

Northern Unit (Natural Land Use Zone)

Unit Description

The Northern Unit contains all land and water north of the Nancy Lake Parkway and includes the areas north of Long Lake Road and the adjacent lands east of the Parkway and north of the maintenance facility. There are approximately 2,700 acres of land and water within the unit. There are no private parcels within this unit; however, a number of private parcels do share a boundary with NLSRA on the northern and eastern portions of the unit. Access to this unit primarily occurs from the Nancy Lake Parkway generally to the south of the unit. The Nancy Lake Parkway originates at mile 67.5 of the George Parks Highway and continues generally south and west to the west shore of South Rolly Lake. See Map 11 on page 7 - 33 for a depiction of the unit.

Like other units, the northern unit is a mix of uplands, wetlands, and waterbodies with vegetation that is similar to adjacent areas. The uplands consist of rolling hills and ridges with vegetation that is dominated by over mature white birch and white spruce trees with a dense shrub and grass understory. The wetlands and waterbodies occupy the area between these uplands with black spruce, alder, willow, shrubs, sedges, and grass species dominating the vegetation in these areas. The second water trail, the Pioneer Loop Canoe Trail, is located in this unit and provides a much more rustic and remote canoe trail experience as opposed to the Lynx Lake Loop Canoe Trail to the south.

Current Uses

This unit is unique within NLSRA and NLSRS in that it provides non-motorized recreation opportunities both summer and winter, with the exception of one snow trail that allows connectivity to area trails in winter. This unit receives the lowest level of recreational use of all of the units and use could be characterized as low throughout the year. This is due to the fact that few developed terra trails exist; none of the lakes currently allow use of a motor – internal combustion or electric; and, the use of snowmobiles is prohibited except for use on a single trail. Additionally, there are few developed facilities that are destinations for recreational users.

A fairly extensive looped cross-country ski trail system exists north of the Parkway. However, due to poor design and maintenance and lack of dependable snow pack, this trail receives little use during the winter. Because this snow trail incorporates wetlands segments, portions of the trail are impassible during snow free periods and thus receive very little use.

Summer use primarily consists of fishing activities on North Rolly and Rhein lakes and minimal use of the Pioneer Loop Canoe Trail. Very little summer use occurs on the portions of the ski trail that are located on uplands.

1 Existing Facilities and Trails

2 The following table identifies facilities and trails that are currently located in this unit. Trails
3 are listed here to provide a comprehensive overview of unit recommendations and allow the
4 reader to see how the proposals tie together. A fire pit and a pit privy are amenities at all
5 campsites. A wood stove and pit privy are amenities at public use cabins. See the Trail Plan
6 in Appendix C for detailed information on trails.
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Facility/Trail	Amenities
Boat launch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Rolly Lake <li>• Rhein Lake 	Vehicle parking at Nancy Lake Parkway Short access trails Hand carry launch Vehicle parking at Nancy Lake Parkway Short access trails Hand carry launch
Cross Country Ski Trails	Looped snow trails are located throughout much of the area north of the Parkway. The length of the existing trails is approximately 6 miles.
Pioneer Loop Canoe Trail	This trail provides a more rustic water trail experience as opposed to the Lynx Lake Loop Canoe Trail. The portages are longer and water segments are shorter than the Lynx Lake Loop Canoe Trail.
Motorized Snowmobile Trail	A single snow trail connects the trails south of the Parkway with the Willow community trails west and north of NLSRA.

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10 Management Intent

11 This area will continue to be managed for non-motorized recreation on a year-round basis
12 except for use of snowmobiles on the North Rolly Lake snowmobile trail and the frozen
13 surface of North Rolly Lake. Year-round recreational opportunities should be expanded but
14 the level of facility and trail development should be limited to ensure low use levels and
15 densities.
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17 Management Guidelines

- Snow trails shall be redeveloped to accommodate cross country skiing, skijoring, and fat-tire biking. Stadium type trail development is not appropriate.
- The use of snowmobiles shall continue to be allowed on the North Rolly Lake winter trail and the frozen surface of North Rolly Lake when the area south of the Nancy Lake Parkway is open to the use of snowmobiles.
- Use of an internal combustion motor on boats shall remain prohibited on all waterbodies in this unit.

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- Public use cabins should be developed where they would provide new recreational opportunities where they do not currently exist. At least one of these public use cabins should be developed to provide a year-round non-motorized experience.

Facility and Trail Recommendations

The following table identifies new facilities as well as existing facilities that need to be rehabilitated, improved, or redeveloped to a higher standard. Although trails are not facilities, they are listed here to provide a comprehensive overview of unit recommendations and allow the reader to see how the proposals tie together. See the Trail Plan in Appendix C for detailed information on trails.

Table 8: Northern Unit Facility and Trail Recommendations

Ref. No.	Facilities/Trails	Desired Outcome
38	Design and develop one new public use cabin on the southeast shore of North Rolly Lake. This includes the design and development of a new parking area and access trail.	Provide a new opportunity for a multimodal accessible public use cabin that is relatively easy to access in the northern portion of NLSRA. This cabin location offers a stunning view of Denali on clear days.
39	Design and develop one new public use cabin on the Rhein Lake or Heins Pond.	Provide a public use cabin that has non-motorized access year-round. This cabin should be close enough to the winter trailhead to allow relatively easy access for people of all abilities.
40	Redevelop the existing snow trails as Class 3 trails to accommodate Nordic skiing, skijoring, classic cross-country skiing, and fat-tire bike use.	Will allow more uses on existing and redeveloped trails where motorized use will not occur. A redeveloped snow trail system should allow users of all skill levels to recreate in this area. New connection trails will diversify and enhance non-motorized winter recreation.
41	Design and develop new terra trails in the eastern portion of the unit. These trails should accommodate both hiking and biking, and possibly equestrian use. Classes of these terra trails should include both Class 2 and Class 3 trails.	These trails will expand hiking and biking opportunities in a non-motorized portion of the NLSRA.
42	Redevelop the Pioneer Loop Canoe Trail as a Class 3 water trail.	Enhance use and access to recreational opportunities in this area of NLSRA.

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3 **Map 11: Northern Management Unit**