou Lake Subdivisions (I and II), the Mariner's Walk Subdivision (Bear Cove), and Homer odd lot and agriculture sales.

Region 8 encompasses part of the Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat Area (CHA) and all of the Fox River Flats CHA. The land and water in these two Critical Habitat Areas has also been designated as a National Estuarine Research Reserve, which encourages research and education in and around Kachemak Bay.

Acreage

The plan applies to 102,592 acres of state-owned and –selected uplands and 22,247 acres of state-owned tidelands in this region. The plan also applies to state-owned shorelands (acreages of shorelands have not been calculated).

Physical features

The dominant features of the state lands in the northeast part of this region are small creeks that have highly incised lower reaches and originate in broad plateaus that support wetlands, grasslands and scattered spruce. The Fox River dominates the central part of this region and includes a broad floodplain. All of these drainages feed into the head of Kachemak Bay and form marshy deltas and mudflats below mean high water. The land east of the Fox River is mountainous and quite steep, and supports well-drained spruce forests. There has been extensive spruce mortality from spruce bark beetles throughout the region.

Access

An extensive trail network branching off the end of East End Road provides access to the northern half of the region. The southern half of the region is accessible only by boat or float plane.

Resources and uses

There are five distinct areas within the region:

1) The Fox River Flats is mostly in state ownership. The flats also have a number of private in holdings that are used by the residents for agriculture and grazing. Cows and horses are grazed on the flats during the summer. Part of this area is contained in the Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Area, which supports many shorebirds and waterfowl. There is a Russian village and trails that connect the residents to Kachemak Bay on the west side of the Fox River. The flats and lower hillsides between Moose Creek and the mouth of Clearwater Creek are very popular for hunting and snowmachining. There is an important moose travel corridor between the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and Clearwater Slough and south into Fox River Valley. The upper Fox River Flats are noted as the principal moose calving area of the southern peninsula. Brown bears travel around the north end of Kachemak Bay through this area.

2) The second area includes mostly state lands interspersed with some private holdings around Caribou Lake and the Fox Creek drainage. A number of homesteaders living around Fox Creek use the surrounding state land to support their homesteads (i.e., personal use firewood and small herd grazing). Two subdivisions, South Caribou Lake I and II, contain many recreational cabins used mainly for hunting camps. The DNR Division of Forestry's *Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales, 2001-2005* proposes timber sales along the East End Road, Fox River drainage and south of Caribou Lake.

3) The area surrounding the Bradley Lake hydroelectric project is entirely state owned and selected. Homer Electric manages the project. Because of poor access, the area supports very little public use, even though six campsites are located along the road to the dam. This area has high winter concentrations of moose. Brown bears travel around the north end of Kachemak Bay through this area. Just west of this area is the Martin River and Bear Cove. The Bear Cove Mariner's Walk subdivision contains a number of recreational use cabins, but there are currently no year-round residents.

4) The tidelands in this unit fall within the two Critical Habitat Areas, include extensive marshes and tideflats, and are important habitat for moose, shorebirds, and waterfowl. The tidelands around Bear Cove support Pacific herring spawning and a harbor seal haulout, and receive heavy use for recreation.

Management constraints and considerations

The region is bounded by the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and Wilderness on the north and east, by Kenai Fjords National Park on the south, and Kachemak Bay State Park on the southwest.

Part of the Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat Area and all of the Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Area are contained within Region 8. The goal of the *Critical Habitat Area Management Plan* is to protect fish and wildlife habitats while providing for public access and use. A Special Area Permit is required from ADFG for certain activities occurring within the critical habitat area. ADFG will review each permit application for consistency with the goals and policies of the

management plan. Access into the Critical Habitat Area and development of harbors, docks, and other tidelands structures may be allowed for the purpose of public access to Kachemak Bay. Oil and gas leasing, though, is prohibited in the Critical Habitat Area.

The *Fox River Flats Coordinated Resource Management Plan* was developed in 1994 to monitor and control livestock and grazing in the flats. There are some constraints on state land management in the Bradley Lake hydroelectric project area as a result of FERC licensing. A borough river protection ordinance applies to the Fox and Bradley rivers in this region. This ordinance designates a 50-foot-wide habitat protection zone that requires a permit for most building, clearing, excavation, and commercial use activities within the zone.

Management Summary

The state lands and tidelands in the Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Area will be managed to support wildlife habitat and grazing. The Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat Area will be managed for wildlife habitat, public recreation, and access. Both areas will be managed consistent with their respective management plans.

There are several parcels of state land that have been surveyed but remain unsold in the three subdivisions in Region 8 (Mariner's Walk in Bear Cove and South Caribou Lake Subdivisions I and II). These unsold lots are classified as Settlement Land, and are available for sale to the public or for conveyance to the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

Although most of the land surrounding Caribou Lake is owned privately, there are some parcels along the waterfront remaining in state ownership that are to be used for public access and related recreational purposes such as trailhead facilities, parking areas, float plane tie down and boating put-in/takeout areas.

The area surrounding the Bradley Lake hydroelectric dam is to be managed primarily as a power site consistent with FERC license requirements. The management intent here is also to accommodate recreation (particularly at the designated campsites) and public access where the security of the power project, public safety, and liability are not significantly at risk. The area around the dam will also be managed for wildlife habitat and harvest.

Most of the mature spruce in this unit has succumbed to spruce bark beetle. Timber harvest is recognized as a compatible use in this region.

Management Intent for Multiple Units in Region 8

Management intent for most units is included in the resource allocation summary table included at the end of this region. However, management intent that applies to multiple units within this region is included below.

Management of the Kachemak Bay and Fox River Flats Critical Habitat areas

See the *DNR Management Authority in Critical Habitat Areas, Game Refuges, and Sanctuaries* guideline in the *Fish and Game Habitat and Harvest* section in Chapter 2 for management intent. See also the *Aquatic Farming in Kachemak Bay* guideline under the *Aquatic Farming* section in Chapter 2.

Bluffs and escarpments

All major bluff lines and escarpments, including but not limited to, the Fox River, Fox Creek Swift Creek, Moose Creek, and Falls Creek canyons, are subject to a building setback from the edge of the bluff sufficient to prevent undue soil erosion, sloughing or hazard to buildings and structures. Such setbacks need only be established at the time of the disposal of land or interest in land.

Road connecting East End Road and CIRI land on upper Deep Creek

Through the planning process, a road connecting logging roads on Cook Inlet Region Inc. land on upper Deep Creek with the East End Road was brought to the Planning Team's attention. The potential effects of this road were not evaluated at the time the plan was developed, however, the proposed road is not inconsistent with the plan. When this road project is proposed, it will be evaluated under its own merits through a separate review process.

Navigable waterbodies

See the *Management Intent for Navigable Rivers* section at the end of this chapter for management intent for the beds of the navigable river segments in Unit 600 that are located within this region but not annotated on the region maps. Also see this section for management intent for shorelands and waters within navigable waterbodies within Federal Conservation System Units (National Parks, Preserves, and Wildlife Refuges) that are within Unit 602 but are not annotated on the region maps.

Other plans

The area affected by the DNR Deep Creek Area Management Plan (DCAMP, adopted in 1981) is entirely within the KAP area. While the recommendations from the DCAMP were carefully reviewed during the process of developing KAP, significant revisions were made to the 1981 policies, guidelines, and designations that applied to this area. The KAP now supersedes the DCAMP.

Many of the recommendations from the Kachemak Bay State Park Management Plan are incorporated into this plan for this region. The ADFG management plan for Kachemak Bay and Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Areas also helped guide developing the management intent in the KAP for this region. Also see Chapter 2 for the *Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Harvest* section, *DNR Management Authority in Critical Habitat Areas, Game Refuges, and Sanctuaries* guideline.

Specific Management Intent for Units in Region 8

Management intent for most units is included in the resource allocation summary table included at the end of this region. However, management intent for some units was too long to be included in the table so is included below.

Unit 195 Bradley Lake hydroelectric project and surrounding lands

Manage the area primarily as a power site consistent with the FERC license requirements. Accommodate recreation (particularly at the designated campsites) and public access where the security of the power project, public safety, and liability are not significantly at risk. Also manage areas for wildlife habitat and harvest, particularly those designated for mitigation under FERC licensing.

Unit 260B Caribou Lake access points & wetlands surrounding subdivision

Public recreation areas around Caribou Lake are classified for public access and related recreational purposes such as trailhead facilities, parking areas, floatplane tie downs, and boat launch sites.

Unit 261 Homer Remote site

Surveyed parcels that return to state ownership may be designated Settlement and resold without an amendment to the plan. KAP does not recommend selling additional parcels, just those already identified.

Table 3.9 Resource Allocation Summary Table

For a key to the two-letter designation abbreviations in this table, see the beginning of this chapter

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Unit Number	Unit Name	Designations	Acres	Map Number	Resource or use for which unit is designated / Management intent	Other resources and uses
195	Bradley Lake hydroelectric project and surrounding lands	ha rd wa	42,253	8A	All land around the dam is subject to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licensing agreements. There are six campsites along the road that Homer Electric manages. Riparian areas are important to bear travel. Nuka River drainage is an important wildlife travel/use corridor into the National Park for moose, goats, and brown bear. High-density moose wintering area. Goat prime summer habitat at Martin River and Battle Creek; ducks and geese, general distribution; general distribution of rainbow trout and Dolly Varden/Arctic char; coho salmon spawning and Dolly Varden on Battle Creek. Also see the "Specific Management Intent for Units" section for additional management intent for this unit.	Small portions of this unit are still state selected. Cultural sites present. A gravel pit was developed at Martin River for construction of Bradley Lake hydroelectric facilities. An Memorandum of Understanding with NPS requires minimum stream flows into the Nuka River in the National Park.
197A	Mariners Walk and other land at Bear Cove	se	1,305	8A	This unit includes subdivided and unsubdivided state land that surrounds Bear Cove. / Convey first the land that has already been surveyed as part of former subdivision lots. Conveyance of larger areas that have not been subdivided can be considered in the future.	Pacific herring, spawning areas; goat, summer range; moose, general distribution; ducks and geese, general distribution; general distribution of rainbow trout and Dolly Varden/Arctic char; red and coho salmon, Dolly Varden on Martin River. Cultural sites present.
197B	Retention areas around Bear Cove subdivisions	rp	126	8A	Frequently used by lot owners and visitors of Bear Cove. / Manage for public recreation and common use by the residents of the subdivision, visitors, and the public.	Cultural sites present.
198	Kachemak Bay shore, 1.5 miles northeast of Bear Cove	se	48.3	8A	This unit includes 20 undeveloped lots. There appears to be several small trails to the south and west of this unit. / Consult with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) before authorizing development in this unit because of harbor seal concentrations.	Bald eagle concentration area: termed critical habitat by Anchorage. Harbor seal haulout concentrations off coast. Goat summer range. Moose general distribution. Ducks and geese, spring and fall concentration area. General distribution of rainbow trout and Dolly Varden/Arctic char. Cultural sites present.

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Unit Number	Unit Name	Designations	Acres	Map Number	Resource or use for which unit is designated / Management intent	Other resources and uses
199	Martin River and lands to west	ha rd	897	8A	Cabins and clearings to the west of this unit. The unit itself is undeveloped. Local dispersed use from Bear Cove. / Consult with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) before authorizing development in this unit because of harbor seal concentrations.	Bald eagle concentration area. Harbor seal, haulout concentrations off coast; goat, summer range. Moose habitat, general distribution; ducks and geese, spring and fall concentration area; general distribution of rainbow trout and Dolly Varden/Arctic char, salmon spawning and rearing. Anadromous fish spawning habitat.
260B	Caribou Lake access points and wetlands surrounding subdivision	rd	16,494	8A	Public recreation areas around Caribou Lake are designated for public access and related recreational purposes such as trailhead facilities, boat storage, floatplane tie downs, and boat launch sites. The unit is also designated for open space and access between Eagle Lake, Caribou Lake, and Upper Deep Creek. / Allow for salvage harvest. Retain in state ownership to ensure access to the lake, to the East End Road and Caribou Hills as well as for other public uses. See "Bluffs and Escarpments", "Connecting Road;" and "Caribou Lake Access" guidelines for additional management intent for this unit.	Mostly wetlands. Small portion (340 acres) borough selected. Potential grazing area. Moose, calving and rutting concentration areas; suspected brown bear habitat and travel corridor; black bear, concentrated foraging/feeding areas. The Fox River Forest Management Block includes part of this unit. It is an area that has significant spruce beetle infestation. Some of this block may be harvested in 2004. The East End timber sale is scheduled for 2001 in this unit.
260C	Boxcar Hills and Upper Fox Creek drainage	ha	6,377	8A	South-facing slopes of Boxcar Hills important for moose rutting and calving; black bear, concentrated foraging/feeding areas. Riparian areas in this unit are important to bear travel. / Retain in state ownership. Allow for timber salvage harvest.	Heavy beetle infestation. The Goober Lake Trail and the Eagle Lake--Caribou Lake Tail provide winter access to the unit.
260D	North Fox River	rd	3,142	8A	Used for access into the National Wildlife Refuge. Scenic views of upper Kachemak Bay. / Retain in state ownership. Allow for salvage harvest. See "Bluffs and Escarpments" guideline for this unit.	Moose, calving and rutting concentration areas; black bear, concentrated foraging/feeding areas; possible brown bear travel corridor. Riparian areas in this unit are important to bear travel.

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Unit Number	Unit Name	Designations	Acres	Map Number	Resource or use for which unit is designated / Management intent	Other resources and uses
261	Fox River Remote	rh	3,838	8A	There are now over 100 private parcels within this unit resulting from past state land sales. Seasonal and year-round cabins/homes have been built on many parcels. / This unit may be conveyed to a municipality. Surveyed parcels that return to state ownership may be designated Settlement and resold without an amendment to the plan. Selling additional parcels is not recommended. Manage the timber for personal use. Maintain legal access to private land. Allow for commercial recreation leasing. See "Bluffs and Escarpments" and "Homer Remote" guidelines for this unit.	Black bears. Moose, calving and winter concentration areas. The Homer Remote Site land sale allowed over 200 entries, with varying maximum parcel sizes, either 5 acres or 40 acres, depending on where the parcel of land was located in the unit. The western half of the unit was reserved for the smaller lots, as well as a portion of the unit at the southeastern edge.
262	Lands south of Voznesenka at end of East End Rd.	gu	177	8A	No identified resource values that warrant a primary designation other than General Use.	Grazing takes place on surrounding lands. Land remaining in state ownership (that surrounds private parcels) is too steep to develop.
264A	South Caribou Lake Subdivision and subdivision addition	se	1,967	8A	Many lots developed. Well-drained soils, forested. Already subdivided. / Lots that are in or revert to state ownership with no pending applications are available for sale to the public. This unit is conveyable to a municipality. Conveyance will be subject to the approved plat notes on greenbelts, overlooks and the community materials site.	
270B	MP 18 north and south of East End Rd.	se	284	8A	Developable land north and south of the road. / If this unit is conveyed to a municipality, consider retaining a public access easement between the East End Road and the snowmachine trails located north of this unit.	Application for grazing lease. The Jones timber sale will be reoffered and may be combined with the proposed 2001 East End timber sale.
270C	North of MP 16 East End Rd.; previous homestead offerings	se	160	8A	This unit is composed of non-ag pre-designated homesteads (30-40 acres each) in 1986 that require the construction of a dwelling to prove up. One lot may still be available for resale.	Cultural sites present.

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Unit Number	Unit Name	Designations	Acres	Map Number	Resource or use for which unit is designated / Management intent	Other resources and uses
270E	MP 18 East End Rd.	rp	36	8A	Adjoins Kachemak Bay State Park on the south. High public recreation value. Parcel adjoins Kachemak State Park as well as East End Road, and has the potential to provide road access (parking and trailheads which the state park currently lacks). / Recommended for addition to Kachemak State Park. Allow salvage harvest before DPOR develops its facility (i.e., make the log storage area in the location of the future parking lot).	Application for grazing lease. The Jones timber sale will be reoffered and may be combined with the proposed 2001 East End timber sale.
271A	Fox River Flats, excluding Critical Habitat Area	gr ha	14,759	8A	A long-term grazing lease has been issued to the Fox River Cattleman's Assoc. for use of much of this unit. Important moose habitat. Moose movement area between National Wildlife Refuge and Clearwater slough and south into Fox River Valley. Upper Fox River Flats are the principal moose calving area for the southern peninsula. Silver salmon subsistence fishery on Fox River. Riparian areas important to bear travel. Wetland area in Section 33 in T3S R9W is important trumpeter swan habitat. / Grazing is compatible in this unit. Manage the wetland area in Section 33 in T3S R9W as trumpeter swan habitat. Grazing in this area will be managed consistent with the Cooperative Range Mgt. Plan. Retain the unit in state ownership.	Trails in this unit have resulted in heavy hunting and ORV use in the adjoining wilderness area of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Fox Creek and Sheep Creek are access corridors for hunters to reach the refuge. Unit includes abandoned town of Dolina. There are trespass horses documented to be using the area.
271B	Fox, Moose, and Swift creeks	rh	6,348	8A	There are several grazing leases issued and applied for in this unit. Riparian areas important to bear travel. High density moose wintering area. Alder thickets along Swift, Moose, and Fox creeks are important moose habitat. Black & brown bears use this area. Some denning occurs. The Fox River Forest Management Block includes part of this unit. Significant spruce beetle infestation. Some of this block may be harvested in 2004. / See "Bluffs and Escarpments" guideline for this unit. Grazing leases may be compatible with the management intent for this unit.	

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Unit Number	Unit Name	Designations	Acres	Map Number	Resource or use for which unit is designated / Management intent	Other resources and uses
271C	One mile southwest of Razdolna	se	8.27	8A	ADL 226031 application is for clearing brush, tilling the land, planting hay, and using the site for grazing through a competitive agriculture sale on 8.27 acres. / See "Bluffs and Escarpments" guideline for this unit.	
271D	For River tributaries bluff settlement areas	se	1,953	8A	Includes several areas of land with potential for settlement adjacent to existing settlement areas. / Available for long-term lease and borough selection. Grazing leases may be compatible with the management intent for this unit. See "Bluffs and Escarpments" guideline for this unit.	There are several pending and expired grazing applications in this unit. Riparian areas important to bear travel. High density moose wintering area. Trail access connects with trail system to East End Road. The Fox River Forest Management Block includes part of this unit. Significant spruce beetle infestation. Some of this block may be harvested in 2004.
271E	Alpine areas east of Sheep River, adjoining Kenai National Wildlife Refuge	gu	3,200	8A	No identified resource values that warrant a primary designation other than General Use.	Alpine area potentially used for bear travel around the end of Kachemak Bay. Borders, but does not include, Fox River Cattleman's Association grazing lease area.
274	Snowshoe Lake area; MP 20 East End Rd.	se	66	8A	Small parcel on the road surrounded by private land.	This unit does not include Snowshoe Lake (which is located 1/4 mile to the northeast). The tributary of Falls Creek that crosses the unit is not anadromous.
275	Eagle Lake Rd. gravel pit, north of MP 20 East End Rd.	se	20	8A	/ DNR has requested relinquishment of DOTPF's ADL (43415) to the unit because the site is depleted. This unit may be conveyable to a municipality.	

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Unit Number	Unit Name	Designations	Acres	Map Number	Resource or use for which unit is designated / Management intent	Other resources and uses
276A	Eagle Lake, north of MP 20 East End Rd.	rp	320	8A	Eagle Lake has the potential to support trailhead facilities, parking areas, floatplane tie downs and boating input/out take areas. / This unit is not recommended for addition to the State Park System in the immediate future. However, those portions adjacent to the lake and used for trails and trailheads may be considered for addition to the State Park System at some time in the future. Portions of the unit that are not suitable for these purposes may be conveyed to a municipality. Timber salvage is allowed in this unit.	The Fox River Forest Management Block includes part of this unit. It is an area that has significant spruce beetle infestation. Some of this block may be harvested in 2004.
276B	Upper Swift Creek materials site, end of Eagle Lake Rd.	gu	40	8A	DNR has requested relinquishment of DOTPF's ADL to the unit. This unit may be conveyed to a municipality.	Past materials site (ADL 41865 expired on 9/2/83). Materials remaining on site are poor quality.
278	Birch Street near Falls Creek, end of East End Rd.	se	10	8A	Isolated tract surrounded by private and Native land. Fairly close to roads.	
531	Bradley Lake hydroelectric project tidelands	ha	219	8A	Bradley Lake hydroelectric dam and associated facilities, roads, airstrips, powerlines and burrow sites are located adjacent to this unit. A barge landing dock is located in the unit but it is only accessible at high tide. The public may be able to use this landing area at lower tides in small boats. Resources and uses are documented in the Management Plan for Kachemak Bay State Critical Habitat Area (ADFG, 1993). / Manage to accommodate uses associated with the need for a barge landing site and public access for the Bradley Lake Road.	

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Unit Number	Unit Name	Designations	Acres	Map Number	Resource or use for which unit is designated / Management intent	Other resources and uses
532	Bear Cove tidelands	ha rd	1,548	8A	This unit contains spawning areas for Pacific herring. Ducks and geese are concentrated in the area in spring and fall, and there are also harbor seal haulout concentrations in this unit. Many visitors and residents of Bear Cove use these tidelands for recreation. Chugachik Island is used by commercial clam harvesters and recreational/personal use clammers. / Resources and uses are documented in the Management Plan for Kachemak Bay State Critical Habitat Area. Consult with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) before authorizing development in this unit because of harbor seal concentrations.	Existing authorization for aquatic farming on the NE end of Bear Island. Cultural sites present.
559	Fox River Critical Habitat Area	ha	7,083	8A	Designated a Critical Habitat Area (CHA) in 1988. The CHA was designated by the legislature primarily for waterfowl habitat. Grazing was also recognized as an important use in the CHA. Waterfowl and shorebird nesting and staging area. Silver salmon subsistence fishery on Fox River. Subsistence coho salmon gillnet fishery on Kachemak Bay. Herring/salmon migration corridor, juvenile fish/shellfish rearing habitat, Anadromous fish spawning habitat. / See the "DNR Management Authority in Critical Habitat Areas, Game Refuges, and Sanctuaries" guideline in the "Fish and Game Habitat and Harvest" section in Chapter 2 for management intent. See the ADFG Management Plan for the CHA for more resource information on this area. See "Management Intent for Multiple Units" section for additional guidelines for this unit.	A small portion of this unit is still state selected. Used as a summer grazing area. There are also trespass horses documented to be using the area.