

Susitna Corridor Region

Extensive areas of state land remain within the Susitna Corridor Region. Totalling about 45,000 acres, it is distributed in a north-south orientation and occupies lowland riverine areas on the east side of the Susitna River. Much of this land is associated with forested areas immediately adjacent to the Susitna River and with wetlands bordering these areas to the east. This region contains a significant inventory of forested land important to the Division of Forestry's sustained yield inventory for South-central Alaska. Some limited agricultural use occurs. This region does not include the Susitna River. Land management and land use designations for the Susitna River is provided by the Susitna Area Plan. Maps 1 (Northern) and 2 (Southern) depict this region.

Distribution and Characteristics

Large blocks of contiguous state land occupy riverine areas immediately adjacent to the Susitna River as well as wetlands east of the forested areas. This is the second largest inventory of state land within the planning boundary, following only the Kashwitna-Willow Uplands region in size. Most of this land occupies generally level or gently rolling terrain, is almost completely vacant, and consists of two large contiguous tracts of spruce-poplar forest and both shrub and forested palustrine type wetlands. Lands owned by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough adjoin this area on the east side. There are few residential areas within the region, and these are situated at or near Red Shirt Lake.

Access, Resources, and Uses of State Land

Access to the land within the region is poor or nonexistent in its western part, where forested and wetland areas are prevalent. Relatively good road access is available to the northeastern part of the region, with three roads emanating from adjacent residential development and accessing this area. These roads, in turn, connect to the Parks Highway at Willow. A bridge over the Little Susitna River does not exist within this region and until it does it is unlikely that the state lands within the southern part of the region can be developed. There are no current plans to construct such a bridge.

Both wetlands and the forested uplands include areas where moose are generally present or that have winter calving areas. Waterfowl are generally distributed throughout the region and swan nesting sites are present in a number of lakes. Lacking suitable habitat, Dall sheep and caribou are not present within the region. Anadromous streams cross a few of the units within the region and, depending on location, contain king, silver, pink, or chum migration, rearing, or spawning areas. Extensive wetland areas exist within the region, with palustrine, lacustrine, and riverine types all being present, depending on location.

1 Because of its relatively remote location, state land receives moderate to limited use, with the
2 type of use reflecting the local patterns of recreation activity. Given the dispersed character
3 of state land, its main use is for winter recreation (dog mushing, cross country skiing),
4 although limited summer trail and ATV use is likely. Such use is necessarily dispersed and
5 limited in amount. Much more intense use is associated with the Little Susitna SRR and
6 Nancy Lake State Recreation Area, both of which are situated to the east. The Little Susitna
7 SRR receives considerable use during the summer, with the intensity of that use related to
8 salmon runs. This area also receives considerable winter recreation use (ATV, dog mushing,
9 and snow-machining). The Nancy Lake SRA receives both summer and winter use. The
10 area of state land that is forested is part of the Division of Forestry's timber base, although no
11 timber harvest operations are likely to occur in this area during the planning period. Areas
12 west of Crystal Lake have experienced agricultural land sales and some limited agricultural
13 operations have occurred. There may be additional development of agricultural uses in this
14 area given that much of the agricultural land remains vacant.

17 **Management Constraints**

18
19 Several state and local management plans affect the planning area and were consulted in the
20 development of recommendations for the Susitna Corridor Region. Only one state resource
21 plan affects this region: the 1982 Willow Sub-Basin Area Plan. Local plans include the local
22 land use plans of community councils within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the Borough
23 Comprehensive Plan, and the Borough Coastal Management Plan.

24
25 These plans provide management guidance of a general nature helped in the formulation of
26 recommendations. The Enforceable Policies of the Coastal Management Plan were
27 particularly useful.

30 **Management Summary**

31
32 State land is to be managed consistent with the plan designations and management
33 recommendations contained in the Resource Allocation Table. State land will be managed in
34 a manner similar to that inferred from its designation. Reflecting the significant presence of
35 wetlands (palustrine, lacustrine, and riverine), most state land (26,700 acres) is co-designated
36 Habitat and Water Resources. Much of the remainder (14,000) is designated Forestry,
37 reflecting the forested resources in the region. The remainder is allocated to settlement
38 (3,400 acres), with most of this occurring west of the two larger lakes that adjoin the region,
39 Crystal and Red Shirt Lakes. Several previous state subdivisions have been developed in the
40 Red Shirt Lake area, and the area northwest of Crystal Lake has experienced agricultural land
41 sales. Consult the Resource Allocation Table and Maps 1 and 2 for specific
42 recommendations.

1
2

Resource Allocation Table for Upland Units – Susitna Corridor Region

Unit # / 1982 Classification	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTRS	Management Intent	Description
S-01 RMG	Se 395	Map 1 S019N005W	Unit may be appropriate for land disposal during the planning period. Focus development within vegetated uplands and avoid or retain wetland areas. Maintain an undisturbed 200’ wide area adjacent to the River to function as a riparian buffer.	Parcel occupies generally flat terrain and consists of vegetated uplands in its western part and palustrine wetlands in its eastern. It abuts the Susitna River. The wetlands are extension of those that make up unit S-02. Road access is available within 0.5 miles.
S-02 RMG, WRR	Wr, Ha 21,929	Maps 1 and 2 S016N007W; S017N006W; S017N007W; S018N005W; S018N006W; S019N005W; S019N006W	Protect wetlands, anadromous streams, and habitat values. Maintain Iditarod Trail easement of 400 feet total width.	This large unit extends throughout the region, consisting of extensive areas of palustrine wetlands mixed with riverine and lacustrine wetlands adjacent to certain streams and lakes. Moose winter calving areas are present and numerous anadromous streams exist. Contains portions of the Iditarod Trail.
S-03 FOR, WHB	F 14,303	Maps 1 and 2 S017N006W; S017N007W; S018N005W; S018N006W; S019N005W; S019N006W	Manage unit consistent with requirements of Forestry section of Chapter 2, applicable Susitna Forestry Guidelines, and FRPA standards. Protect wetlands, anadromous steams, and moose winter calving areas. Maintain a 200’ undisturbed riparian protection buffer adjacent to the Susitna River and its braided channels. Maintain Iditarod Trail easement of 400 feet total width.	This large unit extends throughout most parts of the region, and consists of extensive stands of a spruce-poplar forest situated within riverine areas adjacent to the Susitna River. This tall, relatively dense forest system primarily contains white spruce, locally mixed with large cottonwood and balsam poplar on both level floodplains of the Susitna River and on low river terraces. Alaska paper birch and quaking aspen are also often present. The southern portions of this unit contain a moose winter calving area. This unit is adjacent to the mainstem and braided channels of Susitna River, AWC# 247-41-10200, and provides habitat for Coho, Pink, Chum, King, Sockeye salmon and eulachon, Dolly Varden. The lower S-03 unit also contains anadromous streams AWC# 247-41-10200-2070 and 247-41-10200-2060 and tributaries that support coho salmon. Unit also contains portions of the Iditarod Trail. This large area has been classified Forestry for over 25 years and constitutes part of the primary core of the Division of Forestry’s sustained yield inventory in the Susitna Valley.

Unit # / 1982 Classification	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTRS	Management Intent	Description
S-04 AG	Se 567	Map 1 S019N005W: 22, 27	Unit is appropriate for land disposal during the planning period. Protect inlet stream to larger lake and provide a public use site on lake; maintain a 100' protection area adjacent to the lake and the outlet stream. Consider recreational uses and values in subdivision design and maintain (or realign) recreational trails if found to be present. Maintain public recreation access to lake. Protect wetlands in subdivision design.	Parcel occupies generally flat terrain and is occupied by vegetated uplands interspersed with some palustrine wetlands. Portions within sections 22 and the NE ¼ of 27 adjoins Vera Lake, an ADFG stocked lake. Residential uses occupy parts of the larger lake abutting the eastern part of the unit. Road access is immediately available. An ILMA to ADOT/PF, to construct a road between Pt. MacKenzie and Houston, occupies portions of this parcel. The development of this road is problematic and is dependent on the results of the Knik Arm Bridge crossing feasibility studies and the current (2007) Fish Creek Management Plan, now being prepared. This area was previously classified Agriculture but the Division of Agriculture has subsequently determined that the soils are not suitable for this purpose. Wetland areas adjacent to this unit experience extensive recreational use during the winter.
S-06 WHB, WRR	Wr, Ha 116	Map 2 S018N006W: 11, 14, 15	Protect habitat and water resources values.	Unit occupies a relatively large, heavily vegetated island that is separated from the remainder of the region by a slough.
S-07 STL	Se 1,232	Map 2 S018N005W: 5-8	Portions of unit may be appropriate for land disposal during planning period. Evaluate feasibility of additional subdivision activity prior to a disposal decision. Protect wetlands and maintain public use easement in subdivision design. A 100' protection area affects the anadromous stream.	Unit occupies a generally flat, vegetated area of uplands that, especially in its southern part, is interspersed with palustrine wetlands. A previous state subdivision (ASLS 76-29 occupies the central portion of the parcel. Residential uses are present. A 50' public use easement crosses portions of the unit (Big Swamp Trail; ADL 229107-E). There is no immediate road access. Borough land is situated immediately to the east. Unit contains anadromous stream, Rolly Creek, AWC# 247-41-10200-2070 and tributaries that support coho salmon.
S-08 STL	Se 1,218 (Includes area of previous ASLS.)	Map 2 S018N005W: 17, 20, 28, 29, 32	Portions of unit may be appropriate for land disposal during planning period. Evaluate feasibility of additional subdivision activity in this unit prior to a final disposal decision. Protect wetlands and their functions. Maintain public access trails listed in 'Description'.	Similar to unit S-07, parcel occupies a generally flat, vegetated area of uplands. Most wetland areas are situated in the adjacent unit, S-02, although parts of sections 20 and 29 contain palustrine wetlands. A previous state subdivision (ASLS 71-44) occupies a portion of section 32. Residential land uses are present. Red Shirt Lake is situated about 0.5 miles to the east. There is no immediate road access. Borough land is situated immediately to the east. RST 149, alternate Idiatrod Trail route, and trails 70-22 and 70-4 traverse parcel.

Unit # / 1982 Classification	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTRS	Management Intent	Description
S-09 WHB, WRR	Ha, Wr 883	Map 2 S017N007W: 33; S016N007W: 4, 5, 8, 9	Protect fish and wildlife habitat and water resource values.	Unit occupies an island and is separated from the main body of the region by a slough. It consists of a central part of palustrine wetlands and upland areas within the remainder of the tract. Portions of the unit contain a moose wintering concentration area and a moose calving area.
S-10 WHB	Ha, Wr 3,824	Map 2 S016N007W: 3, 4, 9-11, 13- 15; S017N007W: 33, 34	Protect habitat, anadromous streams, wetlands, and water resource values.	Unit consists of primarily palustrine wetlands with some interspersed vegetated uplands, especially in the northern part. Portions of the unit contain a moose wintering concentration area and a moose calving area.
S-11 AG	Ag 336	Map 2 S017N007W: 36	Unit is appropriate for agricultural land disposal during the planning period. Protect wetlands in subdivision design. Maintain Iditarod Trail easement of 400 feet total width.	Unit consists of vegetated uplands interspersed with some palustrine wetlands. It is generally flat, has soils conducive to agriculture, and has been classified Agriculture for over 25 years. Contains portions of the Iditarod Trail.
S-12 PUR	Rd 42	Map 2 S016N007W: 14, 15	Unit is to be managed for public recreation purposes and retained in public ownership.	Parcel is situated on the Susitna River, contains upland vegetation, and is generally flat. It has been classified as Public Recreation-Dispersed for over 25 years.

1
2
3
4

Total state land within region (11 units) – 44,849 acres