

MANAGEMENT UNIT: FISH CREEK

MANAGEMENT INTENT

The Fish Creek Unit is to be the setting for a major commercial agricultural project planned and developed jointly by the borough and state. This project will add to the size and stability of the local agricultural industry, provide additional employment, increase the local tax base, and diversify the statewide economic base. Agricultural development should be designed to protect other resource values in the unit: fish and game habitat (stream and wetland buffers); recreation (the Iditarod Trail, other trails and streamside recreation including access sites); forestry (timber salvage on agricultural lands); settlement (land of marginal agricultural potential); and small farm agriculture (where configuration of the land makes large farms infeasible). Interim management of the unit will be for forestry, fish and wildlife, recreation and other uses which do not diminish the agricultural value of the unit.

Land use designations and management guidelines are presented below for three sub-units within Fish Creek: the agricultural areas, the hydrologic system, and the Iditarod Trail.

SUBUNIT A: THE AGRICULTURAL AREA

Primary Land Use

- Commercial Agriculture

Secondary Land Uses

- Forestry (salvage)
- Settlement (land of marginal agricultural capability)
- Small Farm Agriculture (where topography makes large farms infeasible)
- Recreation (access sites and trails)

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Agriculture

To the extent feasible, class II and III soils in this unit should be sold for agricultural use. Small farm agricultural development should

be encouraged where parcel configuration or topography render large farms infeasible.

### Forestry

All timber having high value for commercial and personal use shall be salvaged on lands to be cleared for agricultural purposes. See Chapter III, Goals, Policies, and Management Guidelines; Forestry, for implementation techniques.

The management plan for the Fish Creek Unit will address: (a) the implementation techniques used to assure salvage; (b) the time required for the local timber industry to accomplish salvage between the times of access development and clearing completion; and (c) the effect of the sale on the development of the forest industry.

Agricultural land disposals should be designed to provide adequate personal wood supplies for individual farmsteads.

Trail corridors identified in the Fish Creek Unit are available for personal and selected timber harvest under guidelines for Trails, Chapter III.

### Settlement

Land of marginal agricultural capability, because of topography or soil limitations, may be used for settlement. In addition, residential and commercial settlement necessary to support the agricultural project or commercial recreational needs oriented to the Fish Creek drainage may be planned as necessary. Settlement should be concentrated in as few locations as possible in order to minimize both the cost of services and the impact on the agricultural land base.

### Transportation

For management guidelines affecting the development of roads and other transportation facilities see Chapter III, Transportation.

### Recreation

In addition to the Iditarod Trail (which is discussed in Sub-unit C), two trails are identified in the Fish Creek Unit. Each of these should be retained in public ownership with a width of 300 feet (150 feet either side of centerline). This width allows flexibility to reroute, separate motorized and non-motorized uses, and include a visual buffer. Rerouting of the trail corridor will be permitted to minimize impact on agricultural land with the provision that alternate routes provide opportunities similar to the original. In order to minimize impacts on agricultural land and to reduce management costs, rerouting to combine the trail corridor with streams, wetlands, or other recreation corridors is encouraged.

Where road corridors contact streams, appropriate areas should be retained in state ownership to accommodate the expected recreation use,

including parking. The size of these areas will vary but should generally be 20 - 80 acres. Exceptions to this size may be made for sites anticipated to have very low or high use.

Trail access to the Fish Creek system should be maintained and improved during agricultural development. Section line easements shall not be vacated unless an appropriate substitute access is provided. Provision of realistic substitute access is encouraged.

## SUBUNIT B: THE HYDROLOGIC SYSTEM

### Streams/Stream Buffers

#### Primary Land Uses

- Fish and Wildlife
- Recreation

#### Secondary Land Use

- Forestry

### Wetlands/Wetland Buffers

#### Primary Land Uses

- Fish and Wildlife
- Watershed

#### Secondary Land Use

- Forestry

## MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

### Location of Stream Buffers

Along Fish Creek and tributaries, wildlife/ public recreation buffers will be retained in public ownership. Each stream buffer will include all adjacent non-class II - III soils (e.g. Moose River (Mr) and Bernice (Ber) soil types) adjacent to the stream, or the buffer will be 200 feet back on either bank from the high water mark - whichever is the greater distance.

### Location of Wetland/Wetland Buffers

For management guidelines governing the disposal of agricultural lands adjacent to wetlands see Chapter III, Wetlands.

### Forestry

Personal use or commercial harvest in the stream or wetland buffer must be compatible with the habitat/recreation characteristics of the buffer. Negative impacts on visual character, habitat value, water quality, noise screening ability, or adverse changes in access should be avoided.

Operations inside the buffers will require coordination and on-site review with ADF&G and the Division of Parks during sale planning (including and in addition to Title 16 requirements). If significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided no sale shall occur. These guidelines should not be construed to replace the Forest Resources and Practices Act and implementing regulations which also guide operations along streams. See also Chapter III, Wetlands; Forestry Management Adjacent to Wetlands.

#### Transportation

For management guidelines affecting the development of roads and other transportation facilities see Chapter III, Transportation.

#### Other Guidelines

Baseline hydrologic monitoring should be initiated as soon as possible on the mainstream and tributaries of the Fish Creek system. Knowledge of the impacts of the agricultural project on the quantity and quality of the stream waters will be useful in planning future projects.

### SUBUNIT C: THE IDITAROD TRAIL

#### Primary Land Use

- Recreation

#### Secondary Land Use

- Forestry

### MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

#### Location of the Iditarod Trail

Because of the compatible nature of the Iditarod Trail uses and agricultural practices planned for this unit, a 600 foot wide (300 feet either side of centerline) public ownership corridor will be established. This width may be further reduced, and some rerouting permitted, after consultation and agreement with the Division of Parks. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Trails Committee shall also be consulted if rerouting the trail corridor is proposed. Any reduction of corridor width will be contingent on the maintenance or enhancement of the quality of the trail experience.

No structures or equipment of a permanent nature should be placed within the trail corridor which could adversely affect the trail experience.

#### Trail Crossings

Where necessary, trail crossings may be permitted to allow access to lands on both sides of the trail. Crossings should be limited to a few discreet areas rather than random crossings along the length of the trail.

Forestry

Forestry guidelines for the Iditarod Trail are presented in Chapter III, Goals, Policies, and Management Guidelines; Forestry.

## AREA-WIDE POLICIES AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Chapter III presents additional policies and land management guidelines which may be relevant to particular decisions in this management unit. Categories of these policies and guidelines are listed below for ease of reference:

	<u>Pages</u>
AGRICULTURE	41
RECREATION	53
FORESTRY	59
FISH & WILDLIFE	67
SETTLEMENT	73
SUBSURFACE RESOURCES	79
TRANSPORTATION	89
WETLANDS	97
RIVER & STREAM CORRIDORS	103
TRAILS	109
PUBLIC ACCESS	113