Northwest Seward Peninsula Region

This region includes lands on the Northwest Seward Peninsula from Cape Woolley to the boundary of the Northwest Arctic Borough just west of Cape Espenberg. The state owns the central part of the Peninsula and the upper drainages of the Nuluk, Arctic, Serpentine, Kougarok, American, and Agiapuk rivers. There are state selections or overlapping state and Native selections on the southern edge of this block of state land, the western tip of the peninsula in the York Mountains, and the area of the Kigluaik Mountains. The remainder of the area is owned by Native corporations or the federal government. Several parcels of private land exist in this region and are associated with Native allotments. Federal lands on the northern half of the peninsula are within the Bering Land Bridge National Monument. A portion of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge is located near Cape York.

A primary town does not exist in this region; this function is performed by Nome. There are several smaller communities including Teller, Shishmaref, and Wales. These are all year-round communities.

Distribution and Characteristics

This region has over 1.5 million acres of state-owned land and 0.7 million acres of state-selected land. Most of the state-owned land exists in the central part of the Seward Peninsula, and is associated with areas of high to very high mineral value. Most of the remaining state selections are topfiled over Native corporation selections and it is unclear at this time how many of the state topfile selections will be conveyed to the state by the federal government. These selections occur south of the central block and many occur at and near the Kigluaik Mountains. These areas were primarily selected for their mineral potential, although other uses/values exist, including habitat and recreation.

Two types of terrain exist within the region: the more hilly to mountainous areas at the York Mountains, the central area to the east of the York Mountains, and the Kigluaik Mountains**.** Lowland areas, many of which are poorly drained and consist of extensive wetlands, occupy the areas north of the Kigluaik Mountains around the Imuruk Basin. Most of the hilly and mountainous areas are characterized by alpine tundra, wet tundra, and barren rock. High brush occupies several of the river valleys in the northern block.

Access, Resources, and Uses of State Land

Access to and throughout this region is limited. Four major communities have airports. Floatplanes and wheeled planes can land along much of the coastline on the beaches and lagoons. Access to the southern part of this unit occurs along the Teller-Nome Road, and

from the road to the coast by trail. The Kougarok Road ends near the southeastern portion of the unit south of Black Dome, and trails continue to Serpentine Hot Springs. Much winter travel is by snow machines along the coast and on inland trails. Boat access is also common.

Moderate fish and wildlife values are found along some of the principal drainages. Anadromous fish, Arctic char, and whitefish are found in these rivers. Moose are distributed throughout the region, with principal winter concentrations found along the major river drainages in the central block. The WACH has begun to use this area more frequently than in the past, and part of their winter range occurs in the eastern part of the unit. Fall and spring migration routes occur through parts of the northern block. Waterfowl and marine mammals are common throughout the major lagoons in the unit, including Ikpek, Lopp, Shishmaref, and Cowback. Waterfowl are common in the Imuruk Basin.

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, and plants. This area is also used seasonally by guides and their clients, and by recreational users along the Kougarok Road, in Imuruk Basin and in the Kigluaik Mountains**.** The latter is becoming an increasingly popular recreation area.

This unit is known to have high to very high mineral potential. Mineral potential is particularly high in the mountainous areas, including the York Mountains and the Kigluaik Mountains. High mineral values also exist in the northern and eastern parts of the large central block of state land.

Management Constraints

Few state and local management plans affect this area. There are no state resource management plans other than the 1989 Northwest Area Plan. 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 or Mineral/Public Recreation, 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 Waters 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 interior basins, habitat values and, in the case of the Imuruk Basin, recreation values are high. Tideland authorizations may be appropriate in such areas but impacts on habitat and recreation must be carefully evaluated.

Resource Allocation Table for Upland Units – Northwest Seward Peninsula Region

Unit # / 1989 Classification	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTR	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
S-01 None, WHB	Ha 625,223	3, 4, 5, 6 Various	Manage for sensitive species, grazing, and 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 ADFG prior to issuing an authorization involving a long-term or permanent use. Maintain access associated with local/regional trails and RS 2477 routes. Utilization of state gravel resources for the improvement of the airstrip at Pilgrim Hot Springs and the access road connecting the airstrip to the main highway is considered appropriate.	This large unit encompasses areas important for habitat protection within the Northwest Seward Peninsula region. As such, it consists of numerous parcels of state land scattered throughout the region, although concentrations occur within American, Nuluk and South Fork Serpentine river drainages; the lowland areas north of the Kigluaik Mountains; and poorly drained lowlands consisting of numerous lakes and wetlands north of the Imuruk Basin. There is a mix of both state-owned and state-selected land designated Habitat in this region. The bulk of state-owned land occurs in the northern parcels, while state-selected land occurs in the large lowland tracts situated north of the Kigluaik Mountains and north of the Imuruk Basin. Winter moose concentrations occur in many of the principal drainages in the more mountainous areas in the north. The WACH occupies the far eastern, mountainous areas during the winter, although they are not present in other areas. Many of the parcels, especially south and east of Teller and near the Lopp Lagoon, are heavily utilized by both moose and muskox. Some areas are particularly important during moose breeding season when harems of moose are present in the upper drainages. In addition, three types of muskox are present: mixed age/sex groups that are sexually active, bachelor groups of bull muskoxen, and lone muskox. Portions of this unit share a common shoreline with a portion of Brevig Lagoon and the spit at the month of Port Clarence from Point Spencer south are noted as a marine mammal haul out area. Anadromous fish streams occupy most of the principal river drainages, and waterfowl concentrations occur in wetlands north of the Kigluaik Mountains. Because of the large size of this unit and the presence of mineral access trails/roads, there are numerous RS 2477 routes, including RSTs2, 80, 471, 472, 481, and 1817. See http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/trails/rs2477/index.cfm for location and RST number. The state may have need for the use of gravel on state land in the vicinity of Pilgrim Hot Springs for the improvement of the access road between the main highway and the Hot springs, and for

Unit # / 1989 Classification	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTR	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
				the improvement of the airstrip. Portions of this unit have been used historically for reindeer herding, although this activity is limited at present (2008).
S-02 MIN, None	Mi 220,381	4, 6 Various	Manage for mineral values. Grazing is recognized as an appropriate use. Mineral development is 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 ADFG prior to issuing an authorization involving a long-term or permanent use. Maintain access associated with local/regional trails and RS 2477 routes.	One of the largest areas of mineral concentration occurs within this unit. There are two extensive areas where mineralization occurs: throughout the York Mountains and in the mountains to the east. Hilly to mountainous topography characterizes this unit, and the most common vegetation, with the exception of some stream valleys with high brush, is typically wet or alpine tundra, or barren rock. Although associated with less productive habitat areas than N-01, there are, nonetheless, several important species and habitat areas within the unit. Anadromous fish streams occupy most of the principal river drainages, and winter moose concentrations occur in many of these drainages in the mountainous areas in the north. The WACH occupies the far eastern, mountainous areas during the winter, although they are not present in other areas. Seabird rookery sites occur within coastal portions of the unit. Arctic Peregrine falcons are also present. Polar bear use areas occur along the seaward and inland portions of the coast. Because of the large size of this unit and the presence of mineral access trails/roads, there are numerous RS 2477 routes, including RSTs 2, 80, 471, 472, 481, and 1817. See http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/trails/rs2477/index.cfm for location and RST number. A few winter trails pass through portions of this unit. Portions of this unit have been used historically for reindeer herding, although this activity is limited at present (2008).
S-03 RMG	Gu 795,370	3, 4, 5, 6 Various	Manage for multiple uses. Grazing and mining are recognized as appropriate uses. Mineral development may be appropriate within the unit but shall consider impacts upon grazing activities and habitat and shall adhere to the following guideline:	Parcels designated General Use are primarily distributed throughout the York Mountains and the hilly area that occupies much of the Seward Peninsula, generally coinciding with areas that do not have high habitat or mineral values. Parcels with these designations also occur to the west and east of the Kigluaik Mountains. The vast majority of the state-owned parcels are situated in the large block of state land in the central part of the Seward Peninsula. Parcels in

Unit # / 1989 Classification	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTR	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
			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 ADFG prior to issuing an authorization involving a long-term or permanent use. Maintain access associated with local/regional trails and RS 2477 routes.	selection status tend to cluster within the Kigluaik Mountains. Topography in the large northern block is generally hilly to mountainous, depending on location. Vegetation is generally either alpine or wet tundra. Several anadromous streams drain the northern area and moose are present throughout. (The areas of moose winter concentration are located within units S-02 or S-04.) The eastern parcels in the large northern block may be used as part of the WACH winter range. Because of the large size of this unit and the presence of mineral access trails/roads, there are numerous RS 2477 routes, including RSTs2, 80, 471, 472, 481, and 1817. See http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/trails/rs2477/index.cfm for location and RST number. Portions of this unit have been used historically for reindeer herding, although this activity is limited at present (2008).
S-04 WHB	Mi, Ha 361,509	4, 5, 6 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 ADFG prior to issuing an authorization involving a long-term or permanent use. Maintain access associated with local/regional trails and RS 2477 routes.	Parcels with this designation are scattered primarily through the drainages of the large northern block of state land. These areas are known to have high to very high mineral values and certain habitat values associated with riverine areas. Most of these parcels are owned by the state except for several situated on the southern flanks of the York Mountains. This designation has been applied to capture that condition where both important habitat and mineral values exist. Moose are present in these parcels, and except for the far eastern tracts, which may experience WACH use during the winter, caribou are not present. There are some anadromous streams that traverse these parcels. Portions of these units may contain RS 2477 routes; see http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/trails/rs2477/index.cfm for location and RST number. Portions of this unit have been used historically for reindeer herding, although this activity is limited at present (2008).

Unit # / 1989 Classification	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTR	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
S-05 None	Mi, Rd 175,392	3, 4 Various	Manage for recreation and mineral values. Mineral development may be appropriate within the unit but shall consider impacts upon habitat and recreational values/uses.	This unit comprises the Kigluaik Mountains, which contain both high mineral and recreation values. The unit is co-designated Mineral/Public Recreation to acknowledge the two uses and the two values that exist within this unit. Habitat values are also important in this unit. Mining potential is rated as very high and a number of federal claims already exist. It is also used by Nome residents for a variety of backcountry recreational activities. This unit is used by moose, muskox, caribou and sheep. Moose frequent this area during breeding season when harems of moose are present in the upper drainages. Three important muskox groups are present: mixed age/sex groups, bachelor bull groups, and lone muskox. Several anadromous streams are known to exist. Grazing may have been conducted in portions of this unit.
S-06 WHB	Se 19,260	4 Various	Land disposal is considered appropriate during the planning period. Effective (or allowable) developable acreage within this parcels is 800 acres. Preserve trail access.	This unit consists of a large settlement area within the Nuluk River drainage. A trail connecting Brevig and Shishmaref runs through this unit.

Total state uplands within region = 2,197,135 (6 units)

Resource Allocation Table for Tideland Units – Northwest Seward Peninsula Region

Unit # / 1989 Classification	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTR	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
ST-01 WHB	Ha, Hv 232,909	4, 6 Various	Manage and protect wetlands, sensitive species and anadromous streams. Authorizations within this unit may be appropriate but must consider the impacts of the proposed use on the resources that occur within this unit.	This unit is located on the northwest coast of the Seward peninsula. The area encompasses intertidal wetlands, including Shishmaref Inlet, Arctic Lagoon, Ikpek lagoon, and Lopp lagoon. The adjacent uplands are primarily native corporation lands and federal lands in the Bering Land Bridge National Preserve. Sediments in the substrate range from fine sands to silts and organically rich muds. This unit is key habitat to various marine mammal, marine fish, waterfowl, shorebirds and seabirds. Gull/Tern nesting colonies occur on Sarichef Island and Lopp Lagoon. Polar bear denning sites also occur within this unit. Anadromous and resident fish, bivalves and crab are present. Whale, pinniped, waterfowl and seabird are seasonally present. Eel grass is occurs throughout Shismaref Inlet. There are known or a high probability of heritage resources along the coast. Public access occurs on coastal trails and important trails exist within the parcel. Hunting, fishing, camping, bird watching and boating occur in this unit.
ST-02 WHB	Ha, Hv 71,321	3, 4 Various	Manage for sensitive species and habitat protection. Authorizations within this unit may be appropriate but must consider the impacts of the proposed use on the resources that occur within this unit.	Occupying Imuruk Basin and the Tuksuk Channel, this unit is north of the Kigluaik Mountains. The adjacent uplands are state selections and native corporation lands. Shoreline consists of intertidal wetlands with extensive salt and brackish-water marshes of fine sands and organic muds to moderately sloping mixed sand and gravel beaches. Eel grass is present along the shores. High value habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and seabirds. Anadromous and resident fish, bivalves and crab are present. There are known or a high probability of heritage resources. Hunting, fishing, camping, bird watching and boating occur in this unit.
ST-03 WHB	Ha, Hv 9,109	4 Various	Manage for sensitive species and habitat protection. Authorizations within this unit may be appropriate but must consider the impacts of the proposed use on the resources that occur within this unit.	This unit occupies Grantley Harbor, west of Teller; and Brevig Lagoon, west of Brevig Mission. Upland ownership is almost exclusively Native corporation lands. Shoreline habitat is a moderately sloping with mixed sand and gravel beaches. Eel grass is present along the shores. High value habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and seabirds. Anadromous and resident fish, bivalves and crab are present. A seabird rookery exists in Grantley Harbor; portions of the colony may be comprised of endangered species. There are known or a high probability of heritage resources. Public access occurs along coastal trails. Hunting, fishing, camping, bird watching and boating occur in this unit.

Unit # / 1989 Classification	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTR	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
ST-04 WHB	Ha, Hv 3,388	3, 4 K007S038W, K008S038W	Manage for sensitive species and habitat protection.	Located north of Cape Woolley, this unit is comprised of mixed sand and gravel beaches, salt-water marshes and sheltered tidal flats. The adjacent uplands are native owned lands. High value habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and seabirds. Anadromous and resident fish, bivalves and crab are present. There are known or a high probability of heritage resources within this unit. Hunting, fishing, camping, bird watching and boating occur in this unit.
ST-05 WHB, RMG	Gu 551,102	3, 4, 6 Various	Manage for multiple uses. Prior to issuing an authorization consult reference sources mentioned in 'Resources and Uses' and consult ADFG, NMFS, or USFWS, as appropriate.	This tideland unit includes all areas of the coast not otherwise included in a tideland polygon or identified as a pinniped haulout/polar bear den or seabird colony on plan maps. 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 are pinnipeds and whales. For more information, see http://www.alaskacoast.state.ak.us/District/FinalFinalPlans/NorthWestArctic.htm

Total state tidelands within region = 867,829 (5 units)