

UNIT 19: NUTKWA INLET

MANAGEMENT INTENT

State Uplands: During the 20-year life of the plan, the selection at Mabel Bay will be managed for general use, including community recreation and commercial activities, such as aquatic farming. To minimize impacts on existing uses, the department should consult with the community of Hydaburg when authorizing activities. Community recreation activities, such as a campground, will be allowed consistent with the management intent and guidelines of the plan. Before authorizing individual activities, sufficient land should be reserved for a community center in the area best suited for that use. Only activities compatible with a community center, such as a public dock, should be allowed within the community center area.

Because of current low demand for land, no land disposals are proposed during the 20-year life of the plan. A land disposal may be reconsidered during periodic plan review. Any future land disposal planning should consider impacts on existing uses, the ability to mitigate conflicts through design and implementation of a particular disposal, and cumulative impacts.

The long-term management intent for the selection is community settlement and recreation. Community development is expected to occur because of high recreation and fish and wildlife values. Parts of this unit are being considered for congressional designation as units of the National Wilderness Preservation System. If U.S. Forest Service land adjacent to the selection becomes congressionally designated wilderness (or another management category inconsistent with settlement), the department will consider relinquishing or exchanging the land. See Chapter 4 for additional selection information.

State Tidelands and Submerged Lands: State tidelands and submerged lands will be managed to allow resource development support facilities, while maintaining some of the most valuable fish and wildlife habitats in a natural state. Guidelines will be used to mitigate the impacts of development on other important habitats and uses.

Management of this unit will also recognize important mineral deposits and allow up to four permanent resource transfer sites to transport timber and minerals from the uplands. The unit will be managed to allow A-frame breakout points in some areas.

Nutkwa Inlet is a highly productive, heavily used estuarine area where significant resource development is proposed. Therefore, management of the unit will make special efforts to address cumulative impacts of incremental development decisions to ensure the least negative impact to productivity and use of the estuary and its resources. This unit supports important runs of salmon and receives intense purse seine use and subsistence harvest of salmon, bottom fish, shrimp, abalone, and crab. Nutkwa Inlet and Keete Inlet both support significant concentrations of abalone.

Nutkwa Creek and Nutkwa Creek North, together have peak escapements of over 350,000 pink salmon. In comparison, only seven other streams in the Southeast Region

have escapements over 250,000 pinks. Juvenile and returning adult salmon school along the coastline on both sides of the Inlet, where the adults are harvested by an intensive terminal purse seine fishery.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game reports that 283 trollers and 146 purse seiners use the area from Kassa Inlet to, and including, Nutkwa Inlet. Therefore, DNR managers should consider potential conflicts with commercial fishing activities when making decisions about A-frame sites in this unit.

Habitat is designated a secondary use in some important fish and wildlife habitat or harvest areas (Hc). This will be considered in siting and managing all activities directly related to shore-attached facilities where there are primary designations for forestry and mining. Appropriate siting or operating stipulations (which may include timing restrictions) will be considered to mitigate negative impacts on the habitat resources and to meet the management intent for this unit. Even where habitat is designated a secondary use in important fish and wildlife habitat and harvest areas (Hc), it will be managed as a primary use when reviewing proposals for uses that are not directly related to or necessary for the operation of a shore-attached facility where there is a primary designation of forestry or mining. The important habitat resources along the eastern shore from Keete Island south to Has triangulation point are waterfowl and seabird concentration areas, bottom fish harvest areas, and areas where Dungeness crab are present.

Forestry is designated a primary use (F1) in the west side at the head of Nutkwa Inlet because this site is considered to have the best potential for meeting the resource transfer needs of all landowners in the area. Forestry is designated a secondary use at an alternative transfer site along the shore of Nutkwa Inlet, north of Keete Inlet in case it does not prove feasible to build a timber haul road north across Nutkwa Falls to the transfer site at the west head of the Inlet.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY USES

Refer to the land use designation maps for primary and secondary uses and fish and wildlife ratings.

PROHIBITED USES

- Resource development support facilities, except those for floating A-frame harvest, at purse seine hookoff points.
- Mineral location in mapped crucial fish and wildlife habitat and harvest areas.
- Filling state tide and submerged lands for residential purposes.
- Floathomes.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- **Joint Use of a Log Transfer Site at the Head of Nutkwa Inlet.** To the extent feasible and prudent, only one resource transfer site will be allowed in the area designated F1 at the head of Nutkwa Inlet. Joint use of facilities will be considered during the permitting process. This area is reported to be a schooling area for salmon from the Nutkwa Lagoon system. Impacts to schooling fish should be considered in the permit review process, and mitigated to the extent feasible and prudent.
- **Consolidated Use of Transfer Sites in Nutkwa and Keete Inlets.** Transfer sites needed for mineral development in Nutkwa Inlet and Keete inlet will, to the extent feasible and prudent, be consolidated with log transfer sites.
- **Mineral Exploration Activities.** In areas where mining is designated as a secondary use, mineral exploration activities will be allowed. Permanent transfer sites and tailings disposal in those areas will not be allowed unless determined compatible through review procedures.
- **Log Storage at the Head of Nutkwa Inlet.** Logs will, to the extent feasible and prudent, be stored on uplands and not on tidelands or submerged lands at the head of Nutkwa Inlet.
- **Bridge over Nutkwa Lagoon or Inlet.** If a bridge is constructed across Nutkwa Lagoon (above the falls) or Nutkwa Inlet (below the falls) it will, to the extent feasible and prudent, span the water and require no fill of tidelands or submerged lands. The bridge will be constructed in a manner that allows passage for boats that have traditionally navigated the falls at high tides.
- **Public Access along Nutkwa Falls.** Public access across state tidelands to the proposed trail from the east side of Nutkwa Falls to Nutkwa Lagoon will not be precluded.
- **A-frame Logging in Nutkwa Inlet, Keete Inlet, Hassiah Inlet and Mabel Bay.** To avoid conflicts with fishing activities, only one A-frame or permanent transfer site will be active in Nutkwa Inlet; only one A-frame or permanent transfer site will be active in Keete Inlet; only one A-frame or permanent transfer site will be active in Mabel Bay, and only one A-frame will be active in Hassiah Inlet during purse seine openings (also see guideline on permanent transfer sites in Keete Inlet).
- **Permanent Resource Transfer Sites and Storage Areas in Keete Inlet.** Because steep terrain makes it difficult to construct roads, there are two permanent log transfer sites proposed in Keete Inlet, one on the north shore and one on the south shore. To the extent feasible and prudent, only one of these sites will be developed to serve all resource transfer needs in Keete Inlet. If it is determined that two sites are needed in Keete Inlet, the two sites will, to the extent feasible and prudent, use one storage area.
- **Logging Camps.** Logging camps will, to the extent feasible and prudent, be located on the uplands unless it is determined that a floating camp is a more feasible and prudent alternative considering impacts to upland and marine fish and wildlife habitat and harvest areas.

- **Evaluation of Cumulative Impacts.** Before approving a lease, permit, or right-of-way for a permanent resource transfer site or A-frame breakout point, the land manager will consult with ADF&G and other appropriate agencies and determine whether:
 - a. there are no significant cumulative negative impacts to significant fish and wildlife resources; or
 - b. the benefits of developing the facility outweigh the cumulative negative impacts of developing the facility;
 - c. there is no feasible and prudent alternative to developing the facility; and
 - d. all feasible and prudent steps have been taken to reduce negative impacts of the facility.
- **Anchorage.** Use of anchorages depicted on the land use designation map will not be precluded.
- **Access to Private Lands.** Private landowners are guaranteed access rights across state tidelands. However, fill used to enhance access will not be allowed in mapped crucial fish and wildlife habitat and harvest areas unless determined compatible through siting procedures.
- **Developed Recreation Facilities in Crucial Habitat and Harvest Areas.** Based on available information, developed recreation facilities are initially determined incompatible within mapped crucial fish and wildlife areas. A specific proposal for a developed recreation facility may be considered for compatibility based on its design or on new habitat information.
- **Conflicts between Commercial Fishing and A-frame Logging.** Land managers will use siting or timing restrictions to avoid conflicts between A-frame logging and purse seine hookoff points and to minimize conflicts with other commercial fishing activities. A-frame transfer facilities north of Lime Pt. and south of Section 15 on the west shore of Nutkwa Inlet will not operate during purse seine openings in that area.
- **Consider Other Timber Transfer Methods.** Other methods of timber transfer will be evaluated and must have been rejected as not feasible and prudent before A-frame sites will be approved in the area described in the Guideline above.
- **Restrictions on A-frame Operations.** No accumulation of materials from A-frame operations that could foul or damage purse seine nets or that will cause hazards to fishing boats will be allowed north of Lime Pt. and south of Section 15 on the west shore of Nutkwa Inlet.

NOTES

- There are three heritage sites in this unit:
 - AHRS CRG-30 Keete Inlet Village and Petroglyph
 - AHRS CRG-120 Lower Keete Village
 - AHRS CRG-125 North Pass Village
- A 25-foot trail easement runs along the east side of Nutkwa Falls for a proposed trail to Nutkwa Lagoon.

FISH AND WILDLIFE INFORMATION

Thirteen anadromous fish stream outlets are in the unit.

Nutkwa Lagoon provides overwintering habitat and rearing for trout. Trumpeter swan overwintering habitat, which is limited to a few areas in Alaska, is present in Nutkwa Lagoon. Upper Nutkwa provides important rearing and schooling habitat for juvenile salmon from the productive Nutkwa system. Nutkwa Lagoon is shallow and productive, with 100 percent of the area less than 60 feet deep. The creek at the head of Nutkwa Lagoon, Section 33, is a pink salmon pre-emergent fry sample site.

The upper watershed of the Nutkwa system has been identified as a class I Value Comparison Unit. Nutkwa Inlet contains important spawning and rearing habitat and is a very important salmon producer. In 1983, Nutkwa Creek escapement exceeded 100,000 pink salmon. Juvenile salmon rear along both sides of the inlet, at the head, and in Keete Inlet.

Purse seiners use the shoreline of Nutkwa Inlet intensively as far north as current fishery closure boundaries allow. A high-density use area for harbor seals exists along the north shore of Keete Inlet. Productive shallow areas with subtidal aquatic vegetation are found along the south shore of inner Keete Inlet, portions of inner Hassiah Inlet, and Mabel Bay. The entire area is used intensively for subsistence and commercial harvests of salmon, bottom fish, shrimp, abalone, and crab. Nutkwa and Keete Inlet have important concentrations of abalone.