

Unit 1. Lower Nushagak River, Keefer Cutoff to Wood River

Background

Land Status. Most of this unit is owned by Choggiung Ltd. or is federal land selected by the state, Choggiung Ltd., or Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC). The state and BBNC have both selected the mouth of the Iowithla River. It is likely BBNC will receive the selection. The Nushagak River is navigable; the state owns tidelands, submerged lands, and shorelands in the unit. Twenty Native allotments are located in the unit.

Miles of River. The main channel of the Nushagak River extends for 56 miles.

Access. The unit is easily accessible by motorboat, float plane, and snowmobile and is relatively close to major airports and sport fishing lodges. Portage Creek has a developed public airstrip. The nearest communities are Dillingham and Ekwok. The river is important for use as a corridor for boat travel between Dillingham and upriver villages.

Existing Development. The unit includes the village of Portage Creek, many subsistence fish camps near Lewis Point, and 11 cabins which are used seasonally. Twelve temporary camps for commercial sport fishing were authorized by Choggiung between Black Point and Portage Creek in 1988. Ten of the camps supported fly-in day use; two served as bases of operation. The ADF&G operates a field camp near Portage Creek.

Fisheries. The river serves as a corridor for migration of all species of juvenile and adult salmon, which are generally abundant in the summer.

Subsistence and sport fishing uses are among the highest in the planning area. Most of the subsistence fishing use takes place downstream of Black Point. Most of the sport use is commercial, targets king salmon, and takes place from mid-June to mid-July between Portage Creek and Black Point. Commercial use is based out of lodges and nearby communities and out of camps in the unit. Motorboats are stored in the unit to support fly-in day use. The king salmon sport fishery is of increasing importance as a recreational opportunity for residents of Dillingham.

Wildlife. Moose density is moderate; caribou density is low.

Subsistence hunting for moose is high and caribou hunting use is moderate because of relatively easy accessibility. Sport hunting use is low because of private land ownership, competition with local hunters, and relatively low density of game.

Trails and Easements. The winter trail from Dillingham to Naknek is a possible RS-2477 right-of-way. Portions of the trail are on 17(b) easements. The following 17(b) easements are located in this unit: EIN 2, 2a, 2-1, 6, 8a, 8b, 20, 20b, 34, and 36. (Refer to the maps in the envelope in the back of this document for descriptions of these easements.)

Other Values. Scenic values are relatively low because of constricted views and low landscape diversity. Floating use is low. Four cultural sites are documented in the unit.

Management Intent

Semi-developed use experience.

Management Guidelines

Long-term Use (longer than 14 consecutive days at one site):

Permanent facilities	Prohibited.*
Temporary facilities	Prohibited.*
Trapping cabins	Prohibited.*
Boat storage	May be allowed (case-by-case).
Airstrip development	May be allowed (case-by-case).
Docks: permanent	May be allowed (case-by-case).
temporary	May be allowed (case-by-case).
Other uses	May be allowed (case-by-case).

* The state owns only shorelands in this unit. Permanent facilities and temporary facilities (except for floating facilities) and trapping cabins are prohibited on shorelands.

Short-term Use (14 consecutive days or less at one site):

See Short-term Uses (generally allowed uses) in Chapter 2.

Other Guidelines Specific to this Unit

- U1.1 Short-term Uses at the Mouth of the Iowithla River (Public Use Site 6). Because of high public use, this public use site is designated as a "special use area" under 11 AAC 96.010. In public use sites, short-term uses can take place for 14 consecutive days or less without a permit. In this special use area, allowed short-term uses can take place for 7 consecutive days or less without a permit. Allowed uses that take place for longer than 7 consecutive days are considered long-term uses and require a permit or lease. All other public use site guidelines apply to this special use area (see Chapter 2, Public Use Sites).
- U1.2 Relocation of Public Use Site 4. Choggiung Ltd. is considering relocating its designated upland public camping site to a site closer to the Portage Creek landing strip. DNR should work with Choggiung to identify this site. If Choggiung relocates the camping site, Public Use Site 4 will be relocated to shoreland adjacent to the new upland camping site.

Public Use Sites

See Public Use Sites in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations of sites are shown on maps in Appendix C.

- Site 1 Shoreland site on lower Nushagak River known as Blood Beach, 7 miles west of Portage Creek, primarily used for angling. The state owns only the shorelands in this public use site. Uplands are owned by Choggiung Ltd.
- Site 2 Shoreland site on lower Nushagak river at the southern mouth of Keefer Cutoff, primarily used for angling. The state owns only the shorelands in this public use site. Uplands are owned by Choggiung Ltd.
- Site 3 Shoreland site on Keefer Cutoff, 1 1/2 miles north of Portage Creek. The state owns only the shorelands in this public use site. Uplands are owned by Choggiung Ltd.
- Site 4 Shoreland site adjacent to upland site designated by Choggiung Ltd. as a public camping site, 1 1/2 miles north of Portage Creek. The state owns only the shorelands in this public use site. Uplands are owned by Choggiung Ltd.
- Site 5 Shoreland site on Keefer Cutoff, 3 miles north of Portage Creek, used for camping and angling. The state owns only the shorelands in this public use site. Uplands are owned by Choggiung Ltd.
- Site 6 This site is a special use area. See "Other Guidelines Specific to this Unit." Campsite and floatplane landing area on shorelands at the mouth of the Iowithla River. The state owns only the shorelands in this public use site. Uplands are selected by Bristol Bay Native Corporation.

Recommendations for this Unit

Land Selection: Township 12 South Range 50 West (the mouth of the Iowithla River) is currently selected by both the state and the Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC). If BBNC receives title to this selection, a 17(b) easement should include Public Use Site #6 (campsite and floatplane landing area on shorelands at the mouth of the Iowithla River).