

Baird Mountains Region

This region includes the drainages of the Squirrel River and its tributaries, all of which flow into the Kobuk River, and a large mountainous area north of the Squirrel and Omar River drainages. A portion of the Kobuk River is also situated in the southern portion of the region. Native owned lands occupy three townships immediately south of the Klery Creek mining area and a mixture of state and Native selected lands occupy portions of the Kallarichuk Hills and the Squirrel River near the Kiana Hills. The remainder of the management unit is occupied by federally owned lands, most of which are situated within federal conservation units, including the Noatak National Preserve, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge, and the Kobuk Valley National Park. The state-owned/selected lands occupy the central portion of the management unit. There is only one small community, Kiana, which is situated in the far southern part of the region at the confluence of the Squirrel and Kobuk Rivers. This region is wholly within the Northwest Arctic Borough.

Distribution and Characteristics

There are over 0.2 million acres of state-owned land and 0.4 million acres of state-selected land. Much of the state-selected land are topfiled selections over Native corporation selections, and it is not clear how much of this will be conveyed to the state. State-owned land includes uplands in areas adjoining the Squirrel and Omar Rivers as well as in the central mountainous area, which is part of the Baird Mountain formation. Extensive areas of state-selected⁹ land occupy the uplands adjacent to the remaining portions of the Squirrel, Omar, and North Fork (Squirrel River) rivers. State-selected land also occupies two other principal upland areas: portions of the Baird Mountains and the Kallarichuk Hills. The topography of this region is characteristically mountainous in the central area of state land holdings and generally level adjacent to the Omar and Squirrel River drainages. Vegetation patterns generally reflect topography, and are characterized by bottomland spruce/poplar and lowland spruce/hardwood forests adjacent to the principle river drainages. Alpine and moist tundra characterize upland, mountainous areas.

Access, Resources, and Uses of State Land

Access to and throughout this region is limited. There are no roads or airport, although a dirt strip is present at Klery Creek and a gravel runway at the community of Kiana. Such access as exists is provided by snowmachine during the winter, ATVs during the summer and fall, and by skiffs and other small boats, powered and not powered, along the Kobuk and Squirrel Rivers. Float planes may also use the Squirrel and Kobuk Rivers at certain points important for recreation or mining access. Barge access is provided to Kiana.

⁹ Includes both State-selections and ANILCA Topfiled selections.

Moderate fish and wildlife values are found along the Squirrel, Kobuk, and Selawik Rivers and throughout the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Anadromous fish, Arctic char, and whitefish are found along these rivers; sheefish occur within the Kobuk and Selawik Rivers. Moose are distributed throughout the region, with principal winter concentrations found along the Squirrel, Kobuk, and Mangook Rivers. Caribou are scattered throughout the region. Fall migratory routes occur generally north of the Selawik NWR and occupy valleys through the Baird Mountains and a portion of the Baird Mountains is used for insect relief during the spring and summer. Dall sheep are present in the higher parts of the Baird Mountains. Waterfowl are distributed throughout the Squirrel, Kobuk, and Selawik Rivers, and occupy all of the Selawik lowlands, with nesting concentrations present east of Inland Lake. Nesting and molting concentrations of geese occur throughout the Selawik NWR, but particularly east of Inland Lake.

Hunting, fishing, and limited trapping are some of the major uses of the state-owned and selected uplands in the unit. The residents also use the land for gathering eggs, berries, plants, and firewood. The lands and waters provide habitat for moose, caribou, waterfowl, and Dall sheep. This area is also used seasonally by guides and their clients; miners; and recreational users, particularly along the Squirrel River for kayaking and canoeing.

A mineralized area considered to have high mineral potential occurs within the Baird Mountains, directly north of Klery Creek. This area contains a number of significant mineral occurrences, including the Omar, Frost, and Powdermilk Prospects and the Klery Creek placer deposit. Both lode and placer prospects or deposits exist. Principal metallic metals present are copper, zinc, gold, and lead. State mining claims blanket this area and the mining area along Timber, Klery, and Cross Creeks. Several federal mining claims also occur along these streams. Coal, oil, and gas resources are either of low potential or are not known to be present within the region.

Management Constraints

Few state and local management plans affect this area. Only one state resource management plan affected this area, the 1989 Northwest Area Plan, which is now superseded by this update. The Northwest Arctic Borough maintains a district coastal management plan and has land use zoning. Both were consulted in the development of this plan.

Management Summary

State land is to be managed consistent with the plan designations and management recommendations contained in the Resource Allocation Table. State land will be managed in a manner similar to that inferred from its designation. State land in this unit will be kept in public ownership, except for areas affected by municipal entitlement selections by the Northwest Arctic Borough, and will be managed for the development of mineral resources in

areas designated Minerals and for multiple uses in all other areas. This entire region is open to mineral entry and development, and to mineral, coal, or oil and gas leasing. Shorelands in this unit will be managed consistent with the general management intent for such areas described in the *Navigable Rivers and Lakes* section at the end of Chapter 3.

Resource Allocation Table for Upland Units – Baird Mountains Region

Unit #	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTR	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
B-01	Ha 103,048	10 Various	Manage to protect sensitive species and habitats. Authorizations issued in this unit involving long-term or permanent uses are to consider impacts upon the WACH. Special consideration is to be given to activities occurring during the spring and summer migration periods and to areas that may be important during the winter. The protection of caribou movement corridors is an important consideration in any authorization. Consult ADF&G prior to issuing an authorization involving a long-term or permanent use.	This parcel occupies the majority of the Squirrel River drainage with the exception of those parts that are in municipal selection status by the Northwest Arctic Borough. With the exception of a portion of the upper Omar River drainage, the remainder of the unit is in selection status. Occupying areas adjacent to the Squirrel River, an anadromous stream, and its tributaries, terrain is characteristically level and the vegetation, within most of the unit, is typically an upland spruce-hardwood forest. Areas more distant from the river are occupied by high brush. Riverine areas are used by moose for winter concentrations and by waterfowl seasonally. The WACH affects this unit during its spring, summer, and fall migrations and portions of it are used as part of their winter range. The following subsistence resources are present in this unit: bear, caribou, fish, furbearers, moose, salmon, small game, vegetation, waterfowl, and wood. The mineral potential of this area is considered to be low.
B-02	Gu 1,280	10 K018N008W	Use of this parcel for community development may be appropriate, given its adjacency to Kiana.	This small unit occupies an area near the Native village of Kiana that is a state topfiling under ANILCA. The terrain is generally level and the vegetation consists of an upland spruce-hardwood forest. Caribou of the WACH use this parcel as part of their migratory area. The following subsistence resources are present in this unit: bear, caribou, fish, furbearers, moose, salmon, small game, vegetation, waterfowl, and wood.
B-03	Ha 77,170	10 Various	This area may be considered appropriate for conveyance to the Northwest Arctic Borough as part of their municipal entitlement. Before this can occur, a final finding and decision must be made under the Municipal Entitlement Act to convey the land to the Borough. In the event that these decisions determine that conveyance is appropriate, those portions that are affected by such a decision are redesignated Public Recreation-Dispersed and are reclassified Public Recreation Land. This designation and classification becomes effective if/when an entitlement decision makes a determination that conveyance to the borough is appropriate. In the event that these decisions determine that conveyance is inappropriate, the Habitat designation continues.	This unit has generally similar characteristics as that of B-01, occupying portions of the Squirrel River drainage. These areas have been selected by the Northwest Arctic Borough as part of their municipal entitlement. The following subsistence resources are present in this unit: bear, caribou, fish, furbearers, moose, salmon, sheep, small game, vegetation, waterfowl, and wood.

Unit #	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTR	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
B-04	Mi, Ha 352,668	10, 11 Various	Manage for mineral and habitat values. Mining is an appropriate use but any mineral development that may be authorized shall adhere to the following guideline: Authorizations issued in this unit involving long-term or permanent uses are to consider impacts upon Dall sheep and the WACH. Special consideration is to be given to activities occurring during the spring, summer and fall migration periods and to areas that may be important during the winter. The protection of caribou movement corridors is an important consideration in any authorization. Consult ADF&G prior to issuing an authorization involving a long-term or permanent use.	This large parcel is considered to have high mineral potential and there are numerous ARDF occurrences present. It is situated within the Baird Mountains and therefore the terrain is characteristically hilly to mountainous. Dall sheep are present as are caribou that are part of the WACH. This area experiences spring, summer and fall caribou migration and portions of the unit are important for winter range and during the summer, for insect relief. The following subsistence resources are present in this unit: bear, caribou, furbearers, moose, sheep, and small game. Except within the principal river drainages that may have high brush, the remainder of the unit is characterized by alpine tundra and barren ground. The entire unit consists of state-owned land. The Northwest Arctic Borough has some land within the external boundary of this unit. Portions of the Omar River are considered anadromous.
B-05	Gu 58,317	10 Various	Manage for multiple uses. Mining is recognized as an appropriate use. Since mineral potential within this unit is moderate, and portions may actually have a high potential, it is likely that exploration and development of locatable minerals will occur during the planning period. Such developments are considered appropriate, but all such developments must follow the following management guideline. Authorizations issued in this unit involving long-term or permanent uses are to consider impacts upon Dall sheep and the WACH. Special consideration is to be given to activities occurring during the migration periods and to the protection of movement corridors. Consult ADF&G prior to issuing an authorization involving a long-term or permanent use.	This unit is situated to the south of unit B-04, although mineral occurrences are present, this area is considered to have a somewhat lower mineral potential than associated with B-04. The terrain and vegetation of this unit is similar to B-04, and both Dall sheep and the caribou of the WACH are present. The upper northern part of this unit is used during the summer by the WACH for insect relief. The following subsistence resources are present in this unit: bear, caribou, furbearers, moose, small game, vegetation, waterfowl, and wood.

Total state uplands within region = 592,483 (5 units)