

SUBUNIT 4, BENCH LAKE

1. **Background** Bench Lake is a sport fishing lake for rainbow trout. Juvenile silver salmon are commonly found in the outlet creek and lake. It is one of the sources being considered by the city of Houston for its water supply. It is a locally-used, winter motorized recreation area. According to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, there is an old trail from the end of Armstrong Road at the eastern boundary of the city of Houston that goes to Bench Lake through section 18. Part of the network of trails known as the Houston-Meadow Lakes trail also goes through this unit. See the trails map in the Transportation Section. The area around Bench Lake is moose winter range.
2. **Primary Uses**
 - Public recreation
 - Fish and wildlife habitat
 - Watershed
 - Forestry
3. **Classification**

Public Recreation, Water Resources Land, and Wildlife Habitat.
4. **Management Intent** This subunit will be managed primarily for its public recreation, fish and wildlife, watershed, and forestry values. It is intended that the unit be managed for all four primary uses, although state regulations limit to three the number of classifications that may be applied to any one area. The 400-foot buffer around Bench Lake will be managed to retain its natural characteristics. When this plan is revised and longer-term uses for the unit as a whole are determined, a decision should be made as to how Bench Lake should be managed in the long-term. (The Susitna Area Plan specifies three management categories: Wilderness Lakes, Recreational Development Lakes, and General Development Lakes. Which category applies to Bench Lake should be decided when this plan is revised.)
5. **Guidelines**
 - a. **Timber Harvest** Timber harvest in this subunit will be subject to the same guidelines as subunit 3 (South Slope).
 - b. **Trail Buffers** The vegetated buffer along the Bench Lake and Houston-Meadow Lakes trails will be 50 feet on either side of the trail. For activities allowed within the buffer, see Section 3, Trail Management, under Transportation.