

# **I. PRIORITIES FOR LEGISLATIVE DESIGNATION**

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The plan includes proposals for legislative designation of areas requiring intensive recreation management and for moose habitat protection for inclusion within the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area. These special designations would serve as official recognition of the outstanding public values in these areas and of the state's intent to retain these areas in public ownership in perpetuity. A legislative designation is recommended when an area proposed by the plan for long-term retention possesses such high resource values that:

1. It is clear that the area should remain in public ownership permanently; and/or
2. The nature and value of the resources present require more restrictive management for their protection than is possible under a departmental use classification order.

## **A. AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR INCLUSION IN THE HATCHER PASS PUBLIC USE AREA - 4,317 Total Acres**

### **1. UPPER LITTLE SUSITNA VALLEY--REED VALLEYS - 3,232 Acres**

These two river corridors include areas of exceptionally high scenic and public use value. Both valleys are becoming increasingly popular for day and weekend use by urban dwellers. The Little Susitna River is a coho and king salmon spawning and rearing area and supports intensive downstream fisheries. This addition will add the headwaters of the Little Susitna to the existing public use area. Grazing, hunting, trapping, and mining on existing claims would continue as uses within the area.

### **2. ROAD CORRIDOR ARCHANGEL TO HATCHER PASS - 1,085 Acres**

This section of the Hatcher Pass Road and its adjacent corridor is proposed for inclusion in the legislatively designated area due to its high tourism and local use values and the need for intensive public safety and recreational management. Historically, mining has not occurred here and has been found to be an incompatible use, thus this corridor will be closed to mineral entry.

## **B. SPECIAL WILDLIFE HABITAT AREA**

### **WILLOW MOUNTAIN MOOSE CONCENTRATION AREA - 22,720 Acres**

This area is recommended for legislative designation to ensure long-term retention in public ownership and management for its wildlife values.

The western slopes of Willow Mountain provide winter and summer range for high populations of moose. Year-round concentrations of 1,500 - 2,000 moose are among the highest in the Susitna Basin. It provides important near-to-population centers harvest opportunities. Special management will become increasingly important as use increases as a result of improved access for forestry harvest west of the management unit.