

Chapter 3

Unit Designations & Guidelines

Unit I. Moraine Ridge

Summary of Resource and Uses in the Area

The Moraine Ridge Management Unit includes land along the eastern edge of the project area, paralleling the Little Susitna River. The Management Unit includes approximately 4,700 acres and is the closest unit to the road-served communities of Big Lake (7 miles to the east) and Willow (12 miles to the north).

Any road access to the Fish Creek Management Area would almost certainly cross first into this management unit. The Borough is currently evaluating the feasibility of a bridge over the Little Susitna River that would provide road access. To date, three potential bridge locations have been identified in the southern part of the unit. (see Map 1.3).

With the exception of limited private inholdings, this management unit is owned entirely by the Borough. The area includes approximately 100 acres of private land in approximately 35 private parcels. These parcels are mostly recreational residential, generally 5 acres in size, and all but five of these have waterfront access on Hock Lake in the middle of the unit. A single non-waterfront parcel is directly behind a Hock Lake waterfront parcel; four others are located in the middle of the unit, unrelated to water. Access to the private land is typically by boat and trail from the Little Susitna River, by floatplane to Hock Lake, or by snowmobile.

The management unit adjoins State recreation and refuge areas to the east and south - the Little Susitna State Recreation River Area and the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge, respectively.

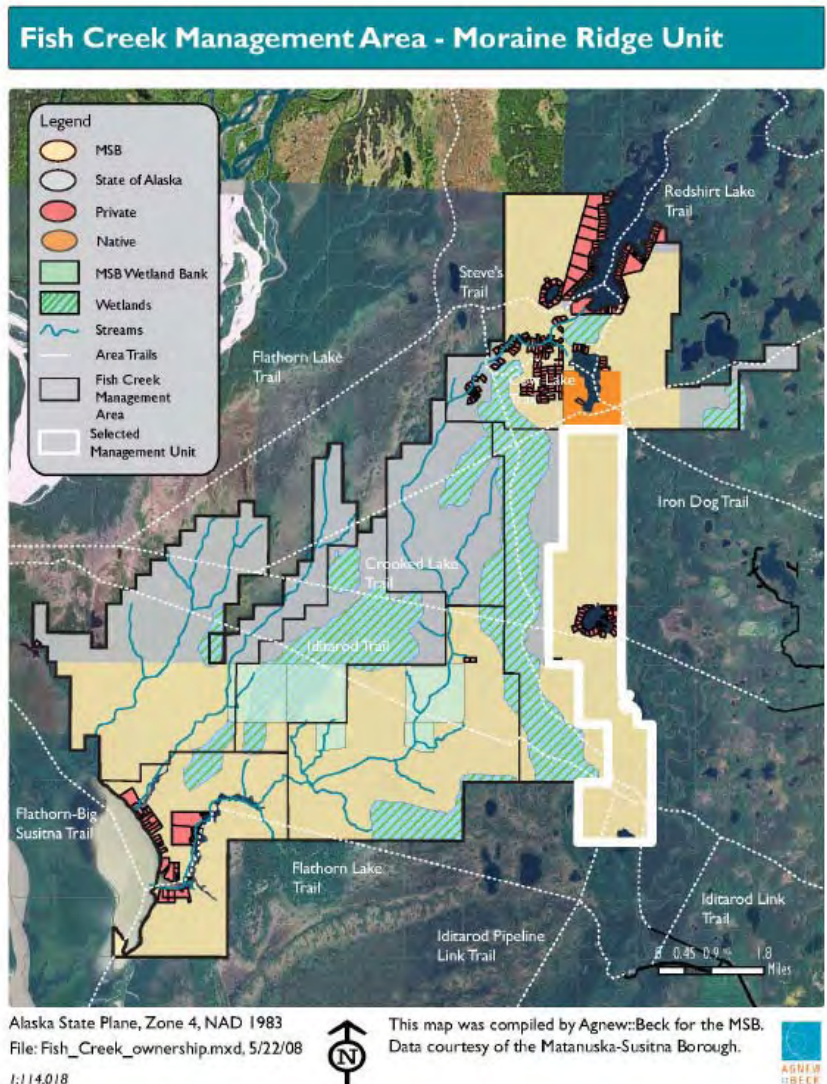
As the name suggests, this unit follows a low moraine, running north to south. This ridge extends the length of this management unit and gives the unit the most elevated acreage in the Fish Creek plan area. This characteristic coupled with the unit's relatively good access and contiguous sections of developable settlement land make the area an

obvious candidate for settlement-related uses.

This area has limited potential for agriculture. Patches of Class III soils are generally small and discontinuous. This limitation is compounded by the irregular terrain. The Borough has not planned timber sales for the management area in the past. According to the Borough's recent timber inventory, portions of this area has relatively high volume of timber per acre, and operable acreages. Hilly terrain would increase timber-related road building and operations costs.

Road easements through the management unit include the Chuitna Road Right-of-Way (ADL 57588). The Borough's Long Range Transportation Plan includes a rail corridor along the western boundary of this area connecting Point MacKenzie with more northerly destinations, though a specific location has not been platted.

Map 3.1. Moraine Ridge Unit



Trail easements also cross this management unit. These trails include the Iron Dog Trail, Iditarod Trail, Winter Tractor Trail and the Crooked Lake Trail. These trails are winter trails used by snowmachines and dog teams.

Management Intent

Land within the Moraine Ridge Unit will be used for a series of road-accessible residential settlement areas, and intervening areas of public open space. Consistent with Borough code and the policies of this plan, residential land sales will not occur until roads are built to the sale area. When planning and locating the sales, the Borough will ensure that physically suitable portions of this area remain in public ownership to provide for public uses such as schools and sites for future commercial uses. In addition, land sale design will locate and trails and related buffers to support current and future recreational use. Limited timber harvests may occur consistent with the land-sale needs, such as for local house logs or firewood.

While the primary management intent for this unit is to provide residential settlement opportunities, this intent also takes in the goal of maintaining the area’s natural character, which will add value to settlement and for recreation use. Development should be planned to retain this character. Locations for roads, trails, subdivisions and other uses require a more site-specific review of physical constraints and opportunities.

Management Guidelines

Chapter 2 guidelines establish the framework of management guidelines for this unit including development setbacks along the roadways and buffers along the Iditarod trail and other identified trails that cross the area (in *Transportation* section) and, along water bodies in the area, the requirement for building setbacks and reservation of public access areas (in *Water and Recreation* sections).

The remainder of this section presents management unit-specific guidelines.

Designations*

Designation		
Primary		Notes
Settlement		Small parcel, road-accessed subdivision with rural character
Secondary		
Forestry		Limited, personal use timber harvests
Public Recreation		Corridors for trails and open space buffers between settlement areas
Wildlife Habitat		Corridors wildlife between settlement areas
Agriculture		Class III soils are intended for uses such as community gardens, gardens as part of settlement areas, or small-parcel agriculture disposals within the overall residential settlement design.
Public & Community Service Uses		Space reserved for possible future uses

* Note that these tables and the plan in general contain primary and secondary designations. Consistent with state regulation, classifications on the status plats will reflect only the primary designation. The secondary designations are still important and a way to convey the management intent. DNR and Borough personnel will use the primary and secondary designations, along with the management intent and guidelines when making decisions about uses of the land.

Settlement

Specific sites for land sales will be identified through a more detailed review of this unit's physical characteristics, and final decisions on the locations of roads and the system of open spaces outlined above. General guidelines for land sale design include the following:

- Land sales will be designed in phases, following the expansion of the road system.
- Sales should be grouped into a series of clusters, separated by east west-trending bands of open space. This design will provide open space benefits for recreation, and habitat/migration benefits to wildlife. It will also decrease road costs. The total amount of land to be sold from this unit will be decided during Borough design of the sales but will not exceed 60 percent.
- Priority sites should offer low gradient, good drainage, and where possible, locations with views
- Road access that passes near Hock Lake may change the character of the private parcels that surround the lake. For that reason, owners will be notified of any access planned to be constructed within a mile of the parcels. Final design will be decided upon only after considering the needs and wishes of Hock Lake property owners.
- Land sales will be buffered from immediate views of boating, fishing, and camping on the Little Susitna Recreational River so as to maintain the natural character and use of the Recreational River.
- Land sales in the vicinity of Yohn Lake, Hock Lake and the unnamed lake in SE¹/₄, NE¹/₄, T17N, R5W S.M. should be sited and buffered to protect the fish and wildlife habitat and water quality of the Little Susitna River.

Forestry

Timber harvest will be allowed along rights-of-way prior to development. Several parcels will be retained in public ownership (approximately 40 acres each) near settlement locations to provide for personal use firewood harvests. Personal use harvests will be designed to support and be compatible with settlement, with protection of habitat and recreation values including buffers surrounding frequently used trails, wetlands, waterbodies and settlement areas.

Public Recreation

As part of the more detailed planning for land sales, specific areas will be identified and retained for trails, public recreation, open space and wildlife.

Areas to be retained in public ownership include:

- A site for a large multi-purpose park. This park would be an area to meet recreation needs of the area as they develop. Initially this area would provide general open space. Over time, when surrounding lands are more developed, this parcel would also provide an opportunity for more developed comparable recreation uses. Such a park might eventually include extensive trails, including groomed cross country ski trails, ballfields, multi-use space available for events (such as outdoor music), and a recreation center building, with road access and parking.
- A primary north-south trail connection. Possible routes include a ridgeline route, a route along the Little Susitna River, or a combination of the two.
- Trail connections to Nancy Lakes State Recreation Area, Little Susitna State Recreation River, Susitna Flats State Game Refuge and west into the Fish Creek trail system.
- East-west trending open space greenbelts separating developed areas. These areas should incorporate a mix of well-drained forested areas, and areas with development constraints such as forested wetlands and steep terrain. One consideration in the location of these greenbelts should be their value as wildlife movement corridors.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Management guidelines for fish and wildlife include the requirement for clustering development (see Settlement guideline, this section), stream buffers, and other guidelines in Chapter 2. The requirement for clustering development will result in several trail corridors and east west corridors to allow the passage of wildlife between this unit, the Little Susitna State Recreation River, and other public open space lands to the north, west and southwest.

Public & Community Uses

- Land will be reserved near the junction of the primary north south and east west roads for eventual town center development. This area should be approximately 160 acres or more, including space for community services that ultimately may be needed in the area, such as a police and fire station, library, post office, small park and school. Remaining land in this set aside would be planned and then sold to private users for a centralized, commercial district.
- Three parcels of approximately 40 acres each will be reserved north of the town center site, to accommodate future public uses, such as schools or police and fire stations.

Unit 2. Lakes

Summary of Resource and Uses in the Area

The Lakes Management Unit is located in the north-east corner of the management area, surrounding Red Shirt Lake and the north end of the Moraine Ridge (Unit 1) and Wetlands – East units (Unit 3).

The 7,990 acres management unit includes a mix of land ownerships: approximately 4,000 acres of Borough land, 1,500 acres of State land, 500 acres of land held by Knikatnu, Inc. surrounding Cow Lake, and 800 acres of other private lands, in approximately 200 small parcels. These individual parcels are mostly used for recreational cabins; most are about 5 acres in size. These parcels surround Red Shirt Lake, Cow Lake and Delyndia Lake and extend down Fish Creek. There are several non-waterfront parcels clustered west of Cow Lake and approximately 10 larger parcels behind existing waterfront ones. Access to these private parcels is typically by snowmachine, 4-wheeler, and for those on lakes, by floatplane. In addition, parcels on or near Red Shirt Lake may also use boat access from trailheads in Nancy Lake State Recreation Area.

The management unit adjoins legislatively designated State recreation areas to the north and east – the Nancy Lakes State Recreation Area and the Little Susitna State Recreation River Area. The lakes and streams in this unit, particularly Red Shirt Lake, Cow Lake, Delyndia Lake and Butterfly Lake, support a variety of fish species, and many people use area lakes for fishing. The lakes and streams connected to Delyndia and Butterfly Lakes provide habitat for Little Susitna River coho salmon.

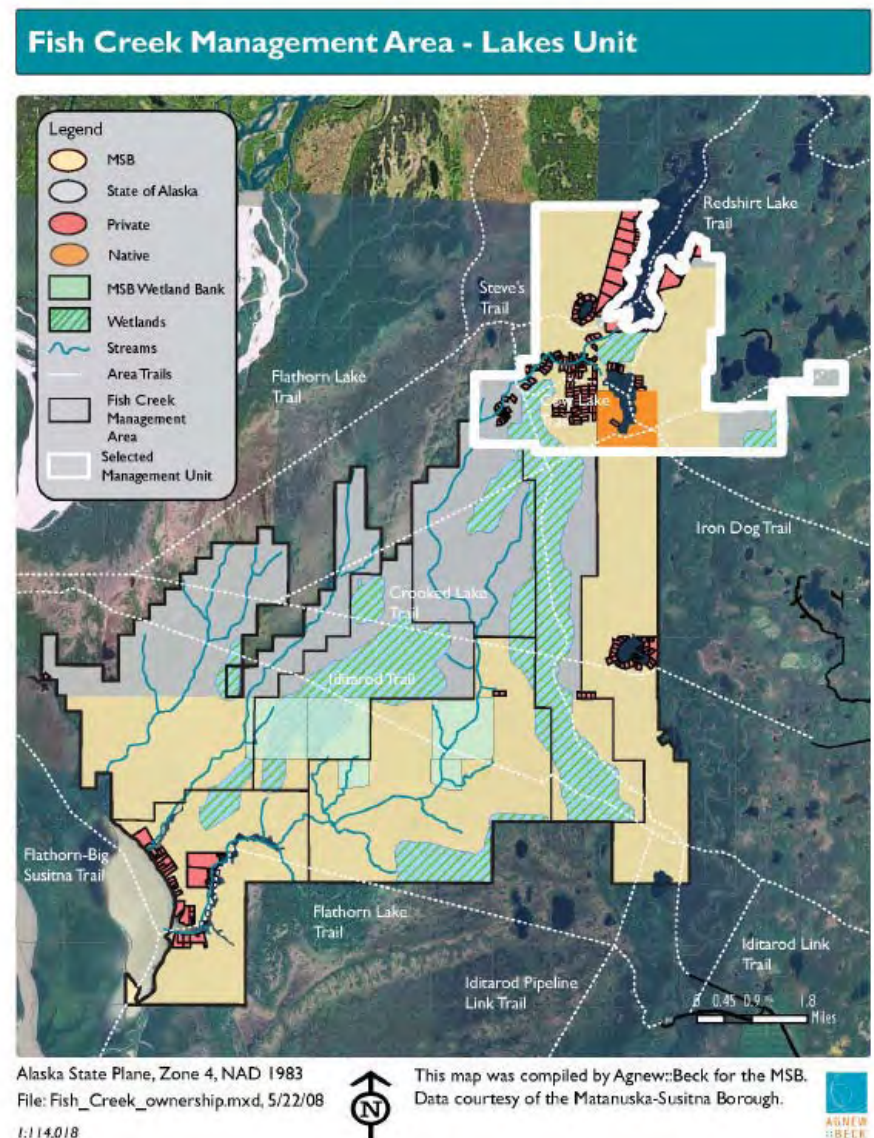
There is no current nor planned road access to the management unit. However, the Matanuska Susitna Borough Long Range Transportation Plan proposes a rail corridor that abuts the unit along its western boundary and may provide rail access at some future date. The

actual alignment of a potential railroad has not been specifically identified or platted. In addition, the management intent for the adjacent unit, Moraine Ridge, includes permanent roads. It is possible that private owners or the Native Corporation may wish to extend roads to private land in the unit.

The management area has limited agricultural or forestry potential. The agricultural soils that do exist are on the far-western side of the management area, with no planned road access in the foreseeable future.

A collection of trails traverse the management unit. The Red Shirt Lake Trail, Cow Lake Trail, Butterfly Lake Trail, Winter Tractor Trail, Iron Dog Trail, Trail 6 and Steve's Trail are all identified as winter trails travelling through the area.

Map 3.2. Lakes Unit



Management Intent

Public land within the Lakes Unit is designated resource management, due to the uncertainty of future access to the area, and the resulting variability in possible future uses. For the near term, the primary management intent for the Lakes area is to continue to offer this area as an attractive location for rural residential users, both today and into the future. Related objectives are to maintain access to the area for landowners and the ability of recreational users to traverse the area on trails. Land sales are not planned within the unit at this time.

Access changes that are outside the control of this plan may require revisiting this management intent. If a railroad is built along the western edge of the unit in the future, some railroad-related uses or land sales related to the railroad use may be appropriate at that time.

Similarly, development of roads in the Moraine Ridge Unit to the south, or coming in from the east or north, may change the accessibility of this area, for private landowners and those who use it for recreation. Finally, much of the ground access to this area is through winter trails. As the vacant private land in the area develops, the winter trail system may prove inadequate. At some point the number of residences may require a system of hardened trails usable in the summer to avoid resource damage. For these reasons, this management intent should be revisited if a railroad is actually constructed, if road access changes the way people get to their land or recreate in the unit, or if significant resource damage caused by over-use of inadequate trails requires access changes. At that time some road-related uses and

additional land sales may be appropriate. Either change would require a plan amendment.

Because of the importance of trails to the way people get to private land in this unit, and use the unit for recreation, the State and Borough should work to identify and reserve a trail system. The objective of the system is to continue and enhance public recreational use, and maintain trail links within and through the area for legal access to private land.

Because of the extensive private ownership and recreation, significant timber harvest is inappropriate. Timber harvest affecting small areas are permitted for house logs or firewood to satisfy the needs of local landowners.

Designations

Designation	
<i>Primary</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Resource Management	<p>Maintain rural-residential character, access for private landowners and opportunities for public recreation use, including summer and winter trails, and public lake access.</p> <p>Changing access may change or add to management goals.</p>

Management Guidelines

Public Recreation and Fish and Wildlife Habitat

The portion of the unit south of Delyndia and Butterfly Lakes should be retained in public ownership and managed for fish and wildlife habitat and public recreation. In addition to the trails that traverse the area, AWC stream 247-41-10100-2129 a tributary to the Little Susitna River provides connection to Delyndia Lake. This area also provides for a habitat and public recreation corridor between the Nancy Lakes Recreation Area and the Little Susitna Recreational River corridor.

Trail System

Trail connections needed include winter routes linking the area to the north and east (towards Willow and Big Lake), and trails to recreation destinations including routes heading south and west. To the extent feasible, summer trails should be identified and reserved. Such trails require locations where continued use will not cause damage to wetlands.

Other Uses

No additional unit-specific guidelines are required for this unit. See Chapter 2 for area-wide guidelines that apply in this area.

Unit 3. Wetlands - East & West

Summary of Resource and Uses in the Area

This unit covers lands in two sections of the management area. The Wetlands-East Unit takes in land between the Moraine Ridge area (Unit 1) and the Upper and Lower Fish Creek Units. The Wetlands-West Unit lies between the two Fish Creek Units and the Homestead (Unit 6) and Flathorn Lake Units (Unit 7).

Together the two wetlands units account for over 8,200 acres. Wetlands-East has approximately 4,000 acres and Wetland-West, the remaining 4,200 acres. These two units make up over two thirds of the approximately 12,000 total acres of wetlands in the planning area.

Over half of the land in these two management units is managed by the State, approximately 5,200 acres. The large majority of the remainder, 3,000 acres, is managed by the Borough. The exception is the four private parcels in the Wetlands-East unit in the area of Hock Lake. These continuous parcels are not located near a substantial water body.

These two units are located in a large branching pattern along the lateral drainages of Fish Creek. The wetlands provide important hydrologic functions and fish and wildlife habitat for the management area.

The Borough has identified wetlands for their Su-Knik Wetlands Mitigation Bank that are within the Fish Creek plan area. These lands are owned by the Borough and will be used to mitigate wetland development in other areas of the Borough. The specific requirements of the land bank require that the wetlands remain undeveloped. Other wetlands in this unit, though not part of the land bank, are also unlikely to be developed, consistent with the management intent for this unit.

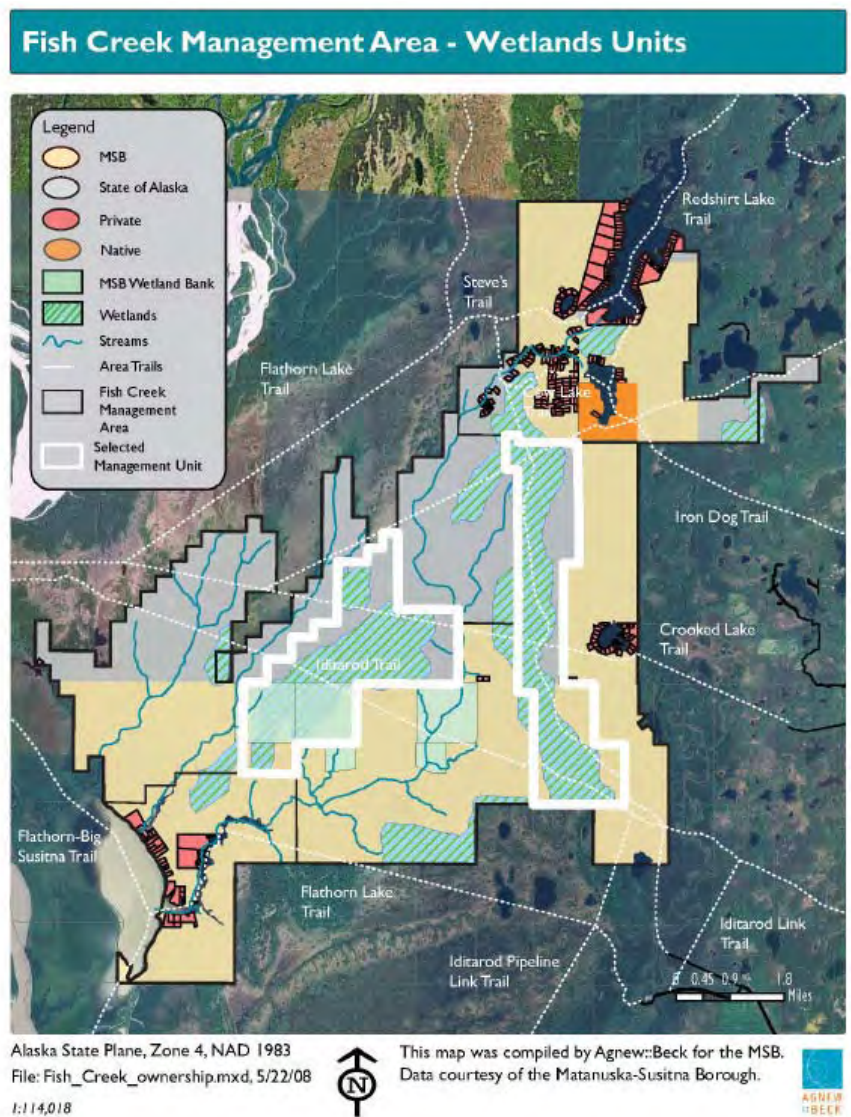
Several trails and easements cross these management units. The historic Iditarod trail crosses both areas and the Chuitna Right-of-Way (ADL 57588) crosses the

southern section of Wetlands-East. Additional trails crossing the units include the Crooked Lake Trail and the Iron Dog race trail, which has an existing easement. The Winter Tractor trail, crossing the Wetlands-East unit, traverses the area in a north-south direction. These trails are used largely as winter trails.

Management Intent

The primary management intent for these wetland areas is to retain these lands in public ownership to preserve their functions for fish and wildlife habitat, to protect water quality and allow for recreational use, primarily winter activities. Activities within this unit must occur in a manner consistent with the protection of these values.

Map 3.3. Wetlands - East & West Unit



Providing for recreational use of these parcels primarily focuses on maintaining winter trail links to and across this unit. In the future, if and when the surrounding areas are developed, recreation uses in these units can be expanded to include other forms of passive recreation use (e.g., wildlife viewing, walking trails) as well as limited, supporting recreation facilities.

Public access will be maintained to and within the Iditarod Historic Trail corridor and the Iron Dog Trail. Work is needed to reserve other important regional trails, e.g. the Crooked Lake trail.

Management Guidelines

See Chapter 2 for area-wide guidelines, addressing issues including use and establishment of trails, transportation routes, buffers and utility corridors in these wetland areas. The remainder of this section presents site-specific guidelines.

Forestry

Timber sales are expected on land adjacent to this unit, especially within the Homestead Creek, Lower Fish Creek, and Upper Fish Creek units. Where timber resources exist on the edge of this unit, adjacent commercial timber harvest may extend into this unit as long as the harvest is designed consistent with the goals for protecting the hydrologic, wildlife, and recreation resources of the unit.

Other Uses

No additional unit-specific guidelines are required for this unit. See Chapter 2 for area-wide guidelines that apply in this area.

Designations

Designation		
<i>Primary</i>		<i>Notes</i>
Watershed Protection		Protect wetlands forming headwaters to area streams
Wildlife Habitat		
<i>Secondary</i>		
Public Recreation		Largely limited to winter use.

Unit 4. Upper Fish Creek

Summary of Resource and Uses in the Area

This unit is in the north-central section of the management area, between the two wetland areas (Unit 3) and north of the Lower Fish Creek (Unit 5). The area covers approximately 3,600 acres.

The management unit is entirely owned by the State. The centrally located management unit has no current road or rail access, and is at the far outer reaches of the possible incremental expansion of road access into the broader Fish Creek area from the east. The area has potential for the typical suite of forested, Susitna-valley public lands: forestry, settlement, agriculture, public recreation and fish and wildlife habitat.

The management unit has one existing winter trail crossing the unit, the Iron Dog Trail.

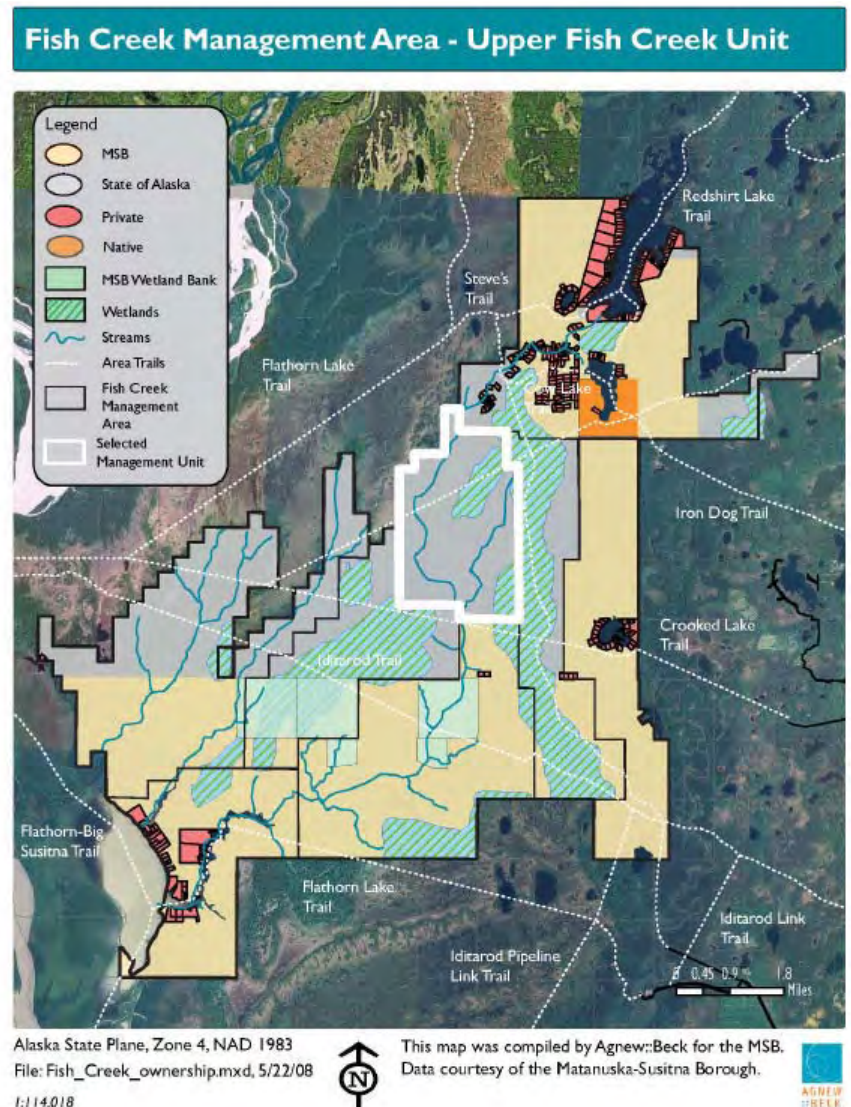
Management Intent

Land within the Upper Fish Creek Unit is designated resource management. While the soils have potential for agriculture or settlement, the unit cannot be developed until the area has permanent road access. Permanent access must await a road that first crosses the Little Susitna River, and then makes significant additional stream and wetland crossings to reach this area. Permanent access is expected to be at least a decade away and probably significantly longer. By the time access is developed, the demand for timber, agriculture, or residential settlement land may change significantly from today's assessment. For that reason, the plan delays the decision about whether to sell these areas, and if sold, for what purposes – residential settlement, agriculture, or a combination. In the interim, the timber in this unit will be included in the State timber base. In this way, the future potential of the area for potential agriculture or settlement will be protected, but interim timber development will provide jobs and timber products and may help develop forestry

roads that may bring access to the area and facilitate eventual permanent access. Therefore, to the extent practical, forestry roads will be located in a manner that may enhance the eventual agricultural or residential settlement value of the areas.

This plan intends that at least 35 percent of the productive forest lands in this unit will be permanently retained for long-term forestry. The plan delays the decision about whether to sell remaining acreage in this unit, and, if sold, for what purposes - residential settlement, agriculture, or a combination; or whether to retain this remaining acreage in the unit in public ownership for uses such as forestry.

Map 3.4. Upper Fish Creek Unit



Designations

Designation		
Primary		Notes
Resource Management		Available for timber management & timber harvest at least until such time as permanent access is developed to the unit, likely a decade or further into the future. Area will be included in State and Borough timber base. Option for future agriculture or settlement will be retained.
Forestry		The plan intends that at least 35 percent of the productive forest lands in this unit will be permanently retained for long-term forestry.

Management Guidelines

Forestry and Trails

The Forest Land Use Plan on State land will address protection of public trails within the unit. The objective of this system will be maintain trail links within and through the area, for legal access to possible future land sales, and to allow for future public recreational use. Destinations to be linked by trail include Flathorn Lake public access sites, the Iditarod Trail, Iron Dog Trail and the Crooked Creek Trail.

The Forest Land Use Plan on State land will also address protection of wetlands within the unit consistent with the management guidelines in Chapter 2.

Other Uses

No additional unit-specific guidelines are required for this unit. See Chapter 2 for area-wide guidelines that apply in this area.

Unit 5. Lower Fish Creek

Summary of Resource and Uses in the Area

The Lower Fish Creek Management Unit includes land on the south-central edge of the management area, bordering the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge to the south. Neighboring management units include: Wetlands-East (Unit 3) to the east, Upper Fish Creek (Unit 4) to the north, Wetlands-West (Unit 3) to the northwest and Flathorn Lake (Unit 7) also to the west. The management unit adjoins Susitna Flats State Game Refuge to the south. The management unit is approximately 6,900 acres in size.

This management unit includes approximately 6,880 acres of land owned by the Borough and approximately 20 acres of privately held land in 2 parcels located in the upper section of the management unit along one of the tributaries of Fish Creek. Access to these parcels is winter-only. These parcels are not currently developed.

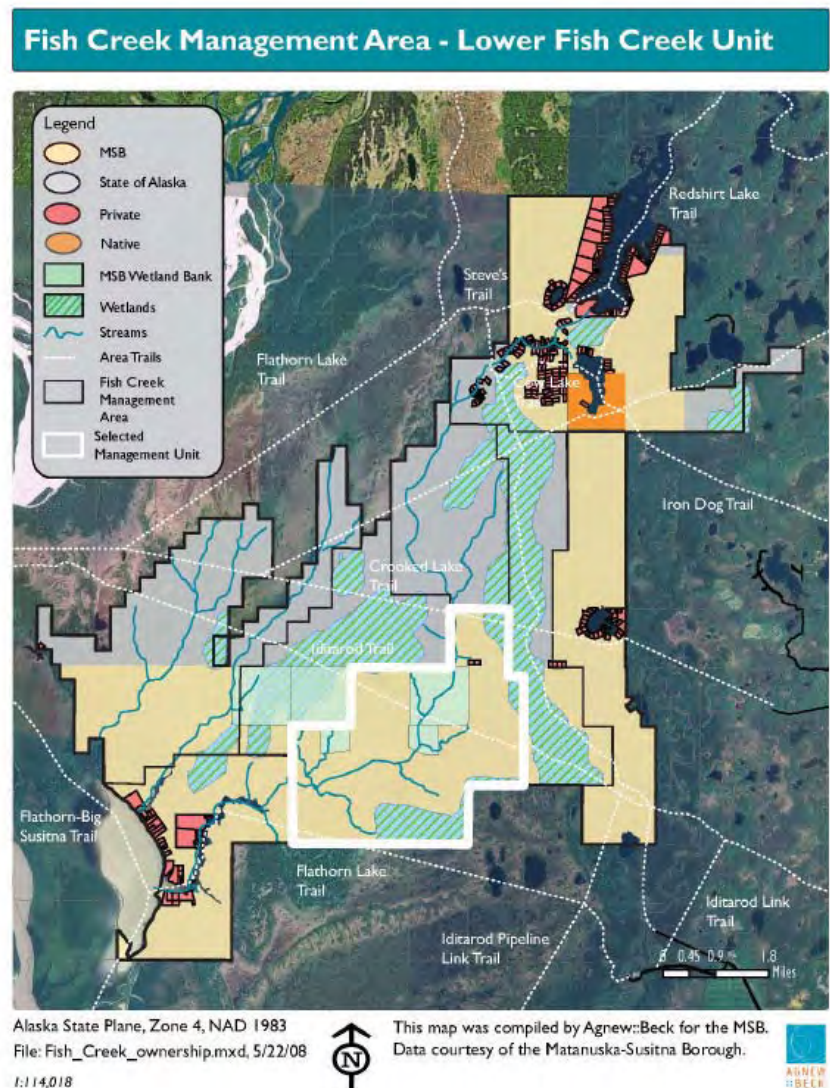
There is currently no road access to this unit. Several seismic lines running through the area are used for ATV access in the summer. Informal winter trails, including the seismic lines, cross through the area and are used by snowmachines, dogsledders and skiers. There are several trail easements that pass through the management unit. One is the Iditarod National Historic Trail route, which is no longer used for the race itself. The current route – the Iditarod Race Trail – crosses the management unit north of the Iditarod Historic Trail. Other trails include the Crooked Lake Winter Trail traveling east-west through the northern part of this area continuing from the Moraine Ridge and Wetlands-East units.

In addition to these trails, the Alaska Department of Transportation (ADOT) has reserved an easement for the Chuitna Right-of-Way (ADL 57588). This was reserved over 30 years ago as part of a Statewide, long-range transportation

planning effort. There are no plans to develop this right-of-way. This unit, is however, on the route of the proposed West Mat-Su Access Project. This route is proposed to cross the Little Susitna River from the Big Lake area to provide access into the Fish Creek Management area. (See more detailed description regarding possible road routes in Chapter 1).

This management unit has agricultural, settlement and forestry potential. According to the previous Fish Creek Management Plan (1984), of the approximately 7,000 acres in this unit, there are over 3,500 acres of Class III soils in large contiguous areas. These large well-drained areas support large blocks of contiguous spruce and birch forest. The timber stand volumes in the unit are not among the highest in Interior and Southcentral

Map 3.5. Lower Fish Creek Unit



Designations

Designation		Notes
<i>Primary</i>		<i>Notes</i>
Agriculture		Small parcel, rural lifestyle, protect agricultural potential
<i>Secondary</i>		
Settlement		Small scale fee-simple sales, planned to complement and support agricultural sales
Forestry		Harvested in a manner that is compatible with eventual agricultural use
Public Recreation		
Wildlife Habitat		

areas of Alaska but are better in volume than many other areas within the Borough. The Borough has not proposed timber sales within the unit.

Management Intent

The primary designation for land within the Lower Fish Creek Unit is agriculture. The land will be managed to develop small-parcel agricultural lots with interspersed higher-density residential development. Residential land sales should be located in the unit in a manner that is compatible with the agricultural sales and where the residential sale revenue can help with road costs.

If access is developed to the Fish Creek Planning area across the Little Susitna River, this unit provides the closest area with soils appropriate for potential agricultural development. Consistent with MSB Code, no land sales will occur until permanent access to the area is developed. Until that time, the area will be managed for forestry, public recreation, and wildlife habitat.

Timber harvest is allowed within this unit. However, because of the nearer-term potential for agricultural or residential land sales, the harvest must be designed consistent with the eventual agricultural or residential sale. Because the intended eventual use of this area is for small, rural lifestyle farms which benefit from starting with forest cover, large scale timber harvests are not expected. For these reasons, timber volume in this unit

will not be added to the sustainable timber base for the Borough.

A large wetland area in the southeast corner of the unit, abutting the Susitna Flats Game Refuge, should be retained in public ownership and managed for its wildlife habitat and water resources values.

Management Guidelines

Agriculture

Agricultural land sales will emphasize small-parcel lots in a manner that allows for a rural lifestyle and flexibility in the form of agricultural activities. The large majority of parcels will be generally be 20-40 acres in size. An agricultural lot layout plan should be developed prior to sales of these parcels to ensure an efficient lot and access plan, as well as protection of fish and wildlife and water resources and public access. In the case of significant agricultural sales, this study should analyze expected water needs to determine whether an instream flow reservation should be established under AS 46.15.145 consistent with the guidelines in Chapter 2.

Public Recreation

Land sale design will maintain trail links to Susitna Flats State Game Refuge, along the Iditarod Historic Trail corridor and other regional trails that may be developed crossing through the area, and to allow access to the stream buffers required by the guidelines in Chapter 2.

Fish & Wildlife Habitat

Retain large wetland area in the southeast corner of the unit, abutting the Susitna Flats Game Refuge, in public ownership and manage for wildlife habitat and water resources values. Complete instream flow studies and recommendations prior to agricultural disposals.

Other Uses

No additional unit-specific guidelines are required for this unit. See Chapter 2 for area-wide guidelines that apply in this area.

Unit 6. Homestead Creek

Summary of Resource and Uses in the Area

This unit covers land along the north-western edge of the Fish Creek area, just east of the Big Susitna River, north of Flathorn Lake (Unit 7) and west of Wetlands-West (Unit 3). The area covers approximately 7,700 acres and is the most remote unit in the management area.

The land in this management unit is managed by the State and the Borough. Approximately 2,880 acres in the south of the unit are Borough-owned; the remainder is held by the State. There are no private holdings in this management unit.

One road easement crosses through the management unit include the Chuitna Road Right-of-Way (ADL 57588). Trail easements also cross this management unit. These trails include the Iron Dog Trail, Iditarod Trail and the Crooked Lake Trail. These trails are winter trails used by snowmachines, dog teams and skiers.

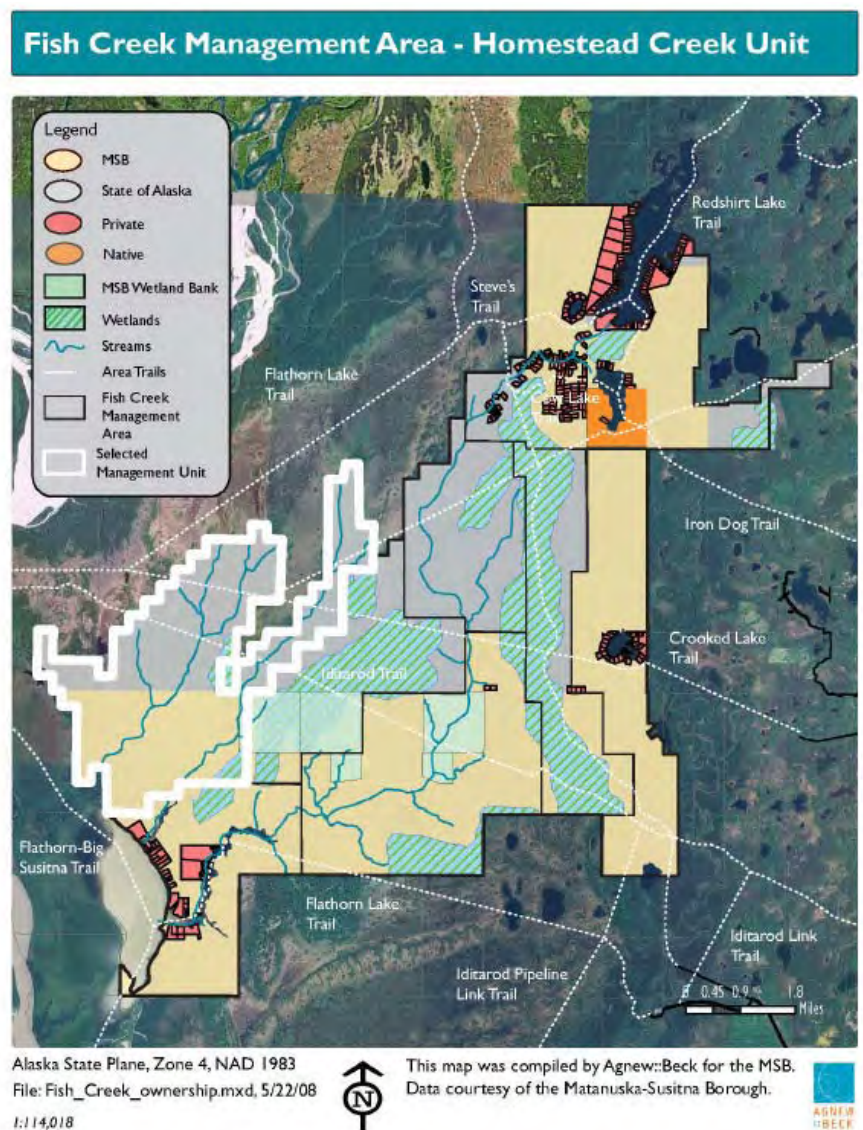
Homestead Creek flows south through this largely level, forested area into the northern end of Flathorn Lake. Large wetlands surrounding this unit are the sources of Homestead creek and Unnamed Creek and their smaller tributaries.

Management Intent

Land within the Homestead Creek Unit is designated resource management. While the soils are appropriate for agriculture or settlement, the unit cannot be developed until the area has permanent road access. This unit is the furthest from the developed area of the Borough and is expected to be the last unit with permanent developed access. Access to the Upper Fish Creek Unit is likely decades away; access to Homestead Creek is likely to be longer still. By the time access to Homestead Creek is constructed, the demand for timber, agriculture, or residential settlement land may change

significantly from today's assessment. For that reason, the plan delays the decision about if and when to sell these areas, and if sold, for what purposes – residential settlement, agriculture, or a combination. In the interim, the timber in this unit will be included in the State and Borough timber base. In this way, the future potential of the area for potential agriculture or settlement will be protected, but interim timber development will provide jobs and timber products and may help develop forestry roads that may bring access to the area and facilitate the eventual permanent access. Therefore, to the extent practical, forestry roads will be located in a manner that may enhance the eventual agricultural or residential settlement value of the areas.

Map 3.6. Homestead Creek Unit



Designations

Designation		
<i>Primary</i>		<i>Notes</i>
Resource Management		Available for timber management & timber harvest at least until such time as permanent access is developed to the unit. This is expected to be decades in the future. Area will be included in State and Borough timber base. Option for future agriculture or settlement will be retained.
Forestry		The plan intends that at least 35 percent of the productive forest lands in this unit will be permanently retained for long-term forestry.

This plan intends that at least 35 percent of the productive forest lands in this unit will be permanently retained for long-term forestry. The plan delays the decision about whether to sell remaining acreage in this unit, and, if sold, for what purposes - residential settlement, agriculture, or a combination; or whether to retain this remaining acreage in the unit in public ownership for uses such as forestry.

Management Guidelines

Forestry and Trails

The Forest Land Use Plan on State land or Borough timber planning will address protection of public trails within the unit. The objective of this system will be maintain trail links within and through the area, for legal access to possible future land sales, and to allow for future public recreational use. Destinations to be linked by trail include Flathorn Lake public access sites, the Iditarod Trail, Iron Dog Trail and the Crooked Creek Trail.

The Forest Land Use Plan on State land or Borough timber planning will also address protection of wetlands within the unit consistent with the management guidelines in Chapter 2.

Other Uses

No additional unit-specific guidelines are required for this unit. See Chapter 2 for area-wide guidelines that apply in this area.

Unit 7. Flathorn Lake

Summary of Resource and Uses in the Area

The Flathorn Lake Management Unit is located in the southwest corner of the Fish Creek area. This unit is bounded on the west almost exclusively by Flathorn Lake and continues north and east until meeting the Homestead Creek Unit (Unit 6) and the Lower Fish Creek Unit (Unit 5), respectively.

There are approximately 4,200 acres covered in this management unit. The majority of 4,200 acres in this unit is held by the Borough. The exception to this public ownership are privately held tracts surrounding Flathorn Lake amounting to 300 acres in approximately 40 private parcels. These lots, around the eastern shore of Flathorn Lake and along the shallow mouth of Fish Creek, which flows into the lake, are all on or immediately adjacent to the waterfront. Several of these parcels have private cabins or homes, primarily used on a seasonal basis.

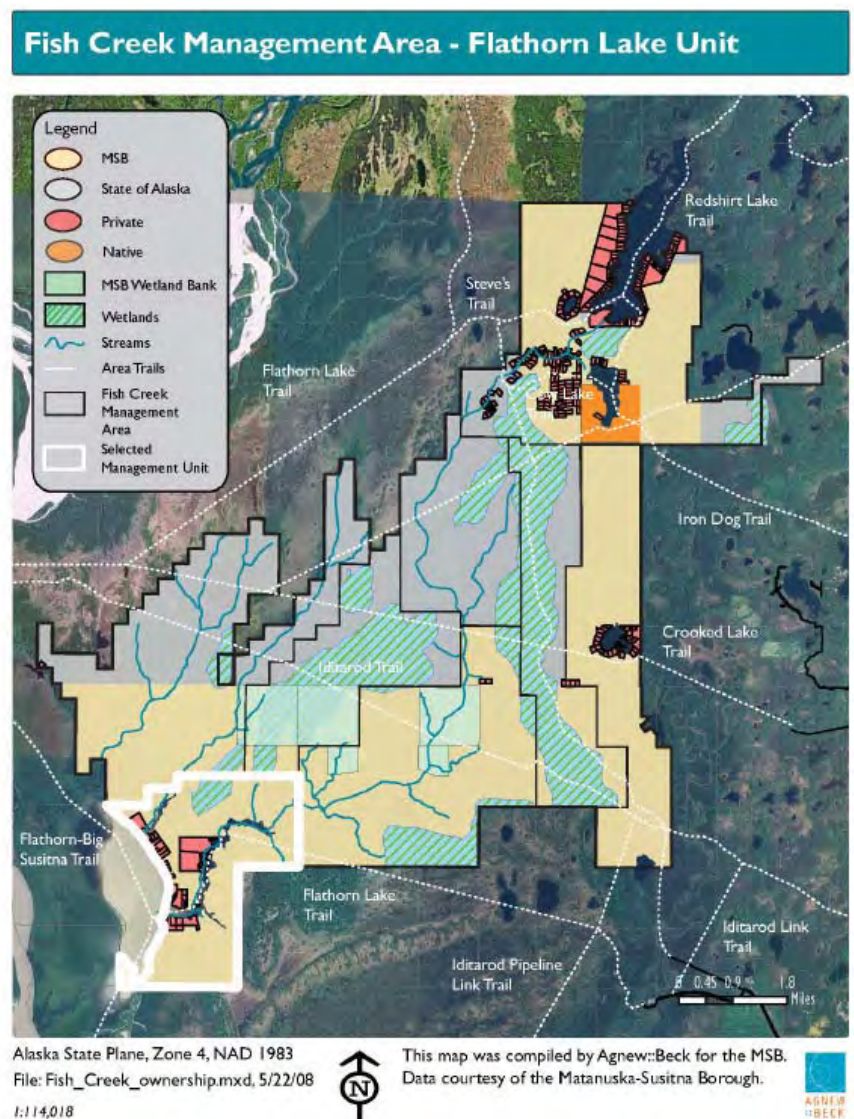
Access is limited to float plane in summer months, snowmachine or ski-plane access in the winter. Boat travel is possible from the Big Susitna into Flathorn Lake and lower reaches of Fish Creek. There is a road easement across this unit, the Chuitna Road Right-of-Way (ADL 57588).

This unit is nearly flat. Large wetlands on the west side lead to the Susitna River; on south side are the low-lying wetlands and tidal flats of the Susitna Flat State Game Refuge. The eastern and northern sections are forested, however the amount of timber is too limited to warrant consideration of large-scale commercial harvest. Additionally the unit lies on the western-most edge of the management unit. As such, the potential for road development is limited.

Management Intent

The primary management intent for Flathorn Lake is to continue the use of this area as a fly-in, recreational cabin destination. A limited number of approximately 25 additional lots may be offered for sale, in waterfront locations, and some backlot areas with access easements to the water. Roads are not required prior to sales, as the area is expected to remain roadless for many years. However, easements for roads should be retained in case roads are constructed at some future date. Other lands within the management unit will be retained in public ownership for trails, sites for future public uses such as schools and recreation including lake access, and sites for possible future local-serving commercial uses. Because of the site's distant location, agricultural sales

Map 3.7. Flathorn Lake Unit



(which require road access) are not appropriate for this management unit. Should road access be extended to the area, further land sales will be considered at that time.

Management Guidelines

Settlement

Specific sites for land sales will be identified through a more detailed review of this unit’s physical characteristics. Land sale design will be consistent with the following:

- Prior to land sales a system of open spaces and trail corridors will be identified (see recreation guidelines below).
- Sales should be grouped into a limited series of clusters. The total amount of land to be sold over the next 10-15 years will be decided during Borough design of the sales, but will not exceed 10 percent of the public land in the unit.
- Priority sites should offer level terrain, good drainage, and where possible, locations with waterfront access or easy trail access to the water.
- Sales should be laid out with reservations for rights of way for possible, eventual road access.
- Wetland areas along the south and west edge of Flathorn Lake should be retained in public ownership and managed for fish and wildlife habitat and water resources.
- Adequate lake front public access and recreation sites on Flat Horn Lake should be retained in

public ownership during land sale design to provide for public use of the lake and adjacent lands.

Public Recreation

A system of public trails, recreation access sites and open spaces will be identified in this area prior to land sales. The objective of this system will be maintain trail links within and through the area, for legal access to private land as well as continue and enhance public recreational use. Destinations to be linked by trail include Flathorn Lake public access sites, the Iditarod Trail and Susitna Flats State Game Refuge. Specific trail management guidelines are covered in detail under Chapter 2 guidelines.

Other Uses

No additional unit-specific guidelines are required for this unit. See Chapter 2 for area-wide guidelines that apply in this area.

Designations

Designation		
<i>Primary</i>		<i>Notes</i>
Settlement		Provide for small, non-roaded parcels with rural character, designed to minimize potential impacts on surrounding current developed areas.
<i>Secondary</i>		
Public Recreation		
Wildlife Habitat		