

MANAGEMENT UNIT 14: KASHWITNA KNOBS

MANAGEMENT INTENT

Much of this management unit is dominated by wetlands and the Susitna River floodplain. In these areas, the primary values are for water resources and wildlife habitat. In the center of the unit, around Kashwitna Knobs, there is a large area of better-drained soils with potential for agricultural development, commercial forestry and settlement. The Kashwitna Knobs area is also one of the largest regions in the study area with high suitability for moose winter range. The Susitna River, which runs through the eastern edge of the unit is a major transportation route as well as a recreational river for boating and fishing. Trapper Creek is a fishing stream with important riparian habitat. It supports runs of king and coho salmon. The existing and proposed agricultural and settlement areas in subunits 14b, 14c and 14d will be closed to mineral location and coal leasing. The rest of the management unit will remain open and available. All public lands in this unit are available for oil and gas leasing.

This unit is not presently accessible by road, nor is road access likely in the near future (5 years). Eventually access may be provided by a spur from a major north-south road running through the Susitna Lowlands sub-region between Kroto Creek and the Kahiltna River. See the Transportation section of Chapter 4 for additional information on this route.

Five subunits are contained within the Kashwitna Knobs management unit: the Kashwitna Flats wetlands (14a), and the Kashwitna Knobs area (14b), settlement lands in the northern part of the region east of Moose Creek (14c), the borough and private lands around Trapper Lake (14d) and the Susitna River floodplain (14e). See the maps at the end of this section for boundaries of these areas, and the accompanying chart for a summary of land uses for each subunit.

Subunit 14a (Kashwitna Wetlands) will be retained in public ownership and managed for fish and wildlife habitat and protection of water resources. This area will be available for remote cabin permits. Consistent with the general policy in Chapter 2, the unstaked portions of the past Big Eleven remote parcel area will be reopened to mineral location and available for coal leasing. The remainder of subunit 14a is already open to location and available for leasing.

Subunit 14b: The Kashwitna Knobs area, one of the largest contiguous blocks of good agricultural soils in the Susitna Basin, is designated for commercial agricultural use. Some agricultural homesteads may be offered in conjunction with commercial agricultural

disposals. This area will not be offered for sale for at least 5 years, nor until year-round roads have been funded. The 5 year holding period is intended to allow sufficient time to 1) inventory and plan timber harvest from the site, and 2) review and evaluate the results of previous agricultural disposals to determine the economic feasibility of farming at Kashwitna Knobs.

Subunit 14c (Moose Creek East) is designated for settlement. It is currently accessible by winter trail and via float plane to lakes along the western border of the unit.

In subunit 14d, Trapper Lake is surrounded by numerous small private lots. The land remaining in public ownership within 500' of the lake (primarily borough land) should be retained to provide public access to the lake and opportunities for public recreation, and to allow for timber harvesting for personal use when consistent with recreation objectives for the subunit.

Subunit 14e is the Susitna River floodplain. Since the floodplain provides very valuable moose winter range and commercial timber and because it is hazardous for residential development, it will be retained in public ownership. The subunit will be managed for forestry, habitat and the public recreation and transportation activities that occur along the river. The subunit will be recommended for legislative designation to protect opportunities for long term timber and habitat management and public recreation.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The complete set of areawide management guidelines is presented in Chapter 2 of this plan. All of the guidelines potentially apply to uses within this management unit; however, those that are most likely to be applicable are indicated with asterisks in the list below.

- *Agriculture
- *Fish & Wildlife Habitat
- *Forestry
- *Recreation
- *Settlement
- Subsurface
- *Transportation
- Instream Flow
- *Lakeshore Management
- *Public Management
- *Public Access
- *Remote Cabin Permits
- *Stream Corridors

LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

SUBREGION Susitna Lowlands

MANAGEMENT UNIT 14 - Kashwitna Knobs

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP (GENERALIZED)	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				PROHIBITED SURFACE USE(S)*	COMMENTS
		SURFACE		SUBSURFACE			
		PRIMARY USE(S)	SECONDARY USE(S)	LOCATABLE MINERALS	LEASEABLE MINERALS		
14a Kashwitna Wetlands	State/ Borough/ Private	Water Resources Wildlife Habitat	Forestry Public Rec. Remote Cabins	Open	Available for leasing	Land Disposals Portions closed to grazing (see mgmt. guidelines)	---
14b Kashwitna Knobs	State	Agriculture	Forestry Public Rec. Settlement Wildlife Hab.	Closed prior to disposal	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Remote Cabins Trapper Cabins	---
14c Moose Cr. East	State	Settlement	Forestry (personal use) Public Rec. Water Resources Wildlife Hab.	Closed	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Remote Cabins Trapper Cabins	Estimated net disposal area = 1,000 acres
14d Trapper Lake	Private/ Borough	Primarily Private Land—Recommended uses on remaining public land: Forestry, Public Recreation, Water Resources, Wildlife Habitat		Closed	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Land Disposal	---

*Other uses such as material sales, land leases, remote cabin permits, etc., that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement and management guidelines of this unit, and with the relevant management guidelines in chapter 2.

LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

SUBREGION Susitna LowlandsMANAGEMENT UNIT 14 — Kashwitna Knobs

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP (GENERALIZED)	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				PROHIBITED SURFACE USE(S)*	COMMENTS
		SURFACE		SUBSURFACE			
		PRIMARY USE(S)	SECONDARY USE(S)	LOCATABLE MINERALS	LEASEABLE MINERALS		
14e Susitna Floodplain	State	Forestry Public Recreation Water Resources Wildlife Habitat	—	Open	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Grazing Land Disposal	Recommended for legislative designation

*Other uses such as material sales, land leases, remote cabin permits, etc., that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement and management guidelines of this unit, and with the relevant management guidelines of the State of Alaska.

- *Trail Management
- *Wetlands Management
- *Resource Management

Management guidelines that apply to this management unit only are presented below by subunit.

Subunit 14a (Kashwitna Wetlands)

Grazing

Grazing is prohibited in those portions of subunit 14a within T21N R5W, T22N R5W, T23N R5W, and T24N R5W.

Subunit 14b (Kashwitna Knobs)

Protection of Transportation Routes

Chapter 4 of this plan identifies a system of possible improvements to the regional and local transportation system. One route passes through this subunit. The precise location of this route has not been determined, although a general location is shown on the maps in Chapter 4. Land use authorizations in this unit such as land sales, leases, or other actions should be located so as not to preclude the option to build this road along a feasible and efficient route.

Subunit 14b and 14c (Kashwitna Knobs & Moose Creek East)

Stream Corridors

The management intent for land adjacent to the streams described below is to permit fishing, camping and other active uses, and to protect water quality and riparian habitat. Consequently, this land should be retained in public ownership. Corridor widths will be set on a case-by-case basis using policies in Chapter 2. The standard minimum buffer width (200' on each side of the river) should be used on unnamed streams that appear on the 1:63,360 scale USGS topographic maps. The buffer on Trapper Creek should be approximately ¼ mile wide on either side to protect hunting opportunities and camping in a natural setting on one of the most important tributaries to the Kroto Creek-Moose Creek system.

Subunit 14e (Susitna Floodplain)

Management Plans and Remote Cabins

It is recommended that a management plan be prepared for subunit 14e. The management plan will determine, among other things, whether or not remote cabins will be permitted in this subunit. Remote cabin permits will not be offered until and unless areas open to remote cabins are designated by a management plan.