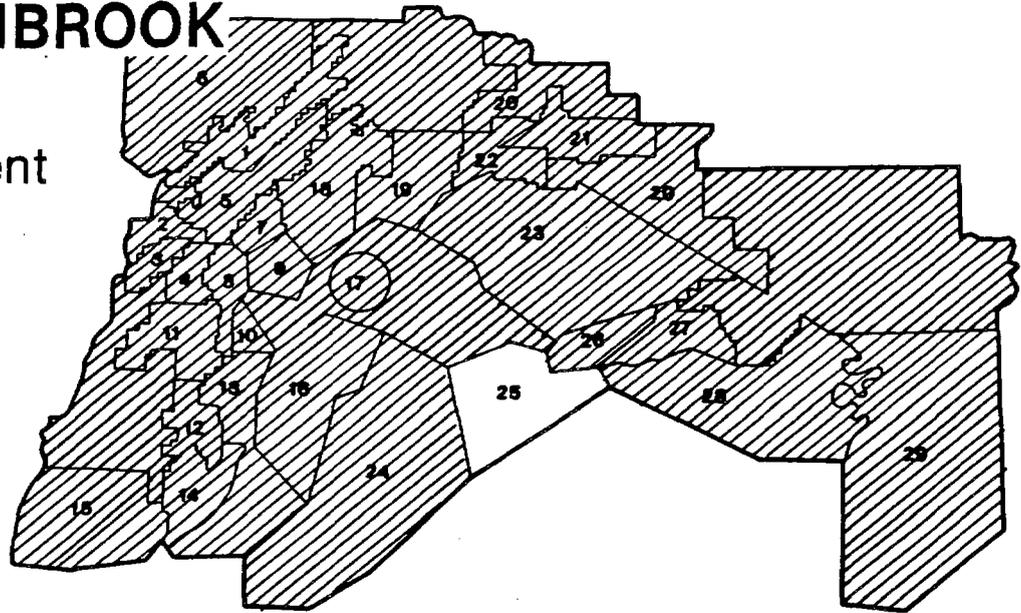


# HINCHINBROOK IS.

## Management Unit 25



### Background

Most uplands on Hinchinbrook Island are managed by the USFS. The USFS's land-use plan for Chugach National Forest indicates that they will manage their land on the island without timber harvest until the plan is revised. At the time of revision, timber management will be reevaluated. The USFS plan indicates that their recreation management will emphasize a "minimum of human induced restrictions and controls. Facilities are provided primarily for user health and safety." Although the federal land is open to mineral entry, there are no known significant mineral values.

The island provides recreation, hunting, and sport and commercial fishing opportunities for citizens of Cordova as well as for south-central Alaska. In addition, Boswell Bay has been a traditional second home area for Cordovans. The tidelands within Boswell Bay are a part of the Copper River Delta State Critical Habitat Area.

The state has selected land in Boswell Bay and Garden Cove, and owns the tidelands surrounding the island. A previous selection at Constantine Harbor was relinquished because the purpose of the selection--dispersed recreation--can be accommodated under Forest Service management, and because the selection purpose is not consistent with the allowable purposes of section 6(a) of the Statehood Act.

### Management Intent

Approximately 400 acres of state uplands will be offered for private ownership near Boswell Bay. The remaining state uplands will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on public recreation and wildlife habitat and harvest.

Management of the state uplands and tidelands outside the vicinity of Boswell Bay will emphasize the protection of existing public access, such as anchorages, airstrips, and trails. Management will emphasize maintaining the current uses of the island, includ-

ing sport and commercial fishing, hunting, and general recreation. Floatlodges are prohibited throughout all but Subunits 25A and 25B, the Boswell Bay and SCHA subunits, because of their incompatibility with existing community use, and with the federal management for the island.

Most state lands remain open to mineral entry. Three streams and twelve estuaries, as well as tidelands in the State Critical Habitat Area in Subunit 25B, will be closed to new mineral entry to protect valuable salmon spawning and rearing habitat and to prevent conflicts with those resources. In addition, the Boswell Bay settlement area will be closed before sale.

Additional management intent is described below for eight subunits. The intent for **Subunit 25I**, the general use area, is reflected in the previous paragraphs.

**Subunit 25A - Boswell Bay.** Within this area, 400 acres will be offered for settlement. The remaining land in the subunit will be retained for public recreation and forestry. Timber harvest by permit or small commercial sale will be allowed to provide for timber needs including firewood, houselogs, and other products. The land sale area will be closed to new mineral entry before sale.

A portion of this area has been selected by the state and Eyak Corporation. The state is unlikely to receive title to the area selected by the Corporation. The area with the overlapping selections is the most suited to settlement of any part of the selection. If the state does receive title, a portion of the land south of the Bay will be offered for sale. Sufficient public lands should be retained to protect public access and use of the beach.

The state will select additional land to the west of the existing selection. This additional selected land will be managed for multiple use, including community development (settlement), community recreation, wildlife habitat, and forestry. The higher quality land is an "A" priority selection, while the remainder of the

selection is "B" priority (see chapter 5 for explanation of priority).

Land not used for settlement should be retained in public ownership for public recreation. These lands will be managed to protect and facilitate community recreation use from Cordova and elsewhere. Boswell Bay has long been an important recreation site and second home area for Cordova residents. It is Hinchinbrook's closest point to the mainland and provides access to several different land types, including the gulf beaches to the south and the inland areas of the island.

Management of the gulf beaches in sections 19, 20, and 21 of T17S R5W, CRM will protect access to the settlement areas, access by the existing airstrip, and motorized and non-motorized use of the beach. Public recreation facilities such as public use cabins or minimum development campsites may also be constructed. Sections 10, 15, 19, 20 and 21 and the adjacent tidelands should be considered by the legislature for a marine park because of the importance of this area for community recreation. The boundary of the marine park should exclude those tidelands within the Copper River Delta State Critical Habitat Area.

**Subunit 25B - State Critical Habitat Area.** This subunit includes tidelands that are part of the legislatively designated Copper River Delta State Critical (SCHA). According to the statute that established the SCHA (AS 16.20.220), its purpose is "to protect and preserve habitat areas especially crucial to the perpetuation of fish and wildlife and to restrict all other uses not compatible with that primary use." Within the SCHA, land use authorizations are subject to ADF&G Title 16 authority concerning the use's impact on fish, game, or habitat as well as to DNR authority under Title 38.

The state's management intent will be the protection of fish and wildlife habitat, as indicated above, and to provide access to the surrounding uplands consistent with the fish and wildlife protection needs. If possible, legal ac-

cess should be developed from this area to the settlement and recreation areas of Subunit 25A.

Consistent with its legislative intent, the SCHA will be closed to new mineral entry. Closure will protect the variety of critical habitat within the area.

**Subunit 25C - Hawkins Cutoff.** Orca Inlet and Hawkins Cutoff contain the most important concentrations of sea otter in Prince William Sound. In the winter, several haulout and pupping areas exist on the offshore sandbars. They include a haulout area approximately one mile north of Shirttail Point and a pupping area approximately one mile southeast of Fish Bay. Both areas can contain hundreds of otters during the winter and early spring. Management of the uplands in this area will protect the appropriate sandbar areas and use by the otters.

Most tidelands of Hawkins Cutoff are habitat for waterfowl (duck and geese nesting or molting concentrations) and razor clams. The cutoff is a very popular anchorage and deer hunting area. Anchorages in Hawkins Cutoff are limited and critical. Management will maintain the quality of the habitat and public use of the area.

**Subunit 25D - Anderson and Double Bays.** State-owned tidelands in this area are important for recreation, commercial and sport fishing, and hunting access. The tidelands also provide important waterfowl nesting or molting habitat. The tidelands will be managed to maintain opportunities to anchor, existing commercial fishing harvest, and access to the uplands for hunting or fishing; and to protect the duck and goose nesting habitat.

**Subunit 25E - Shelter Bay.** The bay is a frequently used sport and commercial fishing site. Access is typically by boat or floatplane. There is also an unimproved sand airstrip on the western edge of the bay. State tidelands in the bay will be managed to maintain this area in its current natural state. Due to the unit's small size, frequent public use, and the

intent to maintain the natural character of its tidelands, development will be sited elsewhere if feasible and prudent.

**Subunit 25F - Constantine Harbor.** Constantine Harbor contains a variety of important recreation, cultural, and fish and wildlife values. Nuchek Island was the site of a Russian Fort; the area once contained a white and Native population of over 2,000 people.

Chugach Alaska Corporation owns almost all the land on Nuchek Island. The corporation's title document also includes the right of access to the airplane landing area on the spit dividing Constantine Harbor from Hinchinbrook entrance and the right of access of state tidelands for a dock. The corporation intends to restore the settlement and fortification of Nuchek as part of the development of educational and visitor facilities on the island.

The tidelands are an important estuary. They are habitat for salmon spawning and rearing, and they support seasonally high concentrations of brown bear and waterfowl (including nesting, molting and winter concentrations). In addition, the uplands are important for bear denning, and two bird rookeries exist nearby.

The subunit supports a variety of recreational uses. A large barrier sand spit protects the harbor from swells moving through Hinchinbrook Entrance and creates a calm, protected lagoon with abundant anchorage opportunities. The sand spit is an important resource for coastal recreation activities. Air access is also frequent. Wheeled planes land on the ocean side of the spit, and floatplanes land in the lagoon. Tenders supplying the fishing fleet often anchor in the harbor.

Tideland management will protect the wildlife resources while maintaining or enhancing the existing recreational opportunities. Access or other needs for the potential facilities on Nuchek Island will be provided. Any developed tidelands uses should maintain the quality of the existing recreation and wildlife use and the quality of the recreation ex-

perience at the potential project site on the island. Any state authorizations in this area should be coordinated with the private project on Nuchek Island.

**Subunit 25G - Garden Cove.** Uplands in this subunit have been selected by the state. The multiple-use management for this area should emphasize public recreation. Any recreation facilities should be coordinated with the private facilities on Nuchek Island including those developed by Chugach Alaska Corporation.

The uplands in this subunit are selected to provide the state with a land base to meet a variety of future land management needs, should they occur. While the land may be appropriate for a variety of uses, commitment of the land to a long-term use should only occur with public review. Therefore, authorization for any use that commits all or most of the selected land to a specific purpose or that significantly diminishes the public recreation value of the land will acquire a plan amendment.

**Subunit 25H - Bird Rookeries.** This subunit provides habitat for a concentration of bird rookeries. No authorizations will be given for activities that will significantly impact the rookeries or that will create repeated disturbance from noise or human use.

## Management Guidelines

**The Shipwreck Armeria.** The Armeria, a lighthouse tender that sank in the early 1900s, has the greatest archaeological significance among the Sound's numerous wrecks. The tender lies in good condition in shallow water in one of the coves on Hinchinbrook Island. The Armeria is identified on the AHRS system as COR-300; its location should not be publicized unless DNR, the USFS, or another group can actively manage the area. Tidelands development that would block access or damage the cultural resources are prohibited. Public notice, under AS 38.05.945, for activities within 1/2 mile of the

site should include the Alaska Sport Divers Association.

### **Settlement (Subunit 25A).**

**1. Trails and Public Access through the Settlement Area.** Access routes should be identified and retained in state ownership from the gulf beaches east of Point Steele to the beaches west of Hook Point. A buffer of state-owned land should be retained in public ownership for unrestricted public access along the coast. The buffer should include the entire beach area. In some places the buffer should include some, but not all, of the vegetated areas suitable for settlement.

**2. Access to the Settlement Area.** The area is typically accessed from Boswell Bay across private land or from the existing landing strip. Before disposal, legal access from the Bay to the disposal area and the beach area should be identified. This may include platting a suitable area for a new landing strip.

**3. Wetlands and Anadromous Streams.** The freshwater wetland areas that drain into the head of Boswell Bay should be retained in state ownership. The anadromous stream that drains the large lake in Section 11, T17S R6W, CRM, is used for sport fishing. The public buffer should contain a usable trail in appropriate areas for campsites.

**Mineral Closures (Subunits 25B, 25C, 25D, 25E, 25F, 25G, and 25I).** Three streams and twelve estuaries (including the Copper River State Critical Habitat Area) will be closed to new mineral entry to protect valuable salmon spawning and rearing habitat and to prevent conflicts with those resources. The stream closures are all within Subunit 25G, Garden Cove. They include approximately 0.4 miles of Garden Creek, approximately 0.5 miles of an unnamed creek, approximately 0.5 miles of Etches Creek, and the state land within 50 feet of each side of those creeks. Subunit 25B, the State Critical Habitat Area, will be closed, consistent with the legislative intent and protection needs of the SCHA. The estuaries to be closed are located in Haw-

kins Cutoff, including Dan Bay (126-129), Double and Anderson Bays (125), Shelter Cove (124), Constantine Harbor (130), Garden Cove (119); in two locations in Port Etches (120, 121); Deer Cove (122) and on the west side of the island (123). The boundaries of the closures are described in Appendix D.

**Crucial Otter Concentrations in Hawkins Cutoff (Subunit 25C).** State tideland permits and leases will protect the dense sea otter haulout and pupping areas in Hawkins Cutoff. Impacts to be considered during the permit review process include direct effects on the animals, acoustical disturbances, and maintenance of haulout areas.

**Cultural Resources in Port Etches and in Anderson and Double Bays (Subunits 25D, 25F, 25G, and 25I).** Double and Anderson Bays and the entire Port Etches, including Constantine Harbor and are impor-

tant for their cultural resources. Chugach Alaska Corporation is likely to nominate both areas to be archaeological districts because of the number and significance of the cultural resources. Management of the state land will be consistent with the protection needs of the districts.

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 25: Hinchinbrook Island

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SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS			COMMENTS
		Primary Surface Use <sup>2</sup>	Prohibited Surface Use	Subsurface <sup>1</sup>	
25A Boswell Bay	Overlapping state-Native upland selection; State-owned tidelands	Settlement		Part of area closed before land sale; part closed if marine park	Estimated net land offering--400 acres; beach area recommended for marine park
25B SCHA	State-owned tidelands	Habitat & harvest		Closed	Within legislatively designated State Critical Habitat Area [AS 16.20.230(11)]
25C Hawkins Cut-Off	State-owned tidelands	Habitat & harvest	Commercial recreation facilities Floatlodges	Most open; four estuaries closed	
25D Anderson/ Double Bay	State-owned tidelands	Habitat & harvest Public recreation	Commercial recreation facilities Floatlodges	Estuary closed	
25E Shelter Bay	State-owned tidelands	Habitat & harvest Public recreation	Commercial recreation facilities Floatlodges	Estuary closed	
25F Constantine Harbor	State-owned tidelands	Habitat & harvest Public recreation	Floatlodges	Estuary closed; remainder open	State selection was relinquished

<sup>1</sup>All 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.

<sup>2</sup>Other 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 25: Hinchinbrook Island

Page 2 of 2

<u>SUBUNIT</u>	<u>LAND OWNERSHIP</u>	<u>LAND USE DESIGNATIONS</u>			<u>COMMENTS</u>
		<u>Primary Surface Use<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>Prohibited Surface Use</u>	<u>Subsurface<sup>1</sup></u>	
25G Garden Cove	State-selected uplands; state-owned tidelands	Public recreation	Commercial recreation facilities Floatlodges Land offerings	Most open; estuary and three streams closed	
25H Bird Rookeries	State-owned tidelands	Habitat & harvest	Commercial recreation facilities Floatlodges	Open	
25I Remainder of Unit	State-owned tidelands	General use	Commercial recreation facilities Floatlodges	Most open; four estuaries closed	

<sup>1</sup>All 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.

<sup>2</sup>Other 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.

Management Unit: 25. Hinchinbrook Island					
SUBUNIT	Fish & Wildlife <sup>2</sup>	Recreation	Minerals	Settlement <sup>3</sup>	Forestry <sup>3</sup>
25A Boswell Bay (uplands and tidelands)	Estuary; clams; seasonal waterfowl concentrations; deer; sport fishing; otter concentrations; commercial fishing	Community recreation area for Cordova	Weakly mineralized	Good capability	High/moderate
25B SCHA (tidelands)	Commercial fishing; estuary	Community rec- reation for Cordova	No known minerals	--	--
25C Hawkins Cut-Off (tidelands)	Estuaries; crucial otter concentrations; seasonal waterfowl concentrations and harvest; deer; commer- cial fishing	Dispersed recreation	No known minerals	--	--
25D Anderson/ Double Bay (tidelands)	Estuaries; otters; essential waterfowl habitat and hunting; deer; sport fishing; commercial fishing	Frequent use for hunting and sport fishing; access to uplands; anchorage; USFS cabin	No known minerals	--	--
25E Shelter Bay (tidelands)	Estuary; high intensity sport fishing; deer concentrations; bear use; bear hunting; commercial fishing	Frequent recreation site for Cordova; mostly sport fishing	No known minerals	--	--

<sup>1</sup> This resource summary describes only the resources for state uplands and tidelands.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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)<sup>1</sup>

<b>Management Unit: 25. Hinchinbrook Island</b>					
<b>SUBUNIT</b>	<b>Fish &amp; Wildlife<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Recreation</b>	<b>Minerals</b>	<b>Settlement<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Forestry<sup>3</sup></b>
25F Constantine Harbor (tidelands)	Estuary; otter concentrations; two bird rookeries; essential waterfowl habitat and seasonal concentrations; bear denning; deer concentrations; commercial fishing	Dispersed recreation	No known minerals	--	--
25G Garden Cove (uplands and tidelands)	Estuaries; seals; otters; seasonal waterfowl concentrations; deer	Dispersed recreation	Weakly mineralized	Capable	High/moderate
25H Bird Rookeries (tidelands)	Concentrations of bird rookeries; otters	Infrequent dispersed recreation	No known minerals	--	--
25I Remainder of Unit (tidelands)	Estuaries; seals; otters; four bird rookeries; seasonal waterfowl concentrations; deer concentrations; bear hunting; commercial fishing	Dispersed recreation; USFS cabin	No known minerals	--	--

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