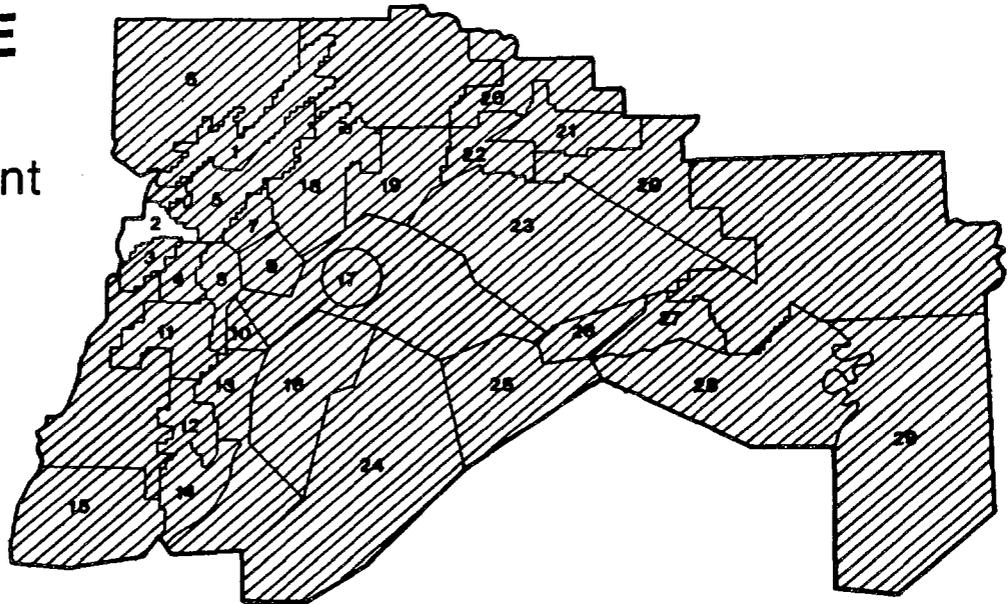

PASSAGE CANAL

Management Unit 2



Background

Passage Canal is the gateway to western Prince William Sound. Over the next 20 years, the developed portion of Whittier is expected to expand along the south shoreline of Passage Canal to Neptune Point. Within this area, the City of Whittier owns 200 acres and will receive title to 400 more. Chugach Alaska Corporation owns 430 acres. A new boat harbor is expected to be built in Shotgun Cove. When this occurs, much of the public use that now originates at the Whittier boat harbor will move to Shotgun Cove. The area between Shotgun Cove and the present developed area of Whittier is likely to contain approximately 500 residential lots and a variety of commercial uses developed on municipal and private land.

The state owns or has selected most of the usable land in Passage Canal and owns the tidelands throughout the unit. Some of the state and federal land on the north side of Passage Canal is highly mineralized, and development of a lode deposit near Poe Bay is possible within the next few years.

Whittier, at the west end of Passage Canal, is the destination for a variety of vessels: commercial fishing boats, barges, tourboats, cruiseships, and all types of recreational craft. In addition, most public use in western Prince William Sound originates in Whittier and traverses Passage Canal. This area is the only part of Prince William Sound seen by many weekend small-boat users and day visitors to Whittier. Campsites and anchorages within this unit are filled beyond capacity on some peak summer weekends. In fact, few campsites or anchorages exist on the south side of Passage Canal.

Management Intent

The plan proposes that approximately 500 acres of state uplands be offered for private ownership near Billings Cove and an undetermined amount of land at Poe Bay and at Neptune Point. Some state land within the settlement areas will be retained to accommodate and encourage public recreation. Public facilities including developed campsites and trails may also be developed in

some of these areas to expand the camping and recreation capacity of the area.

Management of state uplands and tidelands near Whittier will emphasize and encourage the community development, expansion, and access needs of Whittier, including the proposed development in Shotgun Cove. In addition, state lands will be used to accommodate the increasing public recreation needs of the growing community and the growing tourist and recreation use of the area. Throughout the unit, timber harvest by permit or small commercial sale is allowed on state uplands to provide for timber needs including firewood, houselogs, and other products, where the harvest will not affect visual resources.

The state puts a high priority on selecting lands adjacent to communities. Additional state land selections may be made if lands suitable for community development or community recreation are identified. If the state acquires additional land, land would not be offered for sale without a plan amendment.

Most lands in this unit remain open to mineral entry. Lands may be closed to mineral entry prior to land sale or if the legislature designates Entry Cove and Decision Point as marine parks. Areas to be closed to mineral entry are described in the individual subunit discussions.

The City of Whittier has not yet selected its full entitlement. Within the city limits all classifications made by the plan are in categories that can be conveyed to the City under AS 29.65.

Additional management intent is described below for seven subunits. The intent for **Subunit 2H**, the general use area, is reflected in the previous paragraphs.

Subunit 2A - Billings Cove. Land in this subunit is currently owned by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), but 1,935 acres are proposed for state selection. Within this area, 500 acres will be offered for private ownership; the remain-

ing state land will be retained in state ownership and managed for a variety of uses. The land offering will be designed to accommodate and encourage public recreation within the area. State land will be closed to mineral entry prior to its sale.

Billings Cove is a frequently used camping area for kayakers and other small-boat enthusiasts leaving from or returning to Whittier. There is limited upland recreation such as hiking and exploring due to the lack of developed trails and difficult access. Settlement will be designed to retain suitably large areas for public recreation including camping, sport fishing, and hiking. Recreation facilities that are appropriate in this subunit include developed campsites, public-use cabins, developed trails, interpretive signs and similar facilities, docks piers, and similar developed access points.

Subunit 2B - Poe Bay. This subunit includes state-owned land fronting the bay and 710 acres of USFS land proposed for state selection toward the head of the valley. A lode mineral deposit exists at the head of the valley with the potential for near-term development. The lode deposit is beyond the area proposed for state selection. State land will be available for access to the mine and, if required, for staging or operating facilities. Two hundred and forty acres of waterfront land is owned by the University of Alaska.

The best quality land in this unit is owned by the University. State land will be used for settlement and to support the development of the university-owned land. The state's land sale plans should complement and be coordinated with those of the university. Suitable public recreation areas should be reserved on the remaining state lands fronting Poe Bay. Net land sale acreage cannot be determined until after university land management plans are finalized. The state lands required for the land sale will be closed to mineral entry prior to the sale. Mineral access will be protected through the land sale area.

Poe Bay is a frequently used anchorage, sport fishing, and general recreation site. The bay lies almost directly across Passage Canal from the proposed small-boat harbor at Shotgun Cove. If the harbor were constructed, day use of Poe Bay would undoubtedly increase.

To reflect the intent for settlement and the need for mineral access and staging areas, this subunit will have a joint mineral and settlement classification. Areas offered for sale may be reclassified settlement without a plan amendment.

Subunit 2C - Logging Camp Bay. Logging Camp is a popular anchorage. The bay's spit is used for camping and there is a USFS mooring buoy in the bay. Most capable land within this subunit has been transferred to the University of Alaska. In order to consolidate landownership patterns and to promote more efficient management, the strip of land between Poe Bay and Logging Camp Bay is proposed for state selection. The selection is "C Priority" (see Chapter 5 for more information on selections and selection priorities).

State-owned or -acquired land will be retained in state ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on public recreation. This subunit is appropriate for additional campsites to accommodate the recreation use in Passage Canal. All state land within this unit remains open to mineral entry except for the estuary at the mouth of Logging Camp Creek. That estuary will be closed to prevent conflicts with important salmon spawning and rearing resources.

Subunit 2D - Entry Cove. Entry Cove has an excellent anchorage and campsite. It is one of the most important last night - first night campsites for all types of boaters traveling to or from Whittier including motorboats, sailboats, and kayaks. State land nearby contains an important historic site. Active land management is appropriate to accommodate increasing use and to protect the resources of the area. Minimum development campsites are appropriate to increase the general camp-

ing capacity for the Passage Canal - Port Wells area.

Entry Cove should be considered by the legislature for marine park status to protect the important recreation values and to support the need for more active recreation management. Because of the limited, critical nature of the site and its importance to the frequent dispersed recreation and tourist uses, mariculture, floatlodges or other uses inconsistent with the recreation intent will not be allowed. The unit remains open to mineral entry, though it may be closed if legislatively designated as a marine park.

Subunit 2E - Decision Point. Decision Point is at the east end of Passage Canal. It contains the most frequently used campsite in the Sound--it is used by skiffs, inflatable boats, and kayaks. State land will be retained in state ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on recreation. Active management is appropriate to protect the environment, to accommodate increasing use, and to increase the general recreation and camping capacity of the area. Eventually, trails starting at Neptune Point may terminate at Decision Point. The camping area would then become the only walk-in remote campsite in the Sound. Tideland uses that conflict with the recreation use will not be allowed in this subunit. Because of the importance of this subunit for dispersed recreation uses, floatlodges and commercial recreation facilities are prohibited.

The subunit should be considered by the legislature for designation as a state marine park due to its frequent recreational use and need for more active management. If the legislature designates the area as a marine park, it may close the area to new mineral entry.

Subunit 2F - Shotgun Cove and Vicinity. Most state uplands along the coast in this subunit will be transferred to the City of Whittier or to Chugach Alaska Corporation. State-owned tideland adjacent to this land will be used to support the development needs of these land owners. Management of uplands

remaining in state ownership should be coordinated with municipal and private development. Additional land selections are proposed to consolidate land ownership and to enhance public uses. Four hundred and eighty acres of land is proposed for selection. This is a "C Priority" selection. (See Chapter 5 for explanation.) Part of this selection includes a route for a trail to an overlook of Blackstone Bay.

Although some land adjacent to the Shotgun Cove development should be retained in public ownership, some lands may be offered for settlement if compatible with the adjacent development. A high priority will be given to the use of state lands for public recreation including the development of campsites and hiking trails; forestry management to provide houselogs, firewood or other timber needs; and other public uses.

The state owns land behind Neptune Point and between there and Hollow Bight (the small cove east of Neptune Point). That land is just past the end of the proposed Shotgun Cove road and may be the starting place for hiking up the mountainside or along the coast towards Decision Point. It may be the logical place for an "end of the road" campground and boat put-in, and for settlement to complement the nearby municipal land sale at Shotgun Cove. The design of the settlement and campground will await the development at Shotgun Cove and will be done jointly by the Division for Land and Water Management, and the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Interim management will not foreclose the option of using the land for either purpose.

Tidelands along this area are used by seals and seasonally by ducks and geese. The design of the settlement and developed recreation facilities should minimize disruption to seal haulout locations or intertidal vegetation used by waterfowl.

To reflect the intent for potential settlement in this subunit, the uplands will have a joint public recreation and settlement classifica-

tion. Areas offered for sale may be reclassified settlement without a plan amendment.

Part of the land in this subunit is visible from the USFS proposed wilderness area in Blackstone Bay. To protect the isolation and wilderness values of that area, facilities and trails in the Passage Canal unit will be located so that they are not visible from Blackstone Bay.

Tidelands in Shotgun Cove will be closed to new mineral entry to prevent conflict with the proposed boat harbor and related development. The closure should be reviewed by the department in ten years, 1998, to see if the reason for the closure, the proposed development, still warrants the closure.

Subunit 2G - Head of Passage Canal. This subunit includes uplands and tidelands at the head of Passage Canal, adjacent to Whittier. Management will emphasize and encourage community development, expansion, and access needs of Whittier; and public recreation by the local community and by the tourist industry. Most land in this subunit will be retained in state ownership. To accommodate the community development needs of Whittier, leases for commercial and industrial purposes are allowed throughout the subunit. Land sales, however, are prohibited except for isolated parcels adjacent to developed land. To reflect this management intent, the uplands will have a joint settlement and public recreation classification. Isolated parcels offered for sale may be reclassified settlement without a plan amendment.

Diver's Cove (also called Smitty's Cove) in the easternmost part of this subunit is a developed sport-diving site and is the most frequently used sport-diving site in Prince William Sound. Tideland management will protect the continued use of the site.

Management Guidelines

Recreation within the Billings Cove Settlement Area (Subunit 2A). To encourage and

accommodate public recreation within the Billings Cove area, state land should be reserved for developed trails to Billings Glacier; boat pullouts or other developed public access; coastline hiking trails; sport fishing at the mouth and along Billings Creek; and other points of recreation interest. Reservations should also include suitable land for developed campsites along the coast, suitable land for exploring and viewing Billings Glacier, and other points of interest.

Mariculture adjacent to settlement areas (Subunits 2A and 2B). If mariculture use is proposed before the Poe Bay, Billings Cove, or Neptune Point land sales are designed, the land manager should permit mariculture where the adjacent uplands are unlikely to be used for settlement (because of capability or other reasons) or to be reserved for public use, or where the facility is mobile and can accept a short term permit or lease. If appropriate, the land manager may reserve a portion of the uplands in Billings and Poe Bays for caretaker or other facilities needed to support mariculture.

Settlement Design Recommendations (Subunits 2A, 2B, 2F, and 2G).

1. Lot Sizes: Settlement in Passage Canal should occur in small lot sizes, mostly between one and five acres to allow optimum use of the limited amount of land.

2. Settlement Infrastructure. If funds are available or if an alternative technique such as a land-payment system is appropriate, DNR should consider the provision of community infrastructure coincident to or preceding the land sale. Facilities may include a boardwalk to protect soils in common trail areas, developed access, a community sewage collector system, or other facilities as appropriate.

Poe Bay Settlement Area (Subunit 2B).

1. Anchorage: Shoreline development at Poe Bay should not diminish the capacity of the public anchorage.

2. Mineral Access: Public land should be retained through the settlement area for convenient access to the mineral deposit at the head of the bay. The route should be suitable for moving heavy equipment. Tidelands adjacent to the route should be reserved for off-loading and access to mineral claims.

3. Avalanche Hazard: Land offerings in the state-selected land at Poe Bay will be preceded by an evaluation of the avalanche hazard in the valley.

Mineral Closures (Subunits 2C and 2F).

To protect valuable salmon spawning and rearing habitat and to prevent conflicts with these resources, the estuary at the mouth of Logging Camp Creek (73) will be closed to new mineral entry. Tidelands in Shotgun Cove (144) will be closed to prevent conflicts with the proposed municipal and private development. This closure should be reviewed by the department in 1998 to determine if conflicts with the boat harbor and related development still warrant the closure. The boundary of the closure is described in Appendix D.

The complete set of guidelines is presented in Chapter 2; any of these guidelines could apply to uses within this management unit. Guidelines that are most likely to apply to this management unit are listed below:

- Fish and wildlife habitat and harvest areas
- Recreation, tourism, cultural, and scenic resources
- Settlement
- Shoreline development

LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

Management Unit 2: Passage Canal

Page 1 of 2

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS			COMMENTS
		Primary Surface Use ²	Prohibited Surface Use	Subsurface ¹	
2A Billings Cove	State-selected uplands and state-owned tidelands	Settlement Secondary uses: Forestry Recreation		Closed before land sale	Estimated net land offering 500 acres
2B Poe Bay	State-owned and selected uplands; state-owned tidelands	Mining Settlement Secondary uses: Forestry Recreation		Closed before land sale	Land offering to be coordinated with University Management. Net settlement acreage not yet determined. Mineral transfer site may be needed.
2C Logging Camp Bay	State-owned and selected uplands; state-owned tidelands	Public recreation	Land offerings	Estuary closed Remainder open	
2D Entry Cove	State-owned uplands and tidelands	Public recreation	Commercial recreation facilities Floatlodges Land offerings	Open. May be closed if marine park	Possible marine park
2E Decision Point	State-owned uplands and tidelands	Public recreation	Commercial recreation facilities Floatlodges Land offerings	May be closed if marine park	Possible marine park

¹All areas are available for leasing of leasable minerals. Statements of whether or not the unit is open to mineral entry refer only to locatable minerals.

²Other uses such as material sales, land leases, or permits that are not specifically prohibited, may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement, management guidelines of this unit, and relevant management guidelines in Chapter 2. See Chapter 2, pages 2-11 and 2-12, for floathome policies. Trapping Cabin and Remote Cabin permits will not be given in the planning area. See guideline B-3, page 2-39.

LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

Management Unit 2: Passage Canal

Page 2 of 2

<u>SUBUNIT</u>	<u>LAND OWNERSHIP</u>	<u>LAND USE DESIGNATIONS</u>			<u>COMMENTS</u>
		<u>Primary Surface Use²</u>	<u>Prohibited Surface Use</u>	<u>Subsurface¹</u>	
2F Shotgun Cove and Vicinity	State-owned and selected uplands; state-owned tidelands	Uplands: Public Recreation Settlement Tidelands: Shoreline development		Estuary closed	Some uplands will be transferred to Municipal and private ownership.
2G Head of Passage Canal	State-selected uplands and state-owned tidelands	Uplands: Public recreation Settlement Tidelands: Shoreline development	Land offerings, except for isolated parcels	Open	
2H Remainder of Unit	State-owned tidelands	General use		Open	

¹All areas are available for leasing of leasable minerals. Statements of whether or not the unit is open to mineral entry refer only to locatable minerals.

²Other uses such as material sales, land leases, or permits that are not specifically prohibited, may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement, management guidelines of this unit, and relevant management guidelines in Chapter 2. See Chapter 2, pages 2-11 and 2-12, for floathome policies. Trapping Cabin and Remote Cabin permits will not be given in the planning area. See guideline B-3, page 2-39.

Resource Information Summary (page 1 of 2)¹

Management Unit: 2. Passage Canal					
SUBUNIT	Fish & Wildlife ²	Recreation	Minerals	Settlement ³	Forestry ³
2A Billings Cove (uplands and tidelands)	Bear use; mountain goat winter range	Dispersed rec- reation; first- night/last night campsite for Whittier- based recrea- tion	Moderately mineralized; known placer deposits in Billings Creek	Capable	Unknown
2B Poe Bay (uplands and tidelands)	Bear use; sport fishing	Dispersed rec- reation; anch- orage	Moderately mineralized	Capable	Unknown
2C Logging Camp Bay (uplands and tidelands)	Estuary; bear use; commercial fishing	Anchorage and camping; USFS mooring buoy	Moderately mineralized	Low Capability	Unknown
2D Entry Cove (uplands and tidelands)	Estuary; bear use; commercial fishing; deer; deer hunting	Excellent and frequently-used anchorage	Moderately mineralized	Capable	Unknown
2E Decision Point (uplands and tidelands)	Seals; seasonal waterfowl concen- trations; sport fishing; bear use; commercial fishing	Most frequent- ly-used camp- site in Sound; hiking and camp- ing expected after Shotgun Cove Road built	Moderately mineralized	Capable	Unknown

¹ This resource summary describes only the resources for state uplands and tidelands.

² Resource list includes Crucial, Prime, and Important habitats as defined by ADF&G (see Appendix E). Anadromous fish streams are not listed; they exist in most subunits. See ADF&G anadromous fish stream catalogue.

³ Land offering and timber harvest do not occur on tidelands. Therefore, settlement and forestry resources are not rated for tideland subunits.

Resource Information Summary (page 2 of 2)¹

Management Unit: 2. Passage Canal					
SUBUNIT	Fish & Wildlife ²	Recreation	Minerals	Settlement ³	Forestry ³
2F Shotgun Cove and Vicinity (uplands and tidelands)	Estuaries; seals; seasonal waterfowl concen- tration; sport fishing; bear use	Frequent use, to and from Whittier	Moderately mineralized	Capable	Unknown
2G Head of Passage Canal (uplands and tidelands)	Sport fishing	Includes Whittier small boat harbor	No known minerals	Unknown	Unknown
2H Remainder of Unit (tidelands)	Bird rookery; bear use; sport fishing; bear hunting; commercial fishing	Frequent use, to and from Whittier	Moderately mineralized	--	--

¹ This resource summary describes only the resources for state uplands and tidelands.

² Resource list includes Crucial, Prime, and Important habitats as defined by ADF&G (see Appendix E). Anadromous fish streams are not listed; they exist in most subunits. See ADF&G anadromous fish stream catalogue.

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