

Southwest Seward Peninsula Region

This region includes land within drainages surrounding the north side of Norton Sound. Major rivers include the Sinuk, Nome, Solomon, and Casadepaga rivers. The unit also contains the three major roads that radiate out from Nome: the Nome-Teller Road, Kougarok Road and Nome-Council Road. Many parts of the region consist of gently rolling coastal lowlands, although hilly to some mountainous terrain occurs in the northeastern parts of the region. The pattern of vegetation reflects proximity to the coast, and the distribution of lowland and upland (hilly) areas. With the lowlands, which concentrate along the coast, wet tundra is characteristic, while a mixture of high brush and alpine tundra is typical of the remaining areas of uplands.

State land consists of both state-owned and state-selected land, with the land in selection status having high mineral potential. Nearly all of the land in this region was selected by the state for its mineral potential. Much of this land is also affected by Native selections, and the final aspects of land ownership will not be settled for some period of time. Parts of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge are situated within the region. Much of the remainder of the region is owned by Native corporations.

The principal town within the region is Nome. Other communities are much smaller and may only be seasonal. These include Teller, Council, Solomon, and White Mountain. Solomon and Council are mostly seasonal in character.

Distribution and Characteristics

There are 0.8 million acres of state-owned land and 0.6 million acres of state-selected land. The central and southern parts of the region consist mostly of state-owned land, while state-selected lands occurs on the periphery, in the east and northeast. The terrain and vegetative patterns of this land are similar to the overall distribution of land in the region. Areas adjacent and near the coast are typically lowlands consisting of wet tundra or, in better drained parts, high brush. The interior, hillier terrain is characterized by a mix of high brush, alpine or wet tundra, or, in the eastern part, by bottomland spruce-hardwood forest.

Residents currently use the land for hunting land and sea mammals and waterfowl, subsistence or commercial fishing and crabbing, berry picking, and reindeer herding. This unit includes extensive wetlands – particularly north of Golovin Lagoon and Safety Sound – that are important waterfowl nesting habitat. There is a small amount of forest land in the eastern part of the region.

Access, Resources, and Uses of State Land

Access to this region is by air, sea, roads, or trails. Airports exist at Council, Solomon, and White Mountain. A jet capable airport exists at Nome. Remote landing strips for small planes are scattered throughout the region. Boats are used mostly along the coast, in Safety Sound, and on the Niuluk, Pilgrim, Sinuk, and Fish rivers. Roads within the region extend from Nome north towards Taylor, east to Council, and northwest to Teller. Numerous trails, including the Iditarod Trail, provide local access.

Moderate habitat values occur within the region, with these values being high along the coastal lowlands and within the principal drainages of the region. Moose are present throughout the region and moose winter concentration areas exist along the main rivers. There are numerous anadromous streams. Waterfowl habitat is extensive along the wetlands of the coast, particularly at Safety Sound and northwest of Golovin Lagoon. Caribou have recently become present in the region following a long hiatus. Some of the state land is subject to the Fall and Spring migrations of the WACH and is used as part of their winter range.

Much of the region contains lands with high to very high mineral potential. State lands in this region were primarily selected for their mineral values. Grazing has also occurred historically throughout the region, although the presence of the WACH in more recent time has caused a decline in the number of reindeer and of the industry dependent upon that resource.

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 Bering Straits Coastal Resource Service Area maintains a district coastal management plan and this was 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 designated Settlement. They will be managed for the development of mineral resources in areas designated Minerals and for multiple uses in areas designated General Use. In areas designated Mineral/Habitat, these will be managed to accommodate mining activity but such activity must give particular attention to habitat and recreation values. 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. Tidelands will be managed according to designations applied to specific areas assigned a tideland unit. In these areas, which consist of lagoons and sounds, habitat values are high and authorizations are only to be issued if these resources can be retained and protected. Tideland authorizations may be appropriate in such areas but impacts on habitat and recreation must be carefully evaluated.

Resource Allocation Table for Upland Units – Southwest Seward Peninsula Region

Unit #	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTR	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
W-01	Ha 595,871	2, 3, 4, 5 Various	Manage for habitat values. Grazing is recognized as an appropriate use. Mineral development may be appropriate within the unit but shall consider impacts upon grazing activities and habitat and shall adhere to the following guideline: Authorizations issued in this unit involving long-term or permanent uses are to consider impacts upon the WACH, particularly during the winter when parts of this unit are used as part of their winter range. Consult ADF&G prior to issuing an authorization involving a long-term or permanent use. Maintain access associated with local/regional trails and RS 2477 routes.	This unit consists of a number of large parcels in the southern and north-central parts of the region as well as a number of smaller parcels scattered throughout the region. Parcels near the coast characteristically occupy lowlands with wet tundra being the primary vegetation. High brush characterizes the hilly uplands that are situated away from the coast and at higher elevation. In addition, there is a large parcel situated in the far northeastern part of the unit that occupies extensive lowlands. These holdings are split between state-owned and state-selected parcels. Moose are present throughout this unit and winter concentration areas occur within some of the principal drainages. Waterfowl concentrations also occur within these areas, and a number of anadromous streams are present. Caribou use the northeastern and eastern parts of the unit as part of the WACH winter range. Grazing has historically occurred within this unit. The following subsistence resources are present in this unit: bear, furbearer, small game. Mineral potential is considered to be low to moderate and the majority of high value concentrations occur in adjacent areas codesignated Minerals/Habitat. There are a variety of trails, including the Iditarod and one RS 2477 route in the southeastern part of the unit (RST 216).
W-02	Mi 43,037	2, 3 Various	Manage for mineral values. Grazing is recognized as an appropriate use.	There are relatively few parcels that are designated Minerals; most of the higher value mineral parcels are codesignated Minerals/Habitat, reflecting the presence of both sets of values. Parcels that are designated Mineral are situated south of the main body of the Kigluaik Mountains. Most are situated north of Nome and west of the Taylor Highway. These parcels occupy hilly uplands whose vegetation is characteristically high brush. Moose are present on the parcels. It is not believed that the WACH occupies these parcels. Grazing has historically occurred within this unit.

Unit #	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTR	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
W-03	Gu 470,304	2, 3, 4, 5 Various	Manage for multiple uses. Grazing and mining are recognized as appropriate uses. Protect moose concentration areas and anadromous streams. Mineral development may be appropriate within the unit but shall consider impacts upon grazing activities and habitat and shall adhere to the following guideline: Authorizations issued in this unit involving long-term or permanent uses are to consider impacts upon the WACH, particularly during the winter when parts of this unit are probably used as part of their winter range. Consult ADF&G prior to issuing an authorization involving a long-term or permanent use. Maintain access associated with local/regional trails and RS 2477 routes.	This unit occupies a number of large parcels and are scattered throughout the unit. Most occupy mountainous terrain which has high brush as its principal vegetation. Some areas may be occupied by alpine tundra or barren rock. Nearly the entire unit is state-owned. Moose are present on the parcels. Parcels in the northeastern and eastern parts of the unit are used as part of the WACH winter range. Grazing has historically occurred on the unit. Multiple anadromous streams are present in this unit. Although many parts of this unit are rated as low to moderate mineral value, there are several areas that are rated as high value. It is therefore likely that some portion of the area designated General Use may be subject to mineral exploration and development. There are several trails, local and regional, that provide access to and through this unit. There is also one RS 2477 route (RST 216).
W-04	Mi, Ha 176,686	2, 3, 4 Various	Manage for habitat and mineral values. Grazing is recognized as an appropriate use. Mineral development may be appropriate within the unit but shall consider impacts upon grazing activities and habitat and shall adhere to the following guideline: Authorizations issued in this unit involving long-term or permanent uses are to consider impacts upon the WACH, particularly during the winter when parts of this unit are used as part of their winter range. Consult ADF&G prior to issuing an authorization involving a long-term or permanent use. Maintain access associated with local/regional trails and RS 2477 routes.	This unit is codesignated Mineral and Habitat, reflecting the presence of both important areas of habitat as well as high to very high mineral potential areas. (Some of these parcels were designated Habitat in the 1989 Plan and have been converted to a codesignation because of the presence of mineral values that were not apparent at the time of original plan.) There is a mix of state-owned land and state-selected land. Moose are present throughout this unit and winter concentration areas occur within some of the principal drainages. Numerous anadromous streams are present. Caribou are believed to be present in the northeastern parts of this unit, with some areas being used by the WACH as part of their winter range. Grazing has historically occurred on the unit. There are several trails, local and regional, that provide access to and through this unit. There is also one RS 2477 route (RST 741).
W-05	Se 66,523	2, 3 Various	Unit is considered appropriate for land disposal during the planning period. Land disposals shall take into consideration grazing activities and habitat values in their configuration and design and shall follow the design principles described in Chapter 2 under <i>Settlement</i>. Closure to mineral entry and development to locatable minerals should occur once the configuration of the subdivision has been determined.	This unit consists of a number of parcels that are designated for settlement. Typically, these areas are relatively flat and have road access or access by trail. This unit is entirely state-owned land. There are five discrete settlement areas, which are noted on the plan map as: W-5A (Sinuk River; 21,004 total acres) W-5B (Nome River; 18,812 total acres) W-5C (North Salmon Lake; 400 total acres) W-5D (Casadepaga River; 9,667 total acres)

Unit #	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTR	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
			Effective (or allowable) developable acreage within these parcels is as follows: W-5A (Sinuk River; 1500 acres) W-5B (Nome River; 2000 acres) W-5C (North Salmon Lake; 200 acres) W-5D (Casadepaga River; 1200 acres) W-5E (East Fork Pass; 1600 acres)	W-5E (East Fork Pass; 16,640 total acres) The total acreage identified above is the amount within the spatial boundaries of the parcel designated Settlement. The actual number of acres to be developed within these parcels is less than this and is identified in management intent. Note: There is an agreement between the BLM, Bering Straits Regional Corporation, and DNR that affects the adjudication of the state and regional corporation's selections in the area of Salmon Lake. The eastern part of the Salmon Lake area, affected by the regional corporation selection, is to be adjudicated so that the corporation receives title to this area. The state is to receive title to the western part of Salmon Lake, which is the area occupied in part by management unit W-5C. This agreement has, however, not been formally adopted at the time of this writing (October 2008).
W-06	Ha, Rd 23,814	3, 4 Various	Manage unit for its recreation and habitat values.	This unit occupies the area northwest and south of Salmon Lake, which is both a recreation area and an entranceway into the Kigluaik Mountains. The terrain is relatively flat along the Kougarok Road but most of the unit is mountainous. The principal use and value of this area is related to the wildlife habitat and scenic values within the unit and in the adjacent Kigluaik Mountains and to the recreation uses that occur within this unit and within these mountains.

Total state uplands within region = 1,376,257 (6 units)

Resource Allocation Table for Tideland Units – Southwest Seward Peninsula Region

Unit #	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTR	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
WT-01	Ha 14,213	3 Various	Manage to protect habitat values. Contact USFWS and ADF&G prior to issuing authorizations.	Safety Sound is a large, nearly enclosed lagoon situated directly east of the city of Nome. This extensive tideland, including the closely connected lake, provides a protected habitat for a number of important and sensitive species, including waterfowl, anadromous fish, and marine mammals. Estuarine wetlands are present.
WT-02	Gu 198,896	2, 3 Various	Manage for multiple uses. Prior to issuing an authorization consult reference sources mentioned in ‘Resources and Uses’ and consult ADF&G, NMFS, or USFWS, as appropriate. Note: Not included within this tideland unit are the patented tidelands to the City of Nome.	This tideland unit includes all areas of the coast not otherwise included in WT-01 or identified as a seabird colony on plan maps. This coast is characterized by mixed sand and gravel beaches. Mineral Closing Order 568 affects portions of this unit. A variety of species occur within this large area, often associated with migratory patterns. Present in nearshore areas and coastal wetlands are seabirds, shorebirds, and waterfowl. Also present in the area are pinnipeds and whales. For more information, see maps at: alaskacoast.state.ak.us/District/FinalFinalPlans/NorthWestArctic.htm

Total state tidelands within region = 213,109 (2 units)