Chapter 4
IMPLEMENTATION

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Chapter 4
IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses specific actions necessary to implement the plan. These actions include recommendations for legislative designation, proposed state land selections, land use classifications, and mineral orders. The Public Trust Doctrine, management of the Tanana Valley State Forest, future transportation corridors, and trail management are also discussed. This chapter also explains how municipal entitlements will be dealt with, discusses instream flow reservation studies, describes a proposed land trade, and lists issues to be addressed in the next plan update. The last sections of this chapter contain recommendations for future research and monitoring, and the procedures for changing the plan.

AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR LEGISLATIVE DESIGNATION

Introduction

Several areas within the Tanana Basin are recommended for legislative designation either as State Recreation Rivers, State Recreation Areas, State Game Refuges, or State Critical Habitat Areas.

These recommendations are based on the outstanding public values in the proposed areas and the state's intent to retain these areas in public ownership. Legislative designations have been proposed only in areas possessing high resource values that

1) should clearly remain in public ownership permanently, and
2) the nature and value of the resources present require more restrictive management for protection than is possible under a general multiple use classification.

The following section lists these areas.

State Recreation Rivers

State Recreation Rivers established by the legislature are managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Land (DL), under Alaska Statutes (AS) Title 38 and under the direction of the act that establishes the Recreation River.

There are no established criteria for State Recreation Rivers. In 1988, the legislature established six Recreation Rivers in the Susitna Basin. These are the only recreation rivers established in the state. The legislation is specific to those six rivers and provides little guidance for establishment of additional rivers throughout the state.

The TBAP planning team used the following guidelines when considering additions to the recreation river system:

1) to focus planning and management to solve or avoid important management problems (especially managing public use);
2) to recognize the state-wide or regional importance of the river's recreation resources;
3) to ensure long-term retention in public ownership and management to ensure public recreation, fishing, and hunting.

Three rivers in the Tanana Basin have outstanding public values and merit designation as State Recreation Rivers. The following is a brief description of each river and a discussion of how each corridor will be managed.

Chatanika State Recreation River (Subunits 1E1 and 1U2) The Chatanika River is very popular with Fairbanks residents for hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife viewing, and motorized and non-motorized boating. Of the few clearwater streams with good access in the Tanana Basin, the Chatanika is the least developed river close to Fairbanks. The state will manage the river to maintain existing uses, and maintain the access while minimizing development that would likely change the character of the river uses, or the productivity of the fish and wildlife habitat along the river. To recognize the importance of this river to Fairbanks residents and to maintain the quality of the recreation and habitat in the river corridor, the area is recommended for legislative designation as a State Recreation River.

Nenana State Recreation River (Subunits 4R2, 4R3, 4R4, and 4R5) The Nenana River corridor is one of the most important recreation areas in the state. The river's proximity to the entrance of Denali National Park and Preserve makes it one of the state's highest visitor-use areas. The river is heavily used by the public for rafting, canoeing, kayaking and transportation to hunting areas. The riparian corridor is important for moose and other mammals. Because of the river corridor's importance to the state's residents and visitor industry, the Nenana River corridor will be managed to maintain its current character and to protect its scenic, recreational, and fish and wildlife values. The river corridor currently is, and should remain, closed to mineral entry.

The boundaries of the legislative proposal may require adjustment from boundaries in the plan to accommodate the needs of local communities and future municipal governments.

The Nenana River corridor north of Healy (management subunit 4R1) has been dropped from the recommendation for legislative designation as a state recreation river. This section of the river has lower recreation values, and receives less recreation use compared to the river above Healy. The river below Healy includes active and potential mining develop-

ments. This section of the river corridor is open to mineral entry.

Delta/Clearwater State Recreation River (Subunit 7J1) This recommendation includes both the Delta-Clearwater River and Clearwater Lake. Clearwater Lake, and the lower Delta-Clearwater River are in a region of upwelling water from the alluvial fan of the Delta and Gerstle rivers. This water makes these areas some of the few waterbodies in interior Alaska that remain ice-free year-round. As a result, they are extremely important spawning areas (and for Clearwater Lake, a coho salmon rearing area) for late-run salmon. Clearwater Lake also provides nesting habitat and is an important spring staging area for waterfowl.

The Delta-Clearwater River is popular for summer grayling and silver salmon fishing. Access is either by boat from the Tanana, or from the road system to the Delta-Clearwater upstream from the lake, or at a small launch site at the lake. A common float trip is down the creek with a take-out at the lake.

The Delta-Clearwater River is recommended for legislative designation as a State Recreation River because of its importance for recreation and for fish and wildlife habitat. The proposed recreation river is closed to mineral entry.

State Recreation River Legislation Legislative proposals for these areas should be developed by an interagency team and will be reviewed by the public prior to submission to the legislature. The interagency team will include representatives from the DNR divisions of Land, Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Forestry, Agriculture, and Mining; from the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, from the Department of Fish and Game, and from the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Legislative proposals developed for these areas will ensure that the river corridors are managed for multiple use, including hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities, habitat management, personal use timber harvesting, and water quality protection. Land sales and remote cabins will be prohibited in these corridors; however, public use cabins, and in some instances, commercial recreation facilities may be allowed. Provisions will be made for access across the river and for use of existing mining claims. The designations will not regulate use of private land in the unit.

In developing legislative proposals, boundaries of units for these rivers may be modified. Legislative proposals should follow the subunit boundaries in general; however, when these areas are looked at in greater detail, modifications may be necessary. Any modification will be consistent with the management intent for the corridor.

Until the legislature takes action on these proposals, these areas will be managed consistent with the guidelines stated above and the section of Chapter 3 in the plan for each management unit. The boundaries of areas subject to these guidelines can be found in this plan or on maps at DNR's Northern Regional Office in Fairbanks.

State Recreation Areas

State Recreation Areas are established by the legislature and managed by the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. State recreation areas are units of the park system and possess a diversity of outdoor recreational opportunities. The dominant management objective is to provide a maximum level of outdoor recreational opportunities based on the natural values of the unit and its ability to sustain use without significant adverse effects on natural systems.

The Fielding Lake area is recommended for designation as a state recreation area. A brief description and management for the area follows.

Fielding Lake State Recreation Area (Subunit 5B1) This highly scenic area provides opportunities for both recreational activity on Fielding Lake and year-round backcountry exploration. Lack of trees, high water table, and permafrost makes the area susceptible to degradation. The area will be managed to protect the integrity of the landscape and maintain recreational values.

The area between the proposed Fielding Lake State Recreation Area and the boundary of the Copper River Basin Area Plan (CRBAP) includes the proposed alignment of the Trans-Alaska Gas Line (TAGS). Access and facility needs for the gas line are not yet defined and the final location for the gas line may change. This area (Subunit 5B2) and Summit Lake, which is within CRBAP, are suitable for designation as a State Recreation Area and should be evaluated for legislative designation after the TAGS line is constructed. Specific areas on Summit Lake can be developed for recreation facilities and managed by State Parks prior to construction of TAGS or legislative designation. This area and Summit Lake should be evaluated for inclusion in the state recreation area as part of the next five year update of TBAP and CRBAP.

The legislative proposal for this area will be developed by an interagency team and will undergo public review prior to submission to the legislature. The legislative proposal developed for this area will ensure it is managed for multiple use, including hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities, habitat management, personal use timber harvesting, and water quality protection. Land sales will be prohibited in this area. Public use cabins will be encouraged. The area is closed to new mineral entry. The designations will not regulate use of private land in the unit.

Until the legislature takes action on this proposal, the area will be managed consistent with the guidelines stated above and the section of Chapter 3 in the plan for management unit 5B. The boundaries of the area subject to these guidelines can be found in this plan or on maps at DNR's Northern Regional Office in Fairbanks.

State Game Refuges

One area has been identified in the Tanana Basin as meriting legislative designation as a State Game Refuge because of outstanding wildlife and public values:

Tok River State Game Refuge (Subunit 6C3) State Game Refuges are established by the Alaska legislature. Once established, land use activities must be authorized both by the Department of Natural Resources under its normal permitting procedures, and by the Department of Fish and Game under Special Area Regulations (5 AAC 95.400 - 5 AAC 95.770). The main purpose of state game refuges is to protect and preserve natural habitat and game populations.

The Tok River area is recommended as a refuge because of its outstanding habitat values for Dall sheep, moose, and brown bear, and to recognize the importance of hunting and other wildlife uses. The area contains several important sheep licks, an important migration corridor and late winter range for moose, and other high quality habitat areas. The intent of the legislative designation is to make these resource values the primary thrust of state management in this area. Access to mineral claims to the west would be an allowable use under the present proposal.

This area will be managed for multiple use to the extent consistent with the primary goal of protecting habitat. Land sales, remote cabins, and grazing will be prohibited because of conflict with wildlife. The unit is open to mineral entry.

State Critical Habitat Areas

Two areas have been identified in the Tanana Basin as meriting legislative designation as State Critical Habitat Areas because of outstanding wildlife and public use values. State Critical Habitat Areas are established by the Alaska legislature. Once established, land use activities must be authorized both by the Department of Natural Resources under its normal permitting procedures, and by the Department of Fish and Game under Special Area Regulations (5 AAC 95.400 - 5 AAC 95.770).

The purpose of fish and game critical habitat areas 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 purpose. Management is mainly for providing habitat protection. All uses of land or water not compatible with this aim are restricted. Hunting, fishing, trapping, and recreational activities are encouraged so long as they are in keeping with the primary reason for establishing the area.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game will be responsible for preparing legislative proposals for these areas. ADF&G will prepare management guidelines in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources and public review.

The following is a brief description of the values of these areas and a discussion of how they should be managed.

Toklat Critical Habitat Area (Subunit 3O1) The area encompasses about 2,000 acres, including Toklat Springs, near the confluence of the Sushana and Toklat Rivers. The area provides spawning habitat for one of the major fall-spawning chum salmon populations in interior Alaska. These fish contribute significantly to downstream commercial and subsistence fisheries in the Tanana and Yukon drainages. During late fall when the chum salmon run occurs, few areas are available for spawning. Because the Toklat Springs provide a large zone of spawning gravels and high-quality, relatively warm water throughout the winter, it is an especially important spawning area. Salmon provide a major food source for large numbers of brown (grizzly) bears, many from the Denali National Park and Preserve. The area is good habitat for a variety of carnivores and

scavengers, and open water also attracts wintering mallard ducks.

To recognize its importance and to protect the habitat from potentially incompatible uses, the area is recommended for legislative designation as a State Critical Habitat Area. The area is closed to mineral entry.

Delta River Critical Habitat Area (Management Unit 7G3) The lower mile of the Delta River is fed by upwelling spring water after summer flows in the river subside. This area of flowing clean water is one of the few spawning areas available for fall run chum salmon. This area, along with several other upwelling areas nearby, serves as one of the two major fall chum spawning areas within the Yukon drainage. Because of its importance for salmon habitat, and to protect the habitat from potentially incompatible uses, this area is recommended for legislative designation as a State Critical Habitat Area. The area is closed to new mineral entry.

The area recommended for critical habitat status does not include all valuable fish habitat near Delta. The Delta-Clearwater River, Bluff Cabin Slough, Blue Creek, and the south bank of the Tanana River near Rika's Landing are important for chum salmon. These areas are not part of the State Critical Habitat proposal because A.S. Title 16 provides in-stream protection authority, and because the adjacent uplands are either private land, an existing legislative designation, or a proposed legislative designation.

PROPOSED STATE SELECTIONS

This plan identifies areas for future state land selection. Recommendations and reasons for selections are described below. In general, lands are proposed for selection either to consolidate state land ownership and improve the efficiency of state land management, or because the land has high resource values that merit state management. The plan proposes no relinquishments of existing state selections.

The Statehood Act granted Alaska the right to select approximately 105 million acres of federal land. Of this, about 84.9 million acres have been conveyed to the state. The state can select an additional 25.8 million acres (approximately) or 125% of its remaining entitlement. Many pending state selections conflict with Native selections and federal withdrawals.

The deadline for making new selections is January 2, 1994. To ensure that the state receives its entitlement, and the best land available, a statewide review of existing state selections and any available federal land that has not been selected is necessary. Some existing selections should be relinquished and perhaps as many as eight million additional acres should be selected.

For the Tanana Basin, this review of potential selections and relinquishments was completed as part of the Tanana Basin Area Plan update. The selections have been rated by the planning team to indicate the area's relative priority for selection.

The remainder of the state will be reviewed for possible selections in 1991 and 1992. At that time Tanana Basin selections assigned low or moderate priority will be compared to selections in other areas of the state to determine which parcels have highest priority. In addition, to ensure an efficient land management pattern, Tanana Basin selections near the Denali Highway will be reconsidered during the statewide review, when the rest of the Denali Highway area is reviewed.

Proposed Selections

Most of the land in the Tanana Basin is owned by the state, except for military bases, borough-owned land, private land, the Tetlin Indian Reservation and the Tetlin Wildlife Refuge. Most state land was selected in the 1960s and 1970s. The TBAP update recommends additional selection of 1.6 million acres. Brief descriptions of the larger parcels follow (also see Map 4-1, page 4-7).

Minchumina Block. Approximately 605,000 acres of what is known as the Minchumina Block will be selected for mineral and wildlife values in the south, and mineral values in the north. The south half of this selection is moderate priority, the north half is low priority. This selection is within portions of subunits 2A3, 2A4, 3A1, 3A3, 3D1, 3E2, and 3G2.

Black Rapids Glacier Area. Approximately 501,000 acres of land in the Alaska Range just west of the Richardson Highway is recommended for selection. The area includes Black Rapids Glacier, and has recreation and mineral values. This selection is low priority and should be selected only if the state retains the rest of its selections along the Denali Highway. This selection is in Subunit 5C3.

Old Nike Range East of Fairbanks. Approximately 397,000 acres of the old Nike missile range is recommended for selection due to mineral and wildlife values. This site likely is contaminated with hazardous waste and old missiles and bombs; therefore, the state will not accept title from the federal government until the area is cleaned up (see note below regarding selection of military land). This selection is low priority. This selection is within portions of subunits 1T1, 1R1, 1S1, and 1S2.

Unselected Portion of the Yukon Maneuver Area. The state should select remaining federal land within the (approximately) 261,000-acre Yukon Maneuver Area. The range is part of Fort Wainwright and is located east of Fairbanks and Eielson Air Force Base. The land has mineral, fish, wildlife, and forestry values. There is some settlement potential on the south side of this parcel. This land is currently withdrawn but at some time could become available. This site likely is contaminated with hazardous waste and old missiles and bombs; therefore, the state will not accept title from the federal government until the area is cleaned up (see note below regarding selection of military land). Selections within the Stuart Impact Area are low priority. This selection in the following townships is moderate priority: T2S,R5E; S1/2 and NW1/4 of T2S,R6E; S1/2 of T2S,R7E; W1/2SW1/4 of T2S,R8E; T3S,R5E; T3S,R6E; and T3S,R7E, all Fairbanks Meridian.

Four Small Parcels of Federal Land near Mentasta and Tetlin. These are recommended for selection, but all have been selected by a Native corporation. The corporation has first rights to these lands, but may be over-selected, in which case the state could eventually own these lands. These areas have wildlife, mineral, recreation, and scenic resource values. These are high priority selections, except for the Mentasta Mountains parcel which is moderate priority. These selections are within subunits 6C1 and 6C3 .

Alaska Highway Near Canadian Border. The approximately 600 acres of federal land located along the Alaska Highway southeast of Tetlin Junction should be selected. This land has transportation and settlement values. This selection is in Subunit 6B3.

Selection of existing and former federal military lands. The state has filed selections on many of the existing and former military reservations in the Tanana Basin. This update proposes selection of the old Nike range east of Fairbanks and the remainder of the Yukon Maneuver Area. Portions of these existing and abandoned military lands contain contamination and degradation due to toxic and hazardous substances and wastes. Because these lands have other resource values which may warrant state ownership, the state should select these lands. However, the state will not take title to those lands until the toxic and hazardous substances are safely removed or stabilized. Information concerning the location of these known and existing sites will be filed in the state's land selection files. These files are reviewed prior to the state accepting title to the land from the federal Bureau of Land Management.

LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

This plan establishes primary and secondary land use designations for state land in the Tanana Basin. To implement the plan on state land, DNR must classify land into the classification categories in 11 AAC 55 in a way that reflects the plan intent. Land classifications are recorded on state status plats, and are the formal record of the primary uses for which each parcel of state land will be managed. The plan serves as the final finding by the Commissioner of DNR for land classifications for state land in the Tanana Basin planning area.

The primary surface land use designations in Chapter 3 will be converted to classifications shown in Table 4-1. The TBAP update classifies or reclassifies all state land within the planning area.

PROPOSED STATE SELECTIONS

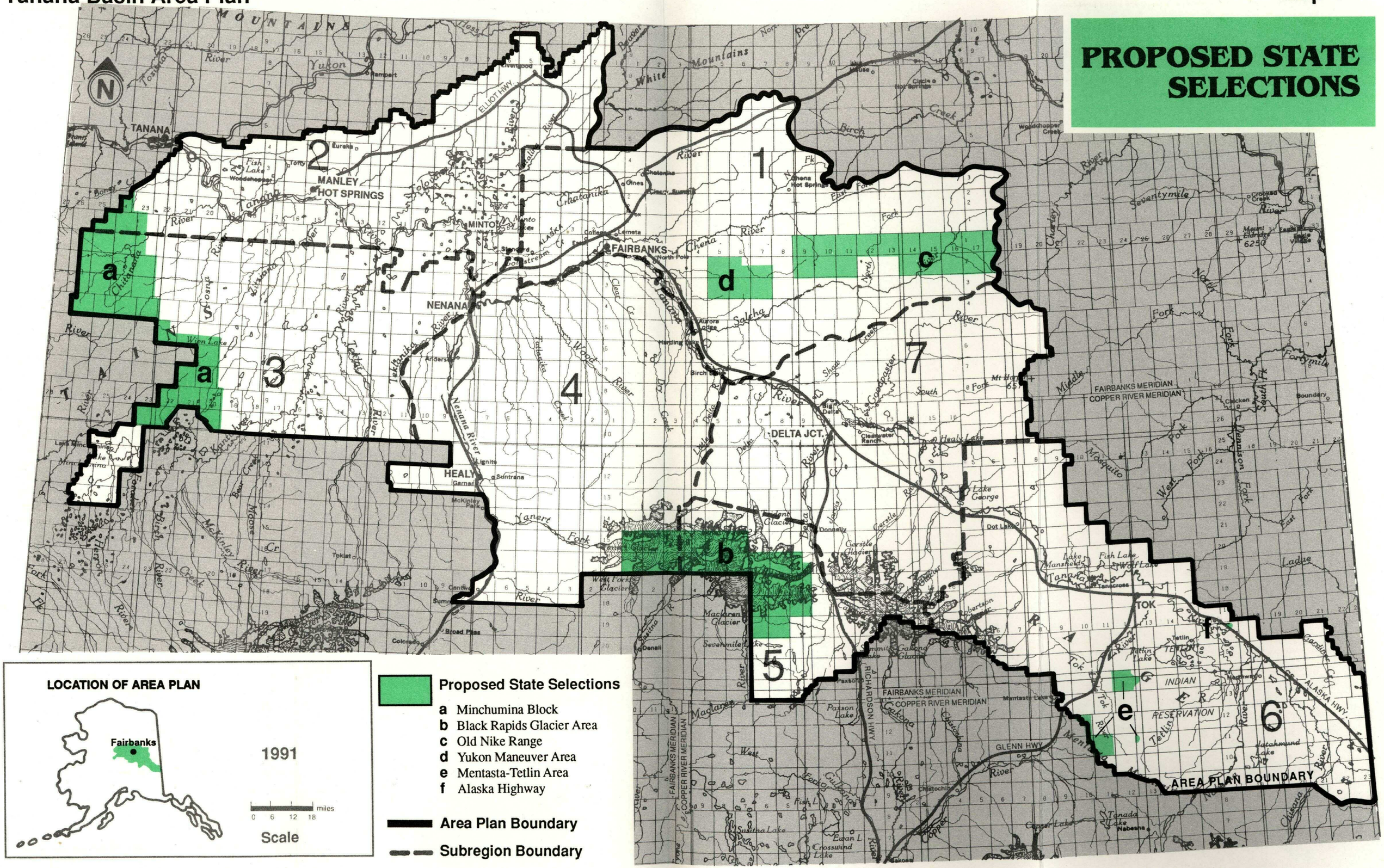

Table 4.1
CONVERSION OF PRIMARY USE DESIGNATIONS TO CLASSIFICATIONS

Primary Use Designations	Classifications
Agriculture	Agricultural Land
Agriculture/Settlement	Agricultural Land, Settlement Land
Forestry	Forest Land
Forestry/Minerals	Forest Land, Mineral Land
Forestry/Public Recreation	Forest Land, Public Recreation Land
Forestry/Wildlife Habitat	Forest Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Forestry/Minerals/Public Recreation	Forest Land, Mineral Land, Public Recreation Land
Forestry/Minerals/Wildlife Habitat	Forest Land, Mineral Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Forestry/Public Recreation/Wildlife Habitat	Forest Land, Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Forestry/Minerals/Public Recreation/Wildlife Habitat	Forest Land, Mineral Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Materials	Material Land
Minerals	Mineral Land
Minerals/Public Recreation	Mineral Land, Public Recreation Land
Minerals/Wildlife Habitat	Mineral Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Minerals/Public Recreation/Wildlife Habitat	Mineral Land, Public Recreation Land Wildlife Habitat Land
Public Recreation	Public Recreation Land
Public Recreation/Wildlife Habitat	Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Public Recreation/Transportation Corridor/ Wildlife Habitat	Public Recreation Land, Transportation Corridor Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Public Recreation/Watershed/Wildlife Habitat	Public Recreation Land, Water Resources Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Reserved Use	Reserved Use Land
Resource Management-High	Resource Management Land
Resource Management-Low	Resource Management Land
Settlement	Settlement Land
Watershed	Water Resources Land
Wildlife Habitat	Wildlife Habitat Land

MINERAL ORDERS

This plan update identifies areas that will be open and closed to new mineral entry. The plan also expands the number and size of mineral licks where mining is subject to leasehold location. The final finding and maps for these orders are in the Appendix C, *Mineral Orders.*

PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE

Under the Alaska Constitution, the state has special duties and management constraints with respect to state-owned land underlying navigable waters. The Alaska Constitution contains provisions embracing the principles commonly known as the public trust doctrine. That doctrine, as it has evolved in court decisions over hundreds of years, requires the state to exercise authority to ensure that the paramount rights of the public to use navigable waters for navigation, commerce, recreation, and related purposes is not substantially impaired.

The Alaska Constitution (Article VIII, sections, 1, 2, 3, 6, 13, and 14) and Alaska Statutes (38.05.127 and 38.05.128) are the legal basis for applying the public trust doctrine in Alaska. This doctrine guarantees the public right to engage in such things as commerce, navigation, fishing, hunting, swimming, and protection of areas for ecological study.

The Constitution provides that "Free access to the navigable or public waters of the state, as defined by the legislature, shall not be denied any citizen of the United States or resident of the State, except that the legislature may by general law regulate and limit such access for other beneficial uses or public purposes." Eliminating private upland owners' reasonable access to navigable waters may result in compensation.

Because 99 percent of Alaska was in public ownership at statehood, both federal and state laws providing for the transfer of land to private parties also provide for public access to navigable waters. Implementing the state constitutional guarantee of access to navigable waters under Article VII, Section 14, AS 38.05.127 requires that the state commissioner of natural resources must "provide for the specific easements or rights-of-way necessary to ensure free access to and along the body of water, unless the commissioner finds that regulating or eliminating access is necessary for other beneficial uses or public purposes."

It has never been held that any lands normally subject to the public trust doctrine in Alaska are exempt from it, including land occupied and developed.

These statutes and concepts are considered and used throughout this plan. Any management actions shall be consistent with the public trust doctrine as defined by the Alaska Constitution, statutes, court decisions, and public involvement.

TANANA VALLEY STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT

The Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF) was established by the legislature in 1983. The approximately 1.8 million acres of state land within the forest is not included in the Tanana Basin Area Plan. The TVSF land is managed according to the Forest Management Plan adopted by the Commissioner of Natural Resources in 1988.

This section of the TBAP update deals with issues which concern state land both within and outside the state forest. These include recommended deletions from and possible additions to the TVSF. Because the TVSF was established by the legislature, only the legislature can add or remove land from the forest.

Possible Additions to Tanana Valley State Forest

The TVSF Management Plan adopted in 1988 recommended 163,323 acres of additions to the state forest (see page 4-14 of TVSF Management Plan). Since the TVSF plan was developed, more accurate timber inventory data has become available. These proposed additions need to be re-evaluated based on this new information. After re-evaluation the proposed additions should be reviewed by the public and then recommended to the legislature.

Proposed Deletions

The TVSF Management Plan proposed that the legislature remove six parcels, totaling 55,950 acres, from the state forest because the timber is not commercially viable or the parcels do not contribute to the management goals of the forest (for more information, see the TVSF Management Plan). The TBAP update endorses these deletions. The following gives management intent for these lands should they be removed from the state forest. The parcels are listed below:

1. **Lower Tolovana parcel (1,710 acres).** This parcel is adjacent to Minto Flats Game Refuge, and will be recommended for inclusion into the refuge if deleted from the state forest. If the parcel does not get included in the refuge, it will be designated primary use wildlife habitat and public recreation.
2. **C.O.D. Lake parcel (3,040 acres).** This parcel is also adjacent to Minto Flats Game Refuge, and will be recommended for inclusion in the refuge if deleted from the state forest. If the parcel does not get included in the refuge, it will be designated primary use wildlife habitat and public recreation.
3. **Chatanika parcel (2,400 acres).** This parcel is adjacent to the Chatanika River corridor. If deleted from the state forest, this parcel should be designated primary use wildlife habitat and recreation, and be included in the Chatanika River corridor legislative recommendation (Subunit 1E1).
4. **Tok parcel (15,360 acres).** There are no commercial timber values on this parcel. If deleted from the state forest, this parcel should be included in Subunit 6H2 (wildlife habitat).
5. **Lost Township parcel (15,360 acres).** This parcel was included in the state forest due to an error in the legal descriptions. Timber values here are minimal, and if this parcel is deleted from the state forest it should be included within Subunit 6G2 (wildlife habitat).
6. **Taylor Highway parcel (21,120 acres).** This township was not in the original legislation offered by DNR, and has minimal timber values. If deleted from the state forest, this parcel should be included within Subunit 6J3 (wildlife habitat).

TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS

Introduction

The design of an efficient regional transportation system is key to resource development and is a major determinant of land use patterns within the Tanana Basin.

No attempt is made to identify actual routes of proposed roads and railroads. However, potential general transportation corridors have been identified. These corridors are designed to help resource development, increase opportunities for public recreation and tourism, and open land for settlement. The corridors are consistent with the Interior Alaska Transportation Study, the Western and Arctic Alaska Transportation Study, and various studies conducted by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

Before transportation systems are built in these corridors, the resources to be transported would need to economically justify the capital improvements necessary. The total benefit of building the road or railroad would need to be compared to the financial, environmental, and social costs.

These proposed corridors are identified here to prevent foreclosure of transportation and utility project options. They are not recommendations for construction.

Proposed Transportation Corridors

Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline

Three alternative routes for construction of a pipeline to carry natural gas from the North Slope to the Lower 48 have been identified. The route from the North Slope to Fairbanks basically follows the existing Trans-Alaska Pipeline. One alternative would construct the gasline from Fairbanks via the Richardson/Alaska Highway and Tanana River corridor to Delta Junction and the Canadian border. The second alternative follows the same route to Delta Junction but continues via the Richardson Highway and Trans-Alaska Pipeline corridor to Prince William Sound. This route is currently being considered by Yukon Pacific Corporation. The third route would follow the Parks Highway and Alaska Railroad corridor from Fairbanks to Cook Inlet. However, this last alternative route would conflict with land use objectives for the Nenana River Corridor area (see Management Unit 4R, *Nenana River Corridor).*

Alaska Railroad Extension

An extension of the Alaska Railroad from Fairbanks would provide access to the Delta Belt mineral area and could provide a connection to Canada and the Lower 48. Spur lines could provide access to the Slate Creek asbestos deposit off the Taylor Highway. A route has been identified through the Tanana Basin via the Tanana River and Richardson and Alaska Highway corridors from Fairbanks to the Canadian border.

Prince William Sound - Upper Tanana Railroad Corridor

The Interior Alaska Transportation Study identified the construction of a railroad from either Valdez or Cordova as an alternate to the extension of the Alaska Railroad. This would serve as the transportation system for development of the Delta Belt and possibly the Slate Creek asbestos deposit. This route follows the Richardson and Tok Highway corridors from Prince William Sound toward Tok.

Western Access Railroad Corridor

Should development of minerals occur in the western portion of the state, construction of a railroad has been identified as a possible means of transporting goods to and from the area. The Interior Alaska Transportation Study and the Western and Arctic Alaska Transportation Study identified a corridor from Nenana to Tanana south of the Tanana River. From Tanana the rail line would continue toward the Bornite area and possibly to Nome. An alternative to the railroad is a highway, which would not pass through the area covered by this plan.

Twin Mountain Access Route

The Twin Mountain area has the most potential for mineral development within the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Three alternatives have been identified as possible access routes. The route identified by the Interior Alaska Transportation Study as the most feasible is an extension of Chena Hot Springs Road. This would follow the Middle Fork Chena River and would extend the road approximately 65 miles. Two other possible routes are an extension of Johnson Road and a new road up the Salcha River Valley.

Parks Highway - Kantishna - McGrath Highway Corridor

A corridor for the construction of a possible highway to Kantishna and McGrath has been identified. The primary near-term purpose of the route would be to access Kantishna. Access to McGrath is recognized as a possible long-term future need. Three identified alignment alternatives involve taking off from the Parks Highway at Lignite, Rex, or Nenana. The first several miles of the route originating at Lignite would generally follow the existing Stampede Road. The route originating at Rex would generally follow an existing winter road to the west before turning south toward Kantishna. The route originating at Nenana would route through the proposed Nenana-Totchaket Agricultural project before turning south toward Kantishna.

Upper Wood River (Bonnifield Mining District) Access

This area has significant potential for hardrock mining development of lead, zinc, gold, and silver, with active exploration and development projected through the 1980s. A corridor has been identified to this area from the Parks Highway at Ferry extending easterly along the foothills of the Alaska Range. A less desirable alternate is along the Bonnifield Trail from Fairbanks, which passes through the Blair Lakes Bombing and Gunnery Range.

Nenana - Totchaket Area Access

With the future development of the Nenana - Totchaket Area for agriculture, the need for access will increase. Routes for roads or railroad spurs (or

both) have been identified and these rights-of-way will be protected. Additionally, access could be extended from the Nenana-Totchaket Area to the Kantishna River to provide access to forest lands. Currently, it is unlikely that sufficient timber volume exists to justify a road, but changing market conditions could make this route economical in the long term. Another possible extension would branch south from the Nenana-Totchaket access route to form a loop to the Parks Highway at Rex. This would provide access to previous state land disposals.

TAPS Oil Spill Contingency Plan Access Routes

Alyeska Pipeline Service Company is developing an oil spill contingency plan for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) that will identify primary containment sites and other measures necessary to minimize damage to sensitive areas if a spill occurs. Proposed containment sites may require additional access, including, in some situations, all-weather roads. Management of state land will not foreclose use of these access routes as described in the approved Alyeska Oil Spill Contingency Plan.

Existing Transportation Routes

Highway Reconstruction, Realignment, and Improvements

Portions of the state highway system are sub-standard in width, curvature, design speed, or capacity. These include all or portions of the Alaska, Richardson, Parks, Dalton, Steese, Elliott, Taylor, Denali, and Tok Cutoff highways, and the Northway Road. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) has proposed projects to improve some of these roads and will seek funding according to regional priorities. DOT&PF will work with various agencies and the planning team to choose designs that meet the land use objectives described in this report while complying with legislative mandates, highway standards, and projects costs.

RS 2477 Trails and Roads

Many trails and minor roads in the Tanana Basin are claimed as rights-of-way under Revised Statute (RS) 2477. Regardless of the RS 2477 status of a trail or road, these corridors will be managed consistent with the guidelines in Chapter 2 for Public Access and Trails Management.

TRAIL MANAGEMENT

The original TBAP identified numerous important trails in the planning area and called for development of a plan for managing these trails. As an alternative to a management plan, the TBAP 1990 Update proposes that the trails listed in TBAP be mapped (see Appendix B, List of Important Trails in the Planning Area). A series of 1:250,000 scale maps showing these trails will be developed upon completion of this update. These maps will be made available to the public.

An interagency team should recommend if an easement or a publicly-owned buffer should be used to maintain the integrity of each trail. The guidelines for Trail Management in Chapter 2 will be used to determine whether buffers or easements should be used to maintain the integrity of these trails on a case-by-case basis. The department is also preparing an atlas that will show where public easements provide access across private land to state and federal public land.

MUNICIPAL ENTITLEMENT

The Municipal Entitlement Act (AS 29.65) establishes state land classification categories that may determine a municipality's general grant land entitlement and that are available for transfer to a municipality. Under existing laws, the size of a new municipality's entitlement is 10 percent of the vacant, unappropriated, and unreserved (VUU) land in the municipal boundaries. In the Tanana Basin area, there is abundant land in the VUU categories.

Classification

The Tanana Basin Area Plan has classified state land within the planning area boundaries (see Land Use Classifications in this chapter). Classifications are based on the best information available at the scale appropriate to the planning effort, generally 1:250,000. These classifications are broad and have not considered if the lands should be available for transfer to municipalities incorporated in the future. Many lands are classified in categories that would not be available for transfer, including Wildlife Habitat Land and Mineral Land. However, settlement of municipal entitlements is a high priority of the department and current classifications will not preclude consideration of parcels of land for reclassification and transfer to a municipality.

When an area incorporates under state law, it may select state land within its boundaries that, except for classification, otherwise meets the definition of vacant, unappropriated, and unreserved land under AS 29.65. When such lands are selected, the departments of Natural Resources and Fish and Game will do a more detailed, site-specific analysis of the resource values of the selected lands. This analysis may result in a change in the designation and classification that would make all or part of the parcel under consideration available for transfer. Changes in designations and classifications will require plan amendment and reclassification before the selection may be approved.

For example, river corridor lands that are classified Wildlife Habitat/Public Recreation are not available for transfer to a municipality. A more detailed review of habitat values may show that parts of the corridor are suitable for local management either because the resource values do not merit state retention or because the land is not essential to the overall management intent for the area. Where this is the case, reclassification of part of the land may be recommended to allow for land transfer. Transfer to a municipality will not be approved until the recommended changes have been publicly reviewed through amendment and reclassification processes.

New Municipalities

On December 7, 1990, the Denali Borough was established along the Parks Highway between the Matanuska-Susitna and Fairbanks North Star boroughs. It is the intent of the plan to allow transfer of land to a new municipality, as long as the process for reclassification and retaining state interest areas is followed. Land selections by a new municipality will be reviewed for consistency with the management intent of the management units involved before approval.

INSTREAM FLOW RESERVATIONS

Instream Flow reservations establish a water right for a certain amount of flow in a stream or water-level in a lake. Instream flow may be reserved for the following purposes: fish and wildlife habitat, migration and propagation; recreation and park purposes; navigation and transportation; and sanitary and water quality purposes (Alaska Statutes 46.15.145).

Some rivers in the Tanana Basin may require instream flow reservations. These are listed below in priority order:

1) First priority rivers include the Chatanika, Salcha, and Toklat. These rivers have important boating, fishing, and wildlife habitat values.
2) The Delta, Goodpaster, and Nenana rivers are the next order of priority for instream flow reservations. These rivers are important for both habitat and recreation.
3) Finally, the Tolovana, Teklanika, Cosna, Kantishna and Robertson rivers should be studied for necessary instream flow reservations to protect habitat and recreation values and to provide for settlements on the Teklanika, Cosna and Kantishna rivers.

The relative importance and method of preserving instream flow in these rivers must be determined by further study. Examination of these rivers should be jointly undertaken by the divisions of Land and Water, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and where appropriate, the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

Further study may identify other rivers requiring instream flow reservations.

LAND EXCHANGE

Nenana River Gorge Area

A need has been identified for additional camping facilities near the entrance to Denali National Park. Because of the lack of suitable state-owned land in this area, land exchanges or cooperative agreements with other landowners may help fulfill this need. See Management Unit 4R for more information.

ISSUES TO ADDRESS IN NEXT PLAN UPDATE

The following five issues were raised late during this TBAP Update process. These issues should be addressed in the next update.

1. At a minimum, all settlement lands in Subregion 2, Lower Tanana, and the Kantishna River area of Subregion 3, and all lands jointly designated Agriculture/Settlement in TBAP should be re-evaluated. This evaluation is needed because demand and public attitudes regarding these land offerings may have changed since the original plan was prepared. Also, because more time has elapsed since previous state land offerings, the department can better evaluate the impacts of past and future land offerings.
2. The road prohibition in the proposed Toklat River Critical Habitat Area (Subunit 301) should be re-evaluated.
3. All mineral closing orders for proposed legislative designations should be re-evaluated.
4. The 1988 Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan identified several proposed additions to the state forest. These proposed additions should be reviewed as part of the next update of TBAP or through a separate process that includes public review. For more information on these additions, see the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Section in this chapter.
5. Management Unit 7D should be reevaluated to decide if part of the unit should be designated primary use minerals.

RESEARCH AND MONITORING

To manage resources effectively, managers need information on the patterns and impacts of uses in the planning area. In particular, management of the Goodpaster area will benefit by additional information. A monitoring program is recommended for the Goodpaster area, particularly for Quartz Lake (Subunit 7B1), the lower Goodpaster River corridor (Subunit 7D1), and the Goodpaster Winter Trail (Subunit 7C1). The monitoring program should gather information to:

- provide baseline data for recreation and fish and wildlife resources;
- regularly assess use levels and effects of management decisions;
- analyze the relationship between use levels and impact levels;
- establish measurable management objectives for levels of use and impacts;
- help in future management decisions

Information gained from the monitoring program should be used to periodically reevaluate and refine plan policies.

PROCEDURES FOR PLAN MODIFICATION & AMENDMENT

The land use designations, policies, implementation actions, management guidelines, and other sections of this plan may be changed if conditions warrant. The plan will be updated periodically as new data and new technologies become available and as changing social and economic conditions place different demands on state land.

Periodic Review

The plan will be reviewed by the Tanana Basin planning team at least once every five years to determine if revisions are necessary. If revisions are necessary, then the procedures for changing the plan (listed below) will be followed.

Changes To The Plan

The method for changing the plan depends on the type of change required. There are three types of changes possible to a plan: amendments, special exceptions, and minor changes. Amendments and special exceptions are plan revisions subject to the planning process requirements of AS 38.04.065; minor changes are not. The Director of the Division of Land (DL) determines if a proposed change constitutes an amendment, a special exception, or a minor change. Changes to the plan may be proposed by agencies, municipalities, or members of the public. Requests for changes are submitted to the Northern Regional Office of the DL in Fairbanks.

Amendments

An amendment permanently changes the plan by adding to, or modifying, its basic intent. Changes in allowed uses, prohibited uses, policies, guidelines, and some implementation actions constitute amendments. For example, an amendment may close to new mineral entry an area that the plan designated to be open, allow a land use in an area where the plan prohibited it, or allow land to be opened to homestead entry in an area the plan designated for retention in public ownership. Plan amendments must be approved by the Commissioner of DNR.

Amendments must be accompanied by a written finding that explains the new information or new conditions that warrant the revision, describes the alternative course of action and the reasons for it, and includes interagency review and public notice of the proposed revision. This finding may be incorporated under AS 38.05.035. Plan revisions may require public meetings if the commissioner decides that the level of controversy warrants it.

Special Exceptions

A special exception does not permanently change the provisions of the plan, and cannot be used as the basis for a reclassification of the subunit. Instead, it allows a one-time, limited-purpose variance of the plan's provisions, without changing the plan's general management intent or guidelines. For example, a special exception may be used to grant an eligible applicant a preference right under AS 38.05.035 in a subunit designated for retention in public ownership. Special exceptions may be made if complying with the plan would be excessively difficult or impractical, or if it would be inequitable to a third party, and if the purposes and spirit of the plan can be achieved despite the exception. Special exceptions may be approved by the Regional Manager of DL. The regional manager's decision may be appealed to the Director of DL, and the director's decision may be appealed to the Commissioner of DNR.

Special exceptions must be accompanied by a written finding that explains the new information or new conditions that warrant the revision, describes the alternative course of action and the reasons for it, and includes interagency review and public notice of the proposed revision. This finding may be incorporated under AS 38.05.035. Plan revisions may require public meetings if the commissioner decides that the level of controversy warrants it.

Minor Changes

A minor change does not modify or change the basic intent of the plan. Minor changes may be necessary to clarify the plan, make it consistent, facilitate its implementation, or make technical corrections. Minor changes are made at the discretion of the Regional Manager of DL and do not require public review. The regional manager will notify planning team representatives when minor changes are made. Affected agencies will have the opportunity to comment on minor changes following notification; the comment period may be provided through existing interagency review processes for associated actions. If the agencies disagree with the regional manager's decision, the decision may be appealed to the Director of DL, and the director's decision may be appealed to the Commissioner of DNR.