

## **North Parks Highway Region**

The North Parks Highway Region encompasses an area of approximately 257,000 acres and is situated in the northern part of the planning area. It includes most land immediately adjacent to the Parks Highway and Alaska Railroad from the Matanuska-Susitna Borough boundary at Broad Pass south to the railroad bridge over the Susitna River downstream of Devil's Canyon. The eastern boundary is formed by the transition from a generally lowland area occupied by the Parks Highway and Alaska Railroad to the mountainous terrain of the Talkeetna Mountains in the east. The western boundary is formed by the Matanuska-Susitna boundary, which generally coincides with the Denali National Park and Preserve. Refer to Figure 3-1 to locate the map of a particular area.

### **Distribution and Characteristics**

Although most land use development occurs near the Parks Highway and Alaska Railroad, most of the land within the region exists west of that area within the mountainous terrain of the Alaska Range; part of which is occupied by glaciers. The vegetation consists of alpine tundra and barren rock in the mountainous areas and by an upland spruce-hardwood forest in areas of lower elevation and within the river drainages that empty into the Broad Pass area. All of the land within the western part of this region is owned by the state or has been selected for conveyance to the state, and totals approximately 234,000 acres. The remainder of the region is occupied by the large, gently sloping area known as Broad Pass. Land ownership in this part of the region is still predominately state, but mixed with federal, borough, and private holdings. The areas of federal ownership have been selected by the state. The Broad Pass area is characterized mostly by woody wetlands with deciduous and evergreen forest predominating in areas with better soils. Development, although sparse, tends to occur within or near forested areas along the railroad or highway.

### **Access, Resources, and Uses of State Land**

Except for the remote mountainous areas, access to areas near the Parks Highway and Alaska Railroad is generally good. Most state land does not immediately adjoin either the highway or railroad, but can be accessed from these transportation facilities by foot travel, snowmachine or off-road vehicles. Access to state land west of the Chulitna River is made difficult during the summer months by the need to cross this river. There are some airstrips and several major trails lead from the highway into the back country. Approximately two miles north of Hurricane Gulch there is a suspension bridge across the Chulitna River, providing foot access to the west.

Except for recreation and wildlife, the resources associated with state land are limited, reflecting the absence of good agricultural soils, merchantable timber, or coal/mineral resources. There is some limited mining activity but this tends to occur in the more remote, western areas closer to stream headwaters outside the region. There is no oil and gas potential in the region and only a low potential for coal.

Dispersed recreation associated with the use of snowmachines and off-road vehicles (ORV) is fairly high. The Parks Highway in this region provides one of the most scenic drives in the planning area. The area east of the Chulitna River between North Chulitna Butte and Summit Lake contains favorable terrain and conditions for cross-country skiing and snowmachining. Winter recreation is especially popular and consists of cross-country skiing, snowmachining, and dog-mushing, especially in the part between Broad Pass and Hurricane. Summer recreation is associated with hiking, fishing, and camping, and with floating/canoeing or boating on the Chulitna River.

The Chulitna River and Indian Creek, the main rivers in the region, are both anadromous streams. The East and West Forks of the Chulitna River are important salmon producing streams for the Cook Inlet commercial fishery as well as popular sport fishing areas. Moose and Dall sheep are present within the region, and several moose rutting and winter concentration areas exist. Waterfowl are also present with dispersed nesting sites spread throughout the region.

## **Management Constraints**

Several local management plans affect this region and were consulted in the development of recommendations for the North Parks Highway Region. Only one state land use plan affects this area: the 1985 Susitna Area Plan, which is being revised with this update. Local plans include the Borough Comprehensive Plan and Coastal Management Plan. These plans contain both generalized land use recommendations and resource management requirements and were helpful in the formulation of recommendations. There are no 'local' comprehensive plans.

## **Management Summary**

State land is to be managed consistent with the plan designations and management recommendations contained in the Resource Allocation Table for this region. Most state land will be managed in a manner similar to that inferred from its designation, which means that most will be managed for its wildlife habitat, settlement, and for multiple uses.

Most of the mountainous areas within the region, which constitute the vast majority of all state land, have limited resource values and little current use, and are to be managed for multiple uses (General Use). Areas so designated (Approximately 100,000 acres) are not intended for development within the planning period except for specific sites that might be

appropriate for commercial recreation, utilities, or mineral exploration and development. The remaining areas within the region are situated within the low-lying, generally flat to rolling terrain of the Broad Pass area as well as similar areas along the Chulitna River. Areas with poorer soils are often characterized by woody wetlands (generally of the palustrine type) and are either inappropriate for development or are more properly protected for their hydrologic and habitat values, and are designated Habitat (Approximately 58,000 acres) while some areas, with more of a recreational focus, are designated Public Recreation-Dispersed (Approximately 5,000 acres). Areas of better soils characterized by upland forested vegetation and with relatively good accessibility provided from the Parks Highway and the Alaska Railroad are designated Settlement. Such areas (Approximately 33,000 acres) are intended for residential development during the planning period. Some of these areas have already experienced subdivision activity and the primary focus within these areas is to retain those areas identified for a common or public use on the subdivision plat. Other areas have not been subdivided, or have experienced only limited development, and are suitable for further subdivision or remote settlement activity. A large area in the northwestern part of the region near Lookout Mountain, known geologically as the “Golden Zone,” is designated Minerals (Approximately 37,000 acres), reflecting the presence of polymetallic veins that occur in this area.

## Resource Allocation Table – North Parks Highway Region

Unit #	Designation(s)/ Acres	Map(s)/ MTRS	Management Intent	Description
N-01	Ha	Map 3-1	Manage unit to protect and maintain fish and wildlife habitat and associated hydrologic values. Retain land in state ownership. Check land status in the selection areas prior to management or disposal decisions.	This large unit occupies the lowlands within, generally, the Broad Pass area. Much of the land in this area is in selection status, although there are also extensive state holdings. Private and Borough land is also present. The topography of this unit is characteristically level or gently rolling with much of the area occupied by wetlands in areas of poorly drained soils and by upland forest (evergreen) in the areas within better soils. Waterfowl are present and a spring trumpeter swan concentration area occurs in portions of the unit. Moose and caribou winter concentration areas also occupy portions of the unit. The Middle Fork Chulitna River, which is an anadromous stream, is also present and supports spawning coho & Chinook salmon. Portions of this unit are in selection status; review land status prior to any management or disposal action.
	24,076	Various		
N-02	Gu	Map 3-1	Manage the unit for multiple uses.	Mountainous topography characterizes this unit; vegetation is almost entirely shrub except for the one large river valley, which is occupied by mixed upland forest. Most of the unit is in selection status, although portions are state-owned. Waterfowl are present in the unit and portions of the unit are occupied by moose and caribou winter concentration areas. Portions of this unit are in selection status; review land status prior to any management or disposal action.
	7,031	Various	Development is unlikely within this unit and, except for certain types of utilities, is probably inappropriate given its mountainous terrain. Any development that may occur must carefully consider its impact upon waterfowl as well as moose and caribou winter concentration areas. Check land status in the selection areas prior to management or disposal decisions.	
N-03	Gu	Map 3-1	Manage the unit for multiple uses.	This large unit consists almost uniformly of mountainous terrain, some of which contains glaciers in its upper reaches. In the higher elevations, vegetation is characterized by barren rock or alpine tundra. The remainder of the unit is characterized by shrub type vegetation except within the easterly river drainages, which contain a mixed spruce-hardwood forest. Moose are present within the drainages. The Chulitna River, which is an anadromous stream, adjoins this unit and supports spawning coho & Chinook salmon. Portions of this unit are in selection status; review land status prior to any management or disposal action.
	93,256	Various	Development is unlikely within this unit and, except for certain types of utilities, is probably inappropriate given its mountainous terrain. Check land status in the selection areas prior to management or disposal decisions.	

Unit #	Designation(s)/ Acres	Map(s)/ MTRS	Management Intent	Description
N-04	Ha  30,795	Map 3-1  S020N010W; S020N009W	Manage unit to protect and maintain fish and wildlife habitat and associated hydrologic values. Retain land in state ownership. Check land status in the selection areas prior to management or disposal decisions.	This unit is bounded on the west and east by the West and East Forks of the Chulitna River, respectively. Terrain is generally flat to gently rolling with many wetland areas. Shrub vegetation characterizes the wetland areas, while a spruce spruce-hardwood forest occupies areas of better drained soils and areas adjacent to the principal drainages. Waterfowl, including trumpeter swans, occur in the wetter areas. Moose are present and the area adjacent to the East Fork is known to be winter concentration and rutting area. Anadromous streams, including the Chulitna River, traverse portions of the unit. DOT 87-6 (Bull River Rd) – goes from Colorado across Bull River & W. Fork Chulitna River to the Golden Zone Mine. Portions of this unit are in selection status.
N-05	Se  243	Map 3-1  S022N016- 018W	The central part of the subdivision (Tract C) is to be retained in state ownership and is not to be further subdivided.	Alaska subdivision 88-066 occupies this unit; although all of the lots have been conveyed out of state ownership, central portions of the unit remain state land. This area, occupied by Tract C, is surrounded by lots. The Chulitna River, which is an anadromous stream, adjoins the unit and supports spawning coho & Chinook salmon.
N-06	Se  1,354	Map 3-1  S020N010W	Unit is considered appropriate for land disposal during the planning period. Current material sale sites within this unit are appropriate; future sales may also be appropriate providing they do not interfere with state land disposals. A riparian buffer of 300' from OHW is to be maintained on the Chulitna River.  Land is to be retained for the purpose of supporting state land disposals. Check land status in the selection areas prior to management or disposal decisions.	This unit occupies generally flat terrain between the Alaska Railroad on the west and the East Fork of the Chulitna River and Parks Highway on the east. Most of the parcel consists of state land, although several small areas are under selection by the state. These are included in this unit. Vegetation consists of a bottomland spruce-poplar forest, with a scattering of wetlands forest. A material sale site (ADL 224050) occupies a portion of the eastern part of the unit. Both moose and waterfowl are present. Portions of this unit are in selection status.

Unit #	Designation(s)/ Acres	Map(s)/ MTRS	Management Intent	Description
N-07	Se  10,133	Map 3-1  Various	<p>Unit is considered appropriate for land disposal during the planning period. Current material sale sites within this unit are appropriate; future sales may also be appropriate providing they do not interfere with state land disposals.</p> <p>As part of subdivision design or the siting of future material sites, carefully evaluate the effects of such uses on moose winter concentration areas and protect any particularly significant moose concentration areas that are identified. A riparian buffer of 300' from OHW is to be maintained on the Chulitna River. Protect anadromous streams with riparian buffer. Retain land in state ownership for the purpose of supporting state land disposals. Check land status in the selection areas prior to management or disposal decisions.</p> <p>Note: Area plan requirements do not apply to the small tract of Mental Health Trust Land in section.</p>	<p>This large unit occupies generally level to somewhat rolling terrain. Vegetation is a mix of evergreen forest, mixed forest, wetlands, and shrub. Evergreen forest occupies areas near the mountains in the east and near the Chulitna River in the west. The central part of the unit consists of a mix of upland spruce-hardwood forests interspersed with wetland (primarily emergent and forested). Moose are present in the unit and portions function as a winter concentration area. Waterfowl are also present. The Healy-Willow Intertie (electric line) crosses through the center of the unit. A number of material sales sites are situated in the northern part of the parcel. Portions of the parcel may be important for winter recreation. East Fork Chulitna River and other anadromous streams occur in the unit.</p> <p>Portions of this unit are in selection status; review land status prior to any management or disposal action.</p>
N-08	Rd, Ha  330	Map 3-1  S021S011W	<p>Unit is to be managed to protect wildlife, the river drainages of Honolulu and Little Honolulu Creek, and to support recreational use.</p> <p>Retain land in state ownership. Protect RST 52 from encroachment.</p>	<p>Unit occupies flat terrain vegetated by a mix of evergreen and mixed spruce-poplar forest. Its area includes that portion of Honolulu and Little Honolulu Creek just before and at the junction with the Chulitna River, and it borders the Chulitna River. The parcel is situated just south of the confluence of the East Fork of the Chulitna River, the Chulitna River, and Honolulu Creek. Honolulu Creek, Little Honolulu Creek, and the Chulitna River are anadromous streams. Trumpeter swans, other waterfowl, and moose are present on this site; a moose concentration area occurs during the winter. This site has moderate to high recreation use. Anadromous streams also occur in the unit.</p> <p>The unit consists of both state-owned and state-selected land. State-selected land occupies much of Section 36 within the area of USS 1930. Check land ownership records prior to issuing any authorizations within this portion of the parcel.</p> <p>RST 52 (Chulitna Trail) crosses part of the parcel.</p>

Unit #	Designation(s)/ Acres	Map(s)/ MTRS	Management Intent	Description
N-09	Se  8,958	Map 3-1  S021S011W; S022S011W	<p>Unit is considered appropriate for land disposal during the planning period. The current material sale site is considered appropriate; future sales may also be appropriate providing they do not interfere with state land disposals.</p> <p>As part of subdivision design, carefully avoid wetland areas and evaluate moose winter concentration/rutting areas. Protect any particularly significant moose concentration areas and provide adequate movement corridors if necessary. A riparian buffer of 300' from OHW is to be maintained on the Chulitna River. Protect anadromous streams with riparian buffers.</p> <p>Retain land in state ownership for the purpose of supporting state land disposals.</p> <p>Protect RST 52 from encroachment.</p>	<p>This large unit consists of flat to gently rolling terrain and is situated on uplands adjacent to the Chulitna River. Most of this area is situated to the west of the river, although some also occur to the east of this river in the far southeastern part of the unit. Vegetation is primarily shrub throughout most of the parcel except for areas immediately adjacent to the Chulitna River. In these areas, evergreen or spruce-poplar hardwoods predominate. Wetlands are interspersed throughout the parcel, but tend to concentrate in the more westerly parts where shrub vegetation predominates. The Chulitna River, which traversed the unit, is an anadromous stream.</p> <p>A fairly large number of remote lots are present in the northern part of the unit, and it is likely that this area will continue to be attractive for remote settlement.</p> <p>RST 52 (Chulitna Trail) crosses part of the parcel.</p> <p>Moose and waterfowl are present in the unit and moose winter concentration/rutting areas are also present in parts of the unit.</p>
N-10	Rd  4,768	Map 3-1  S021S011W	<p>Manage unit for public recreation values. Retain in state ownership.</p> <p>Continued use of the existing material site is considered appropriate, subject to authorization by SCRO.</p>	<p>This large unit occupies a fairly flat upland between the East Fork of the Chulitna River and the main stem of the Chulitna River; Hurricane Creek, and its associated gorge, bisects the unit from east to west. Vegetation consists of mixed forest and woody wetlands. Moose and waterfowl are known to be present, and a portion of the unit is associated with moose winter concentration and rutting areas. A material extraction site (ADL 224967) occupies sections 12 and 13, and the Willow-Healy Intertie crosses the unit in a north-south direction. An anadromous stream occurs in the far northern part of the unit.</p>
N-11	Ma  240	Map 3-1  S021S011W	<p>Continued use of the material site is considered appropriate, subject to authorization by SCRO.</p> <p>Settlement may also be an appropriate use if it is determined that the need for the material site no longer exists.</p>	<p>This fairly small parcel has been designated as a material site for at least 20 years but has not seen any use. It occupies generally flat terrain vegetated by a bottomland spruce-poplar forest. Moose may be present.</p>
N-12	Se  765	Map 3-1  S033N002W	<p>Areas of state land within ASLS 80-131 identified as "Tracts" on the subdivision plat are to be retained in state (or common) ownership. No further subdivision of this unit is considered appropriate. Moose wintering and calving area.</p>	<p>A previous state subdivision (ADL 80-131) occupies this unit. All or nearly all of the lots are privately owned. The state retains a number of areas within and adjacent to the subdivision to provide open space. Part of moose wintering and calving concentration area.</p>

Unit #	Designation(s)/ Acres	Map(s)/ MTRS	Management Intent	Description
N-13	Se  5,087	Map 3-1  S033N002W	<p>Unit is considered appropriate for land disposal during the planning period.</p> <p>As part of subdivision design, carefully evaluate moose rutting and winter concentration areas and provide greenspace or movement corridors as necessary. Avoid or protect any particularly significant moose concentration areas.</p> <p>Retain land in state ownership for the purpose of supporting state land disposals.</p>	<p>This area has been designated for at least 20 years as settlement. The unit occupies fairly level terrain that is characterized by mixed forest in its central part and by shrub vegetation within the northern and southern parts of the parcel. Waterfowl and moose are present and a moose rutting and winter concentration area affects portions of the unit. The Willow-Healy Intertie bisects the unit from north to south, and the Parks Highway touches the far southwestern part of the unit.</p>
N-14	Ha  3,097	Map 3-1  S032N002W; S033N002W	<p>Manage unit to protect and maintain fish and wildlife habitat, associated hydrologic values, and scenic values. Retain in state ownership.</p>	<p>This unit consists of three subunits two of which are situated adjacent to Indian Creek, while the other occupies the steep slopes of Chulitna Butte. All are situated immediately east of South Denali State Park. The two parcels that adjoin Indian Creek are characterized by deciduous or evergreen forest and also occupy areas that are fairly steep. The parcel occupying Chulitna Butte is mostly covered by shrub and some mixed forest. Several of the subunits contain moose rutting and winter concentration areas. Indian Creek is an anadromous stream. Waterfowl and trumpeter swans may also be present. The Willow-Healy Intertie affects several of the parcels.</p>
N-15	Se  6,804	Map 3-1  S032N002W; S031N002W	<p>Unit is considered appropriate for land disposal during the planning period.</p> <p>Retain land in state ownership for the purpose of supporting state land disposals.</p> <p>As part of land disposal, carefully evaluate moose rutting and winter concentration areas and provide greenspace or movement corridors as necessary. Protect anadromous streams. A riparian buffer of 300' from OHW is to be maintained on the Susitna River.</p>	<p>Unit occupies a mix of fairly level and somewhat steep terrain most of which is characterized by deciduous or evergreen forest interspersed by wetlands. Moose and waterfowl are present. The Willow-Healy Intertie passes through the parcel. A fairly large lake is present and several remote lots adjoin the lake. Anadromous streams, including the Susitna River, adjoin the unit.</p> <p>DNR has conducted a number of remote sales in this area and there are numerous remote lots scattered throughout.</p>



Unit #	Designation(s)/ Acres	Map(s)/ MTRS	Management Intent	Description
N-16	Mi  37,055	Map 3-1  F019S011W; F020S011W; F021S011W	Manage unit for its mineral values.	<p>This large management unit is situated in the northwestern part of the region in mountainous terrain associated with the Alaska Range (Lookout Mountain). Glaciers occupy its westernmost portions.</p> <p>The parcel occupies the mineral area known as the “Golden Zone,” which, geologically, is a belt of about 30 mineral occurrences stretching from the Ready Cash site in Section 28, F020S011W to the Nim site located in the northeast portions of F019S010W. This area consists of polymetallic veins, sulfide disseminations, skarns, and Copper-Gold porphyry and breccia. Moose are present in the unit. DOT 87-6 (Bull River Rd) – goes from Colorado across Bull River &amp; W. Fork Chulitna River &amp; provides access to Lookout Mtn.</p>

Total state land within region (16 units) – 234,000 acres