

CHAPTER III

SUBUNITS

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CHAPTER III

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SUBUNIT 1, HATCHER PASS ROAD CORRIDOR

1. **Background** The Hatcher Pass Road runs through this unit, and it is surrounded on two sides by the Hatcher Pass Management Unit. It is functionally a part of that unit and was not added to that unit at the time the Hatcher Pass Plan was done only because it was part of the capital site.

The Willow Creek Sled Trail (shown on the USGS maps as the Sled Road trail) goes through this unit. It is an historic trail, put in originally to take supplies from the railroad at Houston to the Willow Creek Mining District. The Bald Mountain trail also goes through this subunit and provides access through timber to the alpine areas in subunit 2A.

2. **Primary Use**

Public recreation.

3. **Classification**

Public Recreation.

4. **Management Intent** This subunit will be managed primarily for public recreation and as though it were part of Baldy North/Lucky Shot Ridge subunit in the Hatcher Pass Management Plan. The management intent and guidelines for the Baldy North/Lucky Shot Ridge subunit apply.

Approximately 185 acres in sections 2 and 3, T19N, R2W, S.M., south of the Hatcher Pass Road along Willow Creek, will remain closed to new locatable mineral entry. The purpose is to provide a location for public gold panning. No suction dredges will be allowed, and the site will not be identified by signs or advertised until the department has the ability to manage this use. (Public gold panning is a form of recreational mining. In order to ensure that the public will continue to have the right to pan for gold here, it is necessary to keep the area closed to locatable mineral entry by a private party.)

Several trailheads/parking areas have been identified for this subunit. See Transportation guideline number 1b in Chapter II.

Several parcels within this unit have been identified by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough as borough interest areas.

5. Guidelines

- a. **Public Facility Development** Any public facility that would be visible from the Hatcher Pass Road and located within a quarter mile of the road should be located and constructed so that it harmonizes with the natural setting. The scale and design of the facility should be such that it does not visually overwhelm the natural setting.
- b. **Commercial Recreational Development** Large scale commercial recreational developments are not permitted in this subunit. Guidelines in preceding paragraph also apply to private sector developments authorized on state land.
- c. **Coordination Between Public and Private Sectors** Private commercial development on non-state land in the Hatcher Pass Road corridor will be encouraged to follow the same guidelines as are required above for public facilities. Opportunities for coordination between developers and resource managers will be encouraged. Considerations prior to facility construction on private lands include facility location, size, design, character, and operation. Cooperation between private and public facility developers can provide the opportunity for aesthetic unity throughout the area and the development of high quality recreational opportunities.
- d. **Viewshed Guidelines** (The intent is to manage this subunit as though it were part of the Hatcher Pass Unit and ensure protection of the scenic drive, likely to be an increasingly important tourist attraction.)
 - (1) **Signs** If signs are used, they should be part of the system developed for the Hatcher Pass Management Unit. Continuity in type of sign material and design is required. Signs will be under 10 feet in height and will complement the natural setting. Natural materials such as stone or wood are preferred. Signs adjacent to the roadway will be limited to a single directional sign. Sign types and locations must be approved prior to construction by the Division of Land and Water Management and the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Any sign within the right-of-way of the Hatcher Pass Road must be approved by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.
 - (2) **Siting** Sensitive areas within the site will be identified. Structures will not be located on visually prominent points.
 - (3) **Parking** Parking lots should not be large and expansive as they create surface water and snow removal problems. Use natural topography as a guide for designing parking lot edges. Boulders, contours, and vegetation are all elements to consider to achieve a harmonious transition. Keep ground alteration to a minimum.
 - (4) **People Flow** Access roads, paths and steps provide important transitions and should be designed to harmonize with the entire development.

- e. **Mine Development** To promote compatibility between the subunit's high scenic values and mining operations, these guidelines identify key features of mine development that can be managed to minimize alteration of the appearance of the natural landscape.
- (1) **Siting, Type and Number of Mining Structures** Special care will be taken to site structures. The following guidelines will be followed in locating mining structures unless no feasible or prudent alternative exists.
- (a) Place structures 1/4 mile or more from the maintained road system where possible, unless there is better screening potential such as a hollow or forested area nearer the road or unless the structure would be more distracting away from the road than near it.
 - (b) Place structures behind natural contours rather than on prominent points where feasible. This is particularly important in the treeless alpine zones.
 - (c) Place structures behind vegetative screens where such opportunity exists.
 - (d) Group structures together where possible.
 - (e) Keep structures to the minimum necessary to perform mining operations and remove them when no longer necessary for mining operations.
 - (f) Structures should blend with the landscape to the extent possible. For example, structures that are of a wooden, historic character or painted a dark color to blend with the terrain, sky, and/or shadows are encouraged. Shiny metal roofs are discouraged.
- (2) **Management of the Mine Site** These guidelines are good management practices that also enhance visual appearance of the mine site by reducing the observer's sense of "cluttering" of the landscape:
- (a) Operating equipment should be stored compactly in a location and manner that minimizes visual prominence.
 - (b) Abandoned or unusable equipment should be removed annually.
 - (c) Construction materials should be stored in one area that is screened from public view.
 - (d) Disposable materials (trash) should be neatly contained and removed from the mining site periodically.
- f. **Utility Lines** In order to maintain the visual quality of the planning area for travelers on the Hatcher Pass Road, utility lines should be located so that they generally cannot be seen from the road. Where this is not feasible or prudent, the line will be located so as to be as unobtrusive as possible. Where Willow Creek is a major

visual attraction for users of the road, no line should be located between the road and the creek unless it is buried or can be screened or no feasible or prudent alternative exists. Prior to granting approval for an overhead utility line that cannot be screened from the roadway, the authorizing agency (DOT/PF or DNR) will conduct interagency and public review of the proposal, including a public hearing if warranted by the degree of impact on the view and the probable level of public interest.

- g. **Willow Creek Sled Trail** The Willow Creek Sled Trail should be rerouted around private property in T19N R2W, sections 5 and 8.