

## Chapter 3: Management for Each Unit



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### CLASSIFICATION OF MANAGEMENT UNITS

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*The Alaska State Park System: Statewide Framework Plan* establishes a land-use classification system for management and development of land and resources within all statewide park units. From the six statewide designations identified, only two are applied to the Chena River SRA: **Recreational Development** for Unit 1 along the road and river, and **Natural Area** for the remaining five units. Map 3-1 shows the boundaries of these units and their land-use designations. The unit boundaries and their designations remain unchanged from the 1984 Plan. However, the description of characteristics and developments allowed in each classification described in the original Framework were slightly modified to better reflect the Recreation Area's situation. For example, motorized use is clearly allowed on some of the designated trails in the Natural Areas, such as the Colorado Creek and Angel Creek trails. Described below are the purposes, characteristics, and developments/activities allowed under each designation within the Recreation Area.

#### Recreational Development

##### Purpose

Unit 1 was designated Recreational Development to meet the more intensive recreational needs of the public. This unit is intended to provide convenient and well-defined access via roads, boat access and high-standard trails; more intensively-developed recreational facilities; and a proposed information center to orient visitors to the unit's special features. The center may also be used to collect fees.

##### Characteristic

The landscape within this unit can be modified to support educational and recreational activities and/or to enhance wildlife habitat and scenic qualities. This description was applied to this unit to recognize the unit's soils, slope drainage and vegetation that can support more intensive recreational activities. Fire suppression and insect and disease control may be used, where appropriate, within this unit to maintain or enhance recreational use. This unit has already been influenced by prior developments and high public uses. This unit is intended to provide a transition area between the Chena Hot Springs Road and units located away from the road that are designated "Natural Area."

### Development Activities

The highest level of development and levels of public use can occur within the Recreational Development Designation. The developments allowed include, but are not limited to, roads and trails, private vehicle and public transportation routes or access, campgrounds, dispersed campsites, picnic areas, visitor and interpretive centers, high-standard trails for all ages and abilities, and park management facilities. Commercial lodges or resorts on private lands within this unit are likely. High intensity activities related to the use of these developed facilities are generally encouraged. Summer and winter off-road vehicles (ORV's) and other motorized recreational vehicles are included in specifically designated areas or through management techniques such as time and/or space allocations.

### **Natural Area**

#### Purpose

Units 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are given this designation to provide for moderate to low impact and dispersed forms of recreation.

#### Characteristic

Units with this designation will remain relatively undeveloped and undisturbed, and will be managed to maintain high scenic qualities and provide visitors with opportunities for significant, natural outdoor experiences. Retaining these units' natural landscape character is a primary management intent, but landscape modification may be allowed to enhance, maintain, or protect the natural setting according to the units' specific management intent.

#### Development Activities

Developments in a Natural Area are intended to provide for the safety of park visitors and to provide for a moderate level of convenience in a high-quality natural setting. Allowable developments include, but are not limited to, backcountry shelters, public use cabins, high standard trails (paved or gravel), bridges and roads where necessary to access development zones and as provided for in an approved management plan. A medium level of activity is encouraged in natural areas. Activities include, but are not limited to, bicycling, backpacking, hiking, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, skijoring, camping, berry picking and rock climbing. Snowmachining and ORVing are allowed activities within specifically designated areas, depending on resource sensitivities and potential conflicts with other park uses.

## **MAP 3-1: MANAGEMENT DESIGNATIONS BY MANAGEMENT UNIT**

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## **MANAGEMENT UNITS**

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This chapter presents the specific land management policies and guidelines for each of the six management units (Maps 3-1). Unit boundaries generally follow hydrographic boundaries, but may vary where patterns of public use and land ownership dictate. Management intent presented in each unit does not apply to private lands. Each management unit has a description and a statement of management objectives and guidelines for development.

The six management units are:

- Unit 1: Chena River - Road Corridor
- Unit 2: Colorado Creek Unit
- Unit 3: Angel Creek - Chena Dome Unit
- Unit 4: East Fork - Angel Rocks Unit
- Unit 5: Tors Unit
- Unit 6: South Fork Unit

## UNIT 1: CHENA RIVER – ROAD CORRIDOR

### Description

The Chena River – Road Corridor Unit parallels the Chena Hot Springs Road and the upper Chena River. See Map 3-2. This unit is a corridor that varies in width from one-half to three-miles wide. This unit encompasses the lower elevations of the Recreation Area, which are predominately flood plains, ponds, wetlands, and sloughs.

This unit lies within the Chena River floodplain and any development may be subject to periodic flooding. The 1967 flood (100 year stage) affected most of the area to some degree. The cost of building facilities in areas where they are affected by extreme flood events, as in 2003, must be factored into the costs of new construction. The three existing campgrounds are relatively protected from flooding. However, more recent flooding has impacted the riverbank of the Rosehip campground and picnic area, causing the loss of two campsites and half the picnic area. The Tors Campground received damage mainly to the parking area. All gravel bar access roads are of a low standard so the cost of repairing flood damage is generally minimal.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Experiences</i>	<i>Outdoor Recreation Activities</i>
<u>Facilities</u>	Visitors find large white spruce and clear water in the upper Chena lowlands. The open gravel bars provide good dispersed recreation sites. Three established campgrounds. Two public use cabins accessible by road. Established picnic areas. Opportunities for viewing wildlife along the road and salmon spawning in the river.	Dispersed camping. Dispersed picnicking. Camping in campgrounds. Overnighting in Public Use Cabins. Interpretation. Sightseeing and picnicking. Hunting and target shooting. Fishing.
<u>Trails &amp; Trailheads</u>	Trailheads associated with trail systems in other units provide parking, toilets, informational and interpretive displays and other facilities. There are a number of existing winter trails providing excellent dog sledding, snowmachine, skijor and cross-country skiing opportunities. These users can travel out of this unit into the trail systems of the other units.	Day hiking. Backpacking. Rock climbing. Picnicking. ORV use. Horseback riding. Dog sledding. Snowmachining. Skijoring. Cross-country skiing. Trapping. Snowshoeing. Bicycling. Hunting.
<u>Ponds and Sloughs</u>	Canoeing and kayaking on quiet water and pond fishing are popular activities. ADF&G stocks Twin Bears, Goldeneye, and North Fork ponds with grayling and rainbow trout.	Dispersed camping. Picnicking. Group picnicking. Hunting. Fishing. Swimming.
<u>River Corridor</u>	The upper Chena offers some relatively fast water with cut banks, sweepers and logjams to challenge boaters. Abundant grayling provide good fishing. Multiple river access roads provide ready access for many different experiences.	Day trips on river. Extended float trips. Fishing. Hunting. Gravel bar camping & picnicking.

## Management Objectives and Guidelines

This management unit is designated “Recreation Development” and will be managed consistent with this purpose.

The Chena River – Road Corridor Unit will be managed to provide campgrounds, increased dispersed camping and picnicking, improved river access for fishing and boating, winter trail use, and winter and summer access to trails within other units. Motorized travel will be restricted to designated roads and trails. With the exception of personal watercraft (PWCs), powerboats are allowed on the river, but all ponds are non-motorized. PWCs are prohibited in the Recreation Area, except from the third bridge to the East (Middle) Fork of the Chena River, and up the East Fork, where they are used to access private property and travel beyond the Recreation Area boundary.

The existing Twin Bears Camp group camp facility at Milepost 30.0 will continue to be managed under permit by a private operator. Public use of the pond for fishing and swimming will continue to be allowed. The camp will be open to the public on a reservation-basis year round.

### Access Roads to the River, Primary Sites and Dispersed Sites

*Note: Milepost locations are given R (right) or L (left) designators, heading eastbound.*

- Monitor, maintain and improve nineteen primary river and facility access roads: Milepost 26.6L, 27.0R, 27.9R, 29.9L, 30.0L, 31.6L, 32.2R, 33.0L, 36.4L, 37.8R, 39.5L, 41.6L, 42.8L, 44.1L, 45.5R, 47.8L, 48.9R, 49.2L and 50.5L.
- Monitor and maintain all roads to dispersed sites: 26.7R, 28.2L, 28.6R, 29.4R, 29.5L, 31.4R, 38.2L, 39.6R, 42.3R, 42.9R, 43.0R, 43.7L, 43.9R, 44.1R, 45.5L, 47.2L and 47.9L.
- Work with DOT/PF to widen shoulders at certain locations along the Chena Hot Springs Road to allow for safe summer biking and walking along the roadway.
- Work with DOT/PF to plow winter areas adequate to accommodate vehicles with snow machine trailers.
- Work with DOT/PF when brush clearing along the road is planned.
- Seek opportunities to develop safe wildlife viewing areas, particularly along the highway. Sites that could be improved are located at MP 27.8, 28.2, 29.2, 29.4, 38.8, 39.1, 41.6, 42.8, 42.0, 42.9, 46.0, 46.7 and 49.9.

### Facility Developments and Improvements

- Visitor Entrance Facility. Design and construct a visitor entrance station adjacent to the highway near Rosehip Campground that will provide Recreation Area information and collect site fees.
- Twin Bears Camp. Work with permittee to maintain and improve the facilities, including the public access to the trails and pond, improve the camp road and seek opportunities to reroute the camp road off the pond.
- Shooting Range
  - 1) Upgrade benches, trash receptacle, and re-install a vaulted toilet.
  - 2) Reroute the winter trail so that it avoids proximity to the target shooters and better sign the trails and trailhead for safety.

- 3) Seek funding and volunteers to upgrade or extend the shooting range.
  - 4) Seek user group support for facility operations and maintenance.
  - 5) Install trailhead information displays for Stiles Creek, the Winter Trail, and Mist Creek trails.
  - 6) As camping popularity grows, consider designated sites to improve quality.
- Tors Trail Campground. Develop a self-guided nature trail with interpretive signing.
  - Stiles Creek Extension Trailhead. When trail is rerouted to a more sustainable alignment, develop the trailhead facility.
  - Red Squirrel Campground
    - 1) Develop a self-guided nature trail with interpretive signing.
    - 2) Separate the picnic area from the camping area.
  - East Fork Trail
    - 1) Install informational display for East Fork Trail.
    - 2) Provide picnic tables, bear resistant trash receptacles, and toilets at the Goldeneye Pond and East Fork trailhead.
    - 3) If area becomes heavily used, consider establishing designated parking locations.
  - North Fork Pond. Develop an interpretive display and self-guided nature trail with signing.

#### Public Use Cabins

- Construct a road- or boat- or trail-accessible public use cabin adjacent to the river or a pond, primarily for summer use. The location should be chosen in an area with a stable sloped-bank so that there is minimal resource damage. Winter trail access should also be considered when choosing the location.
- Additional cabins may be considered in the future, based on demand and funding. Cabins should be sited off (out of sight of) main trails or public attractions to avoid user conflicts and vandalism.

#### River

- Near Flat Creek Slough. Develop a canoe put-in/take-out with stable banks and adequate parking.
- Rosehip Campground. Develop an improved canoe take-out nearby and reclaim the steep bank at the current site.
- Hodgins Slough. Develop a canoe put-in/take-out with adequate parking.
- Trailered boat launch sites. Place signage for the three designated launch sites at MP 27.9, MP 37.8, and MP 44.1 and place signs at them. If a launch site is identified at the west end of the recreation area closer to the highway than the 27.9MP site, seek authorization and develop that site.

## Road

- Several highway-associated safety hazards exist within the Chena Hot Springs Road right-of-way in the Chena River Recreation Area. State Parks will continue to work with DOT/PF to ensure in that necessary highway maintenance and management standards are met. At the same time, DOT/PF should make improvements such as wider shoulders in key locations so the Chena Hot Springs Road is safer for vehicles turning on to or off of side roads. When improving and maintaining the road and its right-of-way, DOT/PF should take into account the recreational and scenic character of the road corridor.
- State Parks should continue to work with DOT/PF to address flood mitigation and repair.
- DOT/PF and State Parks should identify access points, safety hazards and turnouts, and vegetation maintenance management for enhancing viewing opportunities. Wider shoulders will help reduce “moose jams” and other safety concerns.
- Establish a way for hikers to safely access the Tors Trail entrance without having to cross the highway at a dangerous curve.
- Primary facility access roads and dispersed river site access roads will be signed, maintained and monitored. Other incidental access roads to the river will be monitored but not actively managed or signed unless resource damage or public safety concerns warrant management restrictions or closure.
- Soft sections of river access roads should be hardened.

## Trails and Trailheads

- Chena Hot Springs Winter trailhead, near Flat Creek (MP 26.6L). Construct an interpretive and informational display.
- South Fork trailhead should be relocated and signed closer to the trail, so that a road crossing is not required.
- Compeau Trail. Develop and improve the trailhead parking area. Consider dispersed campsites with ATV access directly to the trail.
- Stiles Creek and Chena Hot Springs Winter trailheads (MP 36.4L). Install trailhead informational displays for Stiles Creek, Chena Hot Springs Winter, and Mist Creek trails.
- Mist Creek trailhead (MP 36.4). If use increases substantially, State Parks will consider the development of a trailhead on the south side of the road for the safety of the trail users.
- Granite Tors trailhead. Construct a safer Chena Hot Springs Road pedestrian crossing between the trail and the trailhead.
- Stiles Creek Bluff trailhead (MP 41.6L). Add an informational display, install a toilet, and improve parking.
- Lower Chena Dome trailhead (MP 49.2L). Establish designated parking spaces if parking area fills on a regular basis.
- Upper Chena Dome and Angel Creek trailheads (MP 50.5L). Install water well and expand parking area to accommodate vehicles towing trailers.

**MAP 3-2: MANAGEMENT UNIT 1:  
CHENA RIVER – ROAD CORRIDOR**

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**UNIT 2: COLORADO CREEK**


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**Description**

The Colorado Creek Management Unit encompasses the northwest part of the Chena River Recreation Area between approximately Milepost 27.0 and 41.5, including lowlands and creek bottoms and culminating in alpine country along the Northern border. See Map 3-3. This unit provides outstanding opportunities for off-road vehicle use. Twenty-five miles of multi-use trails access two public use cabins. The Stiles Creek Trail offers excellent high country vistas. The Colorado Creek Trail navigates the valley and is better suited to winter travel. The Compeau Trail, constructed in 2006, is a high-country year-round trail that connects to the 2004 Little Chena Dozer Line outside the Recreation Area boundary and to the Colorado Creek Trail.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Experiences</i>	<i>Outdoor Recreation Activities</i>
Trails (summer)	Few areas in interior Alaska offer ORV trails due to bogs and permafrost; but two trails in this unit offer this opportunity – Stiles and Compeau. Heavy use of lowland sections of these trails have created deep ruts and multiple braided trails through wet areas.	ORVing. Horseback riding. Hunting. Hiking. Overnight camping and cabin rental.
Trails (winter)	Traveling on the Colorado Creek, Compeau, and Stiles Creek trails, a snowmachiner or dog sledder can feel isolated while being only a short distance from the Chena Hot Springs Road. Overnight camping in cabins enhances this experience.	Snowmachine travel. Dog sledding. Skijoring. Skiing. Overnight camping and cabin rental. Hunting.

**Management Objectives and Guidelines**

The Colorado Creek Unit is designated “Natural Area” and will be managed consistent with these purposes. This unit should be managed to optimize use of the existing trail network for multiple use, including motorized vehicles, horse-back riding, skiing, dog sledding and hiking.

This area will be managed for a variety of uses, including motorized uses. Existing trails will continue to be brushed for use in the winter and new trails constructed if use warrants, particularly trails that connect to existing trails and that create loop trails. The resource impacts of trail use will be monitored. Summer motorized use is limited to designated trails to ensure the protection of soils and vegetation and to minimize erosion problems so trail use may continue.

State Parks will develop a horse-picketing site near the Stiles Creek Public Use Cabin.

### Public Use Cabins/Shelters

- Colorado Creek Trail
  - 1) Upgrade the Colorado Creek Cabin.
  - 2) Construct a public use cabin near the fork of the Colorado Creek and the Stiles Creek trails.
- Stiles Creek Bluff Trail. Construct a public use cabin at a location along the trail with a view of the East Fork Valley.
- Compeau Trail. Construct a public use cabin at a location along the trail with a view of the high country ridges.

### Trails

- Reroute or install hardened surfaces for trails in low-lying areas and reconstruct and harden a single trail at locations where various braided trails have developed.
- Maintain the Compeau Trail for summer, multi-use access to the Colorado Creek Public Use Cabin.
- For new trails, assess the alternatives, provide for public review, seek funding for construction, and construct, particularly those that connect to existing trails or create loop trails.
- When alternate routes are developed to accommodate motorized summer use to a destination that was previously reached with a lowland valley trail, redesignate the lowland valley trail so that motorized use is allowed only in winter.

**MAP 3-3: MANAGEMENT UNIT 2:  
COLORADO CREEK**

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**UNIT 3: ANGEL CREEK – CHENA DOME**


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**Description**

This unit encompasses the northern portion of the Recreation Area between Milepost 41.5 and 51.0. See Map 3-4. The magnificent, fragile high alpine country associated with the Chena Dome dominates the Angel Creek Valley. The expansive panoramas and series of open alpine ridges with Chena Dome as a focal point create a destination for extended trail hiking. Another distinctive feature of this unit is the view eastward down the valley to Angel Rocks, one of the best views in the Chena River Recreation Area. The gradient is not steep but the narrow valley provides ever-changing scenes of the high country and the valley floor. The popular for both sightseeing and trail-related activities. The area is also popular because guests of the Angel Creek Lodge and Chena Hot Springs Resort located nearby often visit this unit to use its trails in both summer and winter.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Experiences</i>	<i>Outdoor Recreation Activities</i>
<u>Chena Dome and associated ridges</u>	The high country ecosystem surrounding the Angel Creek drainage is not readily visible from trails in this part of the state. The scenery is spectacular and the alpine wildflowers are exceptionally beautiful in the first half of the summer. Also, an historical plane crash site can be viewed along the Chena Dome Trail.	Hiking, backpacking. Overnight camping and Hunting. A shelter cabin for inclement weather is on the Chena Dome Trail.
<u>Angel Creek Valley</u>	Fishing at the mouth of Angel Creek is good, the scenery is beautiful, and the low gradients make this an accessible, attractive area for winter travel. The lowlands are very wet in summer making travel along the Angel Creek Trail difficult at times.	Hiking, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, snow machining, dog sledding, horseback riding. Two public use cabins are located on the Angel Creek Trail.

**Management Objectives and Guidelines**

The Angel Creek-Chena Dome Unit is designated “Natural Area” and will be managed consistent with these purposes.

This unit will be managed for low density hiking and backpacking in the alpine country during the summer, and medium density cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, skijoring and snowmachining in the lowlands in the winter. The Angel Creek Trail will be open to motorized uses in the winter. When the trail is rerouted to a drier route, the realigned Valley Trail may be open to motorized use in the summer.

This unit will be managed to provide for hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking experiences in the high country in the summer. The Chena Dome summer trail is a non-motorized mostly alpine loop trail of approximately 29 miles. The hike generally takes three-four days. A shelter is located on the far eastern end of the trail. Two cabins are located along the Angel Creek Valley Trail. This trail will be managed for non-motorized uses in the summer and motorized and non-motorized use in the winter.

### Public Use Cabins/Shelters

- Chena Dome Trail. State Parks will consider issuing special use permits for an organization to construct and maintain new facilities (including public use cabins, shelters, yurts and tent pads).
- Seek partners with user groups to help maintain the existing trail shelter.
- Install rain water run-off collection systems to provide water at the trail shelters or at cabins where surface water is not available.

### Trails

- Improve signage at the spur trail that connects the Chena Dome Trail with the Angel Creek Trail.
- Install better signage along the Chena Dome Trail.
- Reroute the Angel Creek Trail from low, wet areas near the trailhead and repair or install hardened surfaces on the trail so that it can be opened for ORV use in summer.
- There are two short segments of the Chena Dome Trail that are outside the Recreation Area and cross land managed by the DNR Division of Mining, Land and Water. The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should apply for an Interagency Land Management Agreement for these two segments so that the entire length of the trail is managed by the same division.

### Fire line Trail

- During the 2004 fire season, a fire line was bulldozed from the Two Rivers Road, through the Tanana Valley State Forest and up to the western edge of the Recreation Area. The Fire Line is open to ORVs up to mile 13.5, just within the western boundary of the Recreation Area, where signs are posted informing the public of current ORV regulations and the trail is blocked.

**MAP 3-4: MANAGEMENT UNIT 3:  
ANGEL CREEK – CHENA DOME**

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**UNIT 4: EAST FORK – ANGEL ROCKS**


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**Description**

The East Fork – Angel Rocks Unit encompasses the northeastern portion of the Recreation Area. See Map 3-5. This area provides both motorized and non-motorized trails to two distinct and outstanding landforms that characterize this unit: the East Fork Valley and Angel Rocks. The non-motorized Angel Rocks loop trail winds through granite rock outcroppings and delivers stunning alpine views. The Angel Rocks Trail can be followed along the ridgeline to the trail shelter near the Recreation Area boundary. At this point, the trail meets a motorized cross-trail, heading north to the Chena Hot Springs Resort and south to the East Fork Valley Trail. The East Fork Valley forms the boundary between motorized use to the north and non-motorized use to the south and provides miles of snowmachine access, extending far beyond the Recreation Area boundary. Summer access up the East Fork is difficult due to shallow river conditions, remoteness and lack of access.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Experiences</i>	<i>Outdoor Recreation Activities</i>
<u>East Fork</u>	The East Fork offers a primitive backcountry experience with cross-country skiing and snow machining opportunities on the East Fork-Chena Hot Springs trail system.	Remote access to boating and fishing. Snow machining. Cross-country skiing and skijoring. Trapping. Hunting. Motorized winter use on East Fork-Chena Hot Springs Trail.
<u>Angel Rocks</u>	Angel Rocks are large granite outcroppings near the north boundary of the recreation area. They provide an easy day hike -- the top of the rocks is less than two miles from the trailhead. The trail connects with a 5-mile extension to the Hot Springs. There is a shelter cabin located at the junction of these two trails on the ridge top.	Trail hiking. Snowshoeing. Skijoring. Rock climbing. Picnicking. Overnight camping including in a shelter. Hunting.

**Management Objectives and Guidelines**

The East Fork – Angel Rocks Unit is designated “Natural Area” and will be managed consistent with these purposes. This unit will be managed primarily for low density, river floating, hiking and cross-country skiing experience. Exceptions are the Angel Rocks Trail, which is a high use trail; the motorized winter-only East Fork Trail and the East Fork to Chena Hot Springs Trail. Motorboats also ascend the river, some to access private land east of the Recreation Area.

In the winter, the East Fork valley is open to commercial mining traffic on the East Fork winter trail. Commercial use will be monitored carefully and managed through park permitting procedures. The East Fork Trail is designated and marked as motorized in winter only. Permits are required for heavy equipment use.

The Angel Rocks Trail is a non-motorized 3.5-mile loop trail to large granite outcroppings near the north boundary of the Recreation Area. The Angel Rocks to Chena Hot Springs Trail connects the Angel Rocks Trail to Chena Hot Springs. The first 6.1 miles of the trail is

non-motorized. The remaining 2.2 miles of trail to Chena Hot Springs outside the Recreation Areas is open to motorized use. The Angel Rocks Shelter is located at approximately mile six of the Angel Rocks to Chena Hot Springs Trail.

#### Public Use Cabins/Shelters

- State Parks will consider issuing special use permits for an organization to construct and maintain new facilities (including public use cabins, shelters, yurts and tent pads).
- Seek partners with user groups to help maintain trail shelters.
- Install rain water run-off collection systems to provide water at the trail shelters or at cabins where surface water is not available.

#### Trails

- Angel Rocks Trail
  - 1) Install better trail signage, particularly at junctions and along the return loop trail.
  - 2) Install horse reroute signs that direct horse riders to appropriate routes, off the boardwalk.
- East Fork Trail
  - 1) Continue to monitor and maintain.
- Angel Rocks to Chena Hot Springs Trail
  - 1) Install better signage.
  - 2) Complete improvements to the first half of the trail.
  - 3) Improve return route on second half of the trail.
- East Fork to Chena Hot Springs Trail
  - 1) Install better signage.
  - 2) Reroute trail to improve the grade on the steep sidehill section.
  - 3) When trail is improved, produce trail map and flyer for public distribution.
- East Fork Chena River
  - 1) Motorboats, including personal watercraft, will continue to be allowed to use this fork of the Chena River.

**MAP 3-5: MANAGEMENT UNIT 4:  
EAST FORK – ANGEL ROCKS**

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**UNIT 5: TORS**


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**Description**

The Tors Unit encompasses the southeast portion of the Recreation Area. See Map 3-6. This unit consists mainly of the rugged uplands between the South and East forks of the Chena River with narrow strips of lowlands bordering the main stem of the Chena River, Little Munson Creek and Beaver Creek. Contained within this unit are the Granite Tors which jut dramatically from the alpine tundra on the highest ridges. These granite monoliths are a region-wide attraction for hikers, rock climbers and spring skiers. The Tors Trail leads hikers to the ridgeline where these massive rocks reside.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Experiences</i>	<i>Outdoor Recreation Activities</i>
<u>Granite Tors</u>	The Granite Tors are the primary destination for backcountry travelers, offering a unique natural feature jutting incongruously out of the alpine tundra. Use of the trail system is enhanced by a shelter located in the unit.	Trail hiking. Backpacking. Cross-country hiking on high ridges. Cross-country skiing. Overnight camping. Shelter camping. Rock climbing. Sightseeing. Picnicking. Hunting.
<u>Mist Creek</u>	The Mist Creek Trail system offers a non-motorized connector trail to the South Fork Trail and to Nugget Creek Shelter in Unit 6. If used in summer, the Chena River crossing requires a boat.	Trail hiking. Backpacking. Cross-country hiking on high ridges. Cross-country skiing. Overnight camping. Public use cabin. Sightseeing. Picnicking. Hunting.

**Management Objectives and Guidelines**

The Tors Unit is designated “Natural Area” and will be managed consistent with these purposes. This unit will be managed for non-motorized use in all seasons, providing a large expanse of backcountry in a quiet, primitive state, except for the Beaver Creek Valley, where winter motorized use will be allowed in designated areas, in accordance with the military land use polices. The lower few miles of the Tors Trail will be managed for higher density use and additional improvements to the trail will be made.

Developed facilities in this unit consist of trails, trail markers and a shelter for overnight use. There are a series of unmarked trail routes looping from the existing Granite Tors Trail to the northeast, southeast and west, along with a trail route up Little Munson Creek through Beaver Creek to the East Fork and Nugget Creek. These provide over 50 miles of trails for hiking and skiing.

Approximately 11,520 acres in the southern portion of this unit is owned by the military. This land is state topfiled – the state will assume title to the land when the military relinquishes ownership. The United States Army has its own regulations that apply to recreational use (Appendix C). If the Army surpluses all or portions of this land, it will become part of the Recreation Area and managed by State Parks.

### Public Use Cabins/Shelters

- Tors Trail. State Parks will consider issuing special use permits to organizations to construct and maintain new facilities, including public use cabins, shelters, yurts and tent pads.
- If level of use warrants, construct a toilet near the trail shelter.
- Install rain water run-off collection systems to provide water at the trail shelters or at cabins where surface water is not available.

### Trails & Trailheads

- Tors Trail
  - 1) Maintain and enhance the shorter loop trail on the Granite Tors Trail.
  - 2) Install better signage along the Granite Tors Trail.
- Mist Creek Trail
  - 1) Place trail markers on the trail and brush to a standard width.
  - 2) Design trail for winter and summer non-motorized use.
  - 3) Clearly designate the trail as non-motorized, particularly where it joins the South Fork Trail.
- State Parks will work with user groups and individuals to expand winter trails and a cabin system for non-motorized users.

## **MAP 3-6: MANAGEMENT UNIT 5: TORS**

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**UNIT 6: SOUTH FORK**


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**Description**

This unit consists mainly of the low valley lands surrounding the South Fork of the Chena River, from its confluence with the main fork upstream to Beaver Creek, and the foothills on the Recreation Area's west boundary. See Map 3-7. The South Fork delineates the western boundary of the non-motorized section of the park. Nugget Creek cabin on the South Fork provides a popular winter destination. From the cabin, skiers have access to the non-motorized Mist Creek Trail system. Summer use is minimal due to remoteness, river conditions, and lack of access.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Experiences</i>	<i>Outdoor Recreation Activities</i>
<u>South Fork</u>	This section of the Chena River is a small meandering stream with deep pools, beaver dams, logjams and excellent grayling fishing.	Boating. Fishing. Sightseeing. Hunting.
<u>Bog/slough topography</u>	Much of this subunit is ideal for trails.	Cross-country skiing. Designated snowmachine route.
<u>Nugget Creek</u>	The Nugget Creek Public Use Cabin is available for overnight use in all seasons.	Hiking and overnight stays in cabin. Hunting.

**Management Objectives and Guidelines**

The South Fork Unit is designated "Natural Area" and will be managed consistent with these purposes. This unit will be managed as a low density, river floating, hiking and low to medium density winter trail use. Snowmachining is allowed on designated trails. This unit is managed to allow winter motorized uses on the South Fork Trail.

The southern-most portion of this unit (approximately 4,400 acres) is owned by the military. Land managed by the military in both this unit and Unit 5 is topfiled by the State. The United States Army has its own regulations that apply to the recreational use in this area (Appendix C). If the military surpluses these lands, this area will be state owned and will be managed by State Parks as part of the Recreation Area.

Public Use Cabins/Shelters

- Upgrade Nugget Creek Public Use Cabin.
- Improve trail access to the Nugget Creek Cabin.
- State Parks will consider issuing special use permits for an organization to construct and maintain new facilities (including public use cabins, shelters, yurts and tent pads).
- Seek partners with user groups to help maintain the Nugget Creek Cabin.

### Trail

Though much of this unit is poorly suited for summer travel except by boat, it provides good opportunities for winter recreation. To provide for these opportunities, ten miles of winter trail should be developed in the South Fork valley; originating at the Colorado Creek trailhead, connecting to the Nugget Creek cabin and trail, and continuing south to connect with the Beaver Creek Trail in Unit 5. If this trail is constructed, it will be possible to travel approximately 30 miles from the South Fork to East Fork of the Chena River.

- Signing should be placed to define motorized and non-motorized areas for Snowmobiles.
- Place trail markers on the Mist Creek Trail. Brush trail to the appropriate width. Clearly designate it as non-motorized, with signs and appropriate barriers at both ends.
- Install rain water run-off collection systems to provide water at the trail shelters or at cabins where surface water is not available.

**MAP 3-7: MANAGEMENT UNIT 6:  
SOUTH FORK**