

Chapter 6: Management for Each Unit

Planning Units

Due to Chugach State Park's large size and landscape diversity, the area has been divided into five geographical planning units to facilitate planning and management. They are Eklutna-Peters Creek, Eagle River, Ship Creek, Hillside, and Turnagain Arm (see Figure 2). The planning units are defined by major drainages and have characteristics which are unique unto themselves. Each will be described in this chapter individually regarding its setting, special considerations, existing facilities, and recommendations for management and development. The facility recommendations made in this chapter reflect only the proposals for new facilities or changes and/or enhancements to existing facilities. Routine maintenance needs are assumed to be required and are not addressed as specific facility recommendations.

Eklutna - Peters Creek Planning Unit

Setting

This northernmost area of the park contains approximately 193,100 acres and is composed of three major drainages and two smaller ones. On the northwest side of the park, Goat Creek, Eklutna River, Thunder Bird Creek, Peters Creek, and Little Peters Creek flow from a series of rugged mountain peaks and glaciers. The West Fork of Hunter Creek flows abruptly north from the northeast corner of the park. A portion of the park's ice field, located in the southeastern corner of the park dips into the lowlands in the form of Eklutna Glacier, one of the park's major valley glaciers. The carved Eklutna Valley contains the park's largest lake, Eklutna Lake, which is fed by glacial and freshwater streams flowing into the 7 mile long lake.

All of the unit's drainages are heavily wooded with white spruce-birch forests in the lower elevations or with dense stands of balsam poplar. Intermittent wet areas are dominated by black spruce bogs and muskeg. Between 2,000 and 3,000 feet in elevation, forest species become dwarfed and random patches of dense willow and alder grow where underground water is adequate. Above this level, tundra species and bare rock dominate the landscape. Particularly significant for wildlife is the existence of three natural mineral licks, two north of Eklutna Lake and the other north of Peters Creek along an unnamed tributary.

The valleys and towering mountains of this unit provide a striking visual setting for recreation enthusiasts. Some of the most popular scenic destinations for visitors of this unit include the Eklutna Valley, Thunder Bird Creek drainage, Peters Creek and Little Peters Creek valleys. Other less frequented areas of the park where visitors have traditionally gained access to the park's northern boundary are the Hunter Creek drainage, Pioneer Ridge, and the Goat Creek drainage. The portion of the Hunter Creek drainage that is located within the park is approximately two miles from the Knik River Road and receives light use primarily by hunters in the fall. Pioneer Peak and Ridge, used mainly by hikers in the summer, are accessed via a trailhead and trail easement maintained through a cooperative effort between the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's Parks and Recreation Department, the Bureau of Land Management, Eklutna Inc., the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and the Palmer-Wasilla Trail Association. The Goat Creek drainage has been used traditionally by hunters and mountain climbers seeking access to the high country.

The Eklutna Valley is one of the heavily used areas of the park and is known for its scenic qualities and diverse recreational opportunities. A trail leading from the Eklutna Lake access parallels the lake on an old road bed that leads to the West Fork of Eklutna River. This trail, the Lakeside Trail, is used to provide access to the Eklutna Glacier, but because the glacier has receded it is more difficult now to reach its terminus. The Lakeside Trail is open during specified time frames to ATV and snowmachine use and the snowmachines are allowed on the valley floor when snow conditions are adequate to protect the underlying vegetation.

Eklutna Lake is used by boaters even though alternating water levels (often exposing extensive mud flats) and frequent strong winds can make boating difficult. The main campground in the area is located at the north end of the lake and various campsites exist at the smaller more primitive campgrounds at the other end of the lake. The Yuditnu Creek Public Use Cabin is located midway along the lakeside trail and the Serenity Falls Public Use Hut exists nearer the terminus of the trail and is one of a series of mountaineering huts along the historical Eklutna Traverse. Many trails and routes lead from the basin, including the Mount POW hike leading from the Eklutna Lake Road.

Thunder Bird Creek drainage receives very heavy use due to the popular Thunder Bird Falls viewing area located just off the Glenn Highway. A parking lot and a one mile trail lead to the Thunder Bird Falls overlook and many private lots and homes line the trail initially to the falls. Few people continue beyond the falls overlook due to rough terrain. The difficulty of access to Thunder Bird Creek up stream of Thunder Bird Waterfall has kept this area in a primarily untouched state. During the fall, hunters enter the upper parts of the drainage area from adjacent valleys by crossing unnamed passes seeking moose and Dall sheep.

Peters Creek drainage is receiving increasing use, primarily by hunters and nearby residents from the Chugiak and Birchwood communities that have limited options to access the park. A trail along the valley floor leads from a trailhead located within a road right-of-way. The valley and trail are open to snowmachine use when snow cover is sufficient to protect vegetation. The scenic valley receives moderate use year-round and is popular in the fall

with hunters seeking moose, Dall sheep, and black bear. Little Peters Creek drainage is also known as Ptarmigan Valley and is another popular recreation destination year-round. The access to this valley is located off the Old Glenn Highway on Municipality of Anchorage land currently under lease by the park. A trail easement leads from the parking lot up the valley, which is open to snowmachine use when snow conditions are adequate to protect the underlying vegetation.

Management Intent

Protect the unit's watershed properties and drinking water sources. Manage this unit to protect its scenic qualities and enhance its diverse recreational opportunities. Increase public understanding and appreciation through the interpretation of unique natural and cultural features. Maintain the wildlife viewing area in the Eklutna Basin.

Special Management Considerations

Watershed Management

Eklutna Lake is one of the major sources of drinking water for residents of the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA). Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility (AWWU), the utility that manages the drinking water supply for the MOA, has a cooperative agreement⁹ with the park to facilitate management and protection of the important watersheds within the park that provide the bulk of the MOA water supply. Any development or other activities within the park shall be conducted in accordance with this cooperative agreement. Through this agreement, the park is charged with monitoring public use and identifying and correcting problems that could lead to a lowering of water quality, using Best Management Practices in the construction, operation and maintenance of trails and other recreational facilities to avoid or minimize contamination of the public water supply, and consulting with AWWU staff prior to authorizing or conducting significant land use activities in the watersheds.

Existing Management Areas

Snowmachines are presently allowed in Little Peters Creek, Peters Creek and the lake area of the Eklutna basin with adequate snow cover¹⁰. Summer off-road vehicles are allowed during certain times on the Eklutna Lakeside Trail¹¹. Non-motorized boats and boats powered by an electric motor are allowed on Eklutna Lake¹². The Four Mile Creek property acquired in 2000 within the Peters Creek drainage is closed to the use of motorized vehicles including snowmobile use as a result of a deed restriction. This restriction does not apply to park staff use of motorized vehicles for management and safety related purposes. Most of the Eklutna

9 See Anchorage Water & Wastewater Utility and Chugach State Park Cooperative Agreement, Management and Protection of Chugach State Park Public Watersheds and the information in Chapter 5.

10 See 11 AAC 20.040 for restrictions.

11 See 11 AAC 20.015 for restrictions.

12 See 11 AAC 20.025

drainage is in the Eklutna Lake Management Area¹³ which closes the area to all hunting except for black bear and small game by bow and arrow only. The taking of moose, brown bear and sheep is allowed by permit only but methods and means are restricted to bow and arrow. The Eklutna management area is currently closed to trapping. The remainder of the planning unit is in the Chugach State Park Management Area where hunting is allowed for black bear, bull moose, hare, grouse, ptarmigan, and waterfowl. The taking of brown bear, moose, Dall sheep and goat is allowed in this area by permit only¹⁴.

North Anchorage Land Agreement

Most of the lands affected by the North Anchorage Land Agreement (NALA) are found in this unit primarily around Eklutna Lake and in the Peters Creek drainage. NALA gave the State management authority in perpetuity to Eklutna Inc. owned lands within the park boundary in lieu of sharing in the military development lands in the future. These lands are to be managed as part of the park and in the same manner as other park lands are managed. Any new development on these managed lands that was not contemplated in the previous 1980 Chugach State Park Master Plan is subject to Eklutna Inc. concurrence if more than one-half acre of clearing is required.

Hazards

Eklutna Lake is the park's largest lake at 7 miles in length and 1 mile in width. Although the surface freezes in winter, fluctuating water levels create variations in ice thickness and cause surface irregularities which can result in unsafe ice conditions. Down-canyon winds can rise in the basin with little notice and often have sufficient force to create white-capped waves on the lake. To the unprepared boater, they can represent a hazardous situation. Avalanches and rock slides can occur at various times and locations within the Eklutna-Peters Creek Unit and can present a potential hazard to recreationalists.

Eklutna/Whiteout Traverse Mountaineering Huts

Three A-frame huts that were constructed by the Mountaineering Club of Alaska (MCA) before Chugach State Park was established in 1970 exist along the historic Eklutna/Whiteout Traverse. The huts are known as Pichler's Perch, Hans', and Rosie's Roost huts. The huts are considered to be publicly owned structures and are to be managed as public facilities within the park that are important for public safety. They must remain open to all glacier travelers on the traverse and must be shared by groups. Commercially guided parties may use the huts; however, they may not attempt to exclude other travelers from sharing the huts. The MCA performs annual maintenance work on the huts and because of their involvement, the state will give MCA one years notice regarding any plans to remove or not allow the reconstruction of a damaged hut.

13 See Appendix E for a map depicting how the special management areas coincide with park planning units.

14 Consult the latest version of the hunting regulations for details.

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT

Chapter 6: Eklutna - Peters Creek Planning Unit

Existing Facilities

Below you will find a list of the existing park facilities within this unit and the basic amenities available at each of them.

| Facility | Campsite(s) | Picnic Table(s)/ Shelter(s) | Latrine(s) | Boat Access | Public Use Cabin(s)/ Yurt | Interpretive Display(s)/ Trailhead Kiosk/ Bulletin Board | Water (i.e. drinking fountains, hand pumps, toilets) | Fire ring/Grill(s) | Ranger Office/ Maintenance Yard | Visitor Contact Center | Scenic Overlook | Trailhead/ Parking Lot | Historic Feature | Fishing Access | Residential Cabin | Fee Station/Booth | Ballfield/Other (i.e. playground, dump station) |
|--|-------------|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------------|--|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Eklutna Lake Canyon Site | x | x | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | |
| Eklutna Lake ATV Trailhead | | | x | | | x | | | x | x | | x | | | x | x | |
| Eklutna Maintenance Yard | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | |
| Eklutna Lake Campground | x | x | x | | | | x | x | | | | | | | | x | |
| Eklutna Lake Picnic Area | | x | x | | | x | x | x | | | | x | | | | x | |
| Eklutna Lake Group Area | x | x | x | | | x | x | x | | | | | | | | | |
| Eklutna Lake Day Use Trailhead | | | x | x | | x | x | | | | | x | | x | | x | |
| Yuditnu Creek Cabin | | x | x | x | x | | | x | | | | | | x | | | |
| Eklutna Lake South Backcountry Campgrounds (Bold Airstrip, Eklutna Alex, Kanchee) | x | x | x | | | x | | x | | | | | | | | | |
| Serenity Falls Hut | | x | x | | x | | | x | | | | | | | | | |
| Eklutna Traverse Huts* (Pichler's Perch, Hans' Hut, Rosie's Roost) | | | | | x** | | | | | | | | x | | | | |
| Thunder Bird Falls Trailhead & Overlook | | | x | | | x | | | | | x | x | | | | x | |
| Peters Creek Trailhead | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ptarmigan Valley Trailhead | | | | | | x | | | | | | x | | | | | |

* Maintained by the Mountaineering Club of Alaska.

** Not reservable.

Facility Recommendations

Below you will find a listing of the new facilities or new upgrades to existing facilities.

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|----|-----------|---|---|--|
| 10 | 6.1 | Mount POW Trailhead | Develop a small vehicular trailhead in the vicinity of Mile 5 of the Eklutna Lake Road and Mount POW. The area should be developed in conjunction with a sustainable trail to the summit. | Mount POW is climbed each Veterans Day to honor POW/MIAs. Currently parking occurs in the Eklutna Lake Road ROW and access to Mount POW traverses a steep hillside initially. Work with veterans group to site a sustainable trail to the summit and associated parking area to serve the trail. |
| 11 | 6.1 & 6.2 | Eklutna Lake Canyon Group Recreation Site | Separate area into multiple sites that can be combined as needed. Add picnic pavilions, water and toilet facilities. | The current site has no amenities yet gets some use. The site has potential to provide a much needed area for larger gatherings. |
| 12 | 6.1 & 6.2 | Eklutna Lake ATV Trailhead | Redesign, pave and enlarge parking area. | This trailhead provides ATV and snowmachine users year-round access to the scenic Eklutna Basin and Lakeside Trail. The parking area is poorly designed and needs upgrading to better accommodate vehicles with trailers. |
| 13 | 6.1 & 6.2 | Eklutna Ranger Station | Relocate and upgrade to include equipment storage, residential quarters, and visitor contact area. | The current ranger facility is not well situated to serve visitors and lacks operational necessities and functionality. The new facility would be in a more visible location to serve visitor needs. |
| 14 | 6.1 & 6.2 | Volunteer Housing | Replace volunteer housing and site near ranger station. | The current volunteer cabin is inadequate and does not meet the park's basic necessities. |
| 15 | 6.1 & 6.2 | Eklutna Lake Campground | Redesign campground and upgrade as needed. Include picnic pavilions, cooking area and animal resistant food storage area, and provisions to facilitate winter camping. | The Eklutna Campground has long been a popular destination that has a lot of potential to better accommodate future use if demand continues to grow. Some upgrades particularly for winter use are needed in the short term to enhance recreational opportunities. |
| 16 | 6.1 & 6.2 | Eklutna Lake Group Area | Add picnic pavilions. | This area should be enhanced in conjunction with campground upgrades to better facilitate group use. |

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|----|-----------|---|---|---|
| 17 | 6.1 & 6.2 | Eklutna Lake Day Use Trailhead | Monitor use of the area and upgrade or enlarge trailhead as needed. Ensure that any upgrades are coordinated with surrounding facilities. Open up and maintain views of the lake. | This serves as the main trailhead for the Eklutna day use facilities. The site contains over 75 parking spaces, latrines, and interpretative signage. It provides direct access to the Eklutna Lakeside Trail and Eklutna Lake. |
| 18 | 6.1 & 6.2 | Eklutna Lake Boat Access | Upgrade to provide safe, readily accessible drop-off and pick-up location to facilitate boat launch and retrieval and better integrate into surrounding facilities. | The current hand carried boat launch is not well designed, provides poor access to the water and is usually quite some distance from the actual lake shore. New boat access should accommodate fluctuating water levels. |
| 19 | 6.1 & 6.2 | Eklutna Lake Picnic Area | Redesign area adjacent to the campground to include pavilions, and associated facilities, of various sizes including at least one suitable for larger groups. Ensure that any upgrades are coordinated with surrounding facilities. Open up and maintain views of the lake. | The picnic area is a poorly designed and underutilized resource with the potential to better serve visitor needs. Group use areas are needed throughout the park. Vegetative growth prevents scenic viewing of Eklutna Lake. |
| 20 | 6.1 & 6.2 | Bold Ridge Backcountry Campsite | Harden a camp site on Bold Ridge and enhance as needed. | This site would provide a needed formalized area to camp on the ridge while minimizing resource impacts. |
| 21 | 6.1 & 6.2 | Eklutna Lake South Backcountry Campgrounds (Bold Airstrip, Eklutna Alex, Kanchee) | Upgrade latrines at campgrounds and sites as needed. Increase the number of campsites at the Bold Airstrip and Kanchee campgrounds. Add animal-resistant food storage and cooking area. | These campgrounds were established long ago when visitors were able to drive a road back to use them. Over time the road was washed out and the areas are now served by a trail. The campsites have not seen any upgrades or serious maintenance since the 1970s. Some upgrades and expansion will make these areas more desirable and help distribute use. |
| 22 | 6.1 & 6.2 | South End & West Side Eklutna Lake Public Use Cabins | Establish some public use cabins on the south end and west side of Eklutna Lake. Use a site planning process to determine where they are located and how many are appropriate for the area. | Public use cabins are popular, easy to maintain, and enhance the recreational experience. The west side of Eklutna Lake could be well served with the careful addition of some cabins. |
| 23 | 6.1 & 6.2 | West Side Eklutna Lake Backcountry Campsites | Harden camp sites on the west side of Eklutna Lake and enhance as needed. | Formalizes hardened spots to minimize resource impacts and provide for visitor use. |
| 24 | 6.1 | Serenity Falls Hut | Maintain hut and monitor use. Work on a better reservation system for the hut to maximize its use. | This is an underutilized park resource. Currently the only way to reserve space in this hut is to visit the Public Information Center in Anchorage in person. |

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|----|-------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| 25 | 6.1 | Thunder Bird Creek Drainage Trailhead | Look for opportunities to establish a small to medium parking lot trailhead in the area to disperse use and provide additional access. | There is limited access to this part of the park but the area has been traditionally used by those seeking access to the Thunder Bird Creek drainage, Mount Eklutna and the surrounding alpine terrain. There is currently no road access to the park boundary in this area but people have accessed the park using informal trails in the vicinity. |
| 26 | 6.1 | Peters Creek Trailhead | Improve access and build a road into the park where a medium parking lot can be developed and perhaps a caretaker cabin. The parking area needs to accommodate vehicles with trailers. | This site is becoming more popular for year-round use and alternative access in the area is very limited. Parking currently is within the right-of-way and is not adequate for the level of use the site receives. Upgrades would reduce neighborhood impacts and provide more security for the area. |
| 27 | 6.1 | Peters Creek Valley Public Use Cabin | Establish a public use cabin in the valley. The cabin shall be located where both motorized and non-motorized activities will be served. | This area is becoming more popular for year-round use and a public use cabin in the valley would enhance the recreational experience. |
| 28 | 6.1 | Ptarmigan Valley Trailhead | Landscape trailhead and pave road and parking lot. Enhance site with picnic shelters and a group use area. Parking upgrades will need to include space for vehicles towing trailers. | The site provides year-round access to the Little Peters Creek drainage via the Ptarmigan Valley Trail. Trailhead enhancements would make the poorly designed area more usable and desirable. |
| 29 | 6.1 | Canyon Drive Trailhead | Develop a small parking lot trailhead with trailhead kiosk. | This site is popular for hikers seeking quick access to a hidden lake and the surrounding forest and alpine terrain. Parking currently is within the right-of-way and is not adequate for the level of use the site receives. Upgrades would reduce neighborhood impacts and provide clearer management authority at the site. |

Map 6.1: Eklutna-Peters Creek Unit

Map 6.2: Eklutna-Peters Creek Unit

Eagle River Planning Unit

Setting

Dominated by the broad U-shaped valley of Eagle River, this planning unit spans the park from east to west and is approximately 138,100 acres in size. Composed of Eagle River and its main tributaries, the South Fork of Eagle River, and Meadow and Raven creeks, the area contains landscapes ranging from broad flat valley bottoms to rugged mountains and glaciers. Eagle River meanders back and forth across its broad flood plain leaving numerous old channels and gravel bars. Above the flood plain, the area is heavily forested with white spruce-birch forests. Steep-sided mountains rise abruptly from the valley floor, and a definite brush line of willow and alder grows above the forested areas. At higher elevations, tundra, bare rock and ice dominate. At the far end of the valley, one of the park's major valley glaciers, Eagle Glacier, winds downhill. At the glacier's terminus lies a lake referred to locally as Glacier Lake. The glacier itself is part of the park's larger glacial system to the south and east where higher elevations and dramatically increased levels of precipitation feed snow into the system which sustains the lower-lying portions of the glaciers.

The Eagle River drainage is a prime area for wildlife viewing. Dall sheep can be seen foraging on nearby mountainsides, moose and bear are occasionally sighted along the river corridor, and beaver and spawning salmon can be observed from the viewing decks located at the Eagle River Nature Center. A natural mineral lick, important for wildlife, exists in this unit south of Eagle River along an unnamed tributary. Recreational use in the main Eagle River valley is considered heavy although exact figures are difficult to establish because of the lack of defined access points along the approximate 12 miles of road. Throughout its length, people regularly stop to seek out the nearby woods, the river, ponds, and scenic views of the valley.

Eagle River itself offers good recreational opportunities and has long been a popular float for canoeists, rafters, and kayakers even though segments of the river are rated difficult. Boaters gain access to the river via the Eagle River Campground, the Eagle River Greenbelt Trailhead, the North Fork Eagle River Trailhead, or the Eagle River Nature Center. Due to a shift in Eagle River's course, the North Fork Trailhead is less desirable as a launching point since one must now traverse a slough to gain river access. The water course and gravel bars downstream of the confluence of Icicle Creek and Eagle River and a corridor from the Nature Center are open to snowmachine use when snow cover is sufficient to protect vegetation. The Eagle River Campground is located on the east side of the Glenn Highway and provides a variety of camping and day use opportunities.

Some of the most popular scenic destinations in the main drainage provide visitors access to the alpine uplands including Mount Baldy and the Meadow Creek drainage, the Mile Hi-Mount Magnificent ridgeline, and Ram Valley. Access in this area is particularly challenging

due to the steep-sided mountain terrain, complex land ownership, and the loss of traditionally used access points and trails resulting from residential development. The Eagle River Nature Center and its associated trail system is a main attraction to school groups and residents of the municipality. The facility is open year-round and provides visitor information, outdoor and interpretive programs, viewing decks, and public-use overnight facilities. The Crow Pass Trail (a segment of the Iditarod National Historic Trail) is accessed via the Nature Center.

Adjacent to Eagle River lie numerous tributaries, many of them coming out of hanging valleys whose waters fall precipitously into the main drainage. Eagle River's South Fork valley represents significant opportunities within the unit due to its large size, numerous attractions, and more subtle terrain than the main drainage. At the head of the valley lie Eagle and Symphony Lakes. Eagle Lake is milky colored while Symphony Lake has a clear deep crystal blue color creating a striking contrast. The lakes and surrounding hanging valleys are accessed via a trail leading from the South Fork Eagle River Trailhead. This access receives considerable use year-round and frequently exceeds the capacity of parking spaces available. Also within the valley is Harp Mountain, which has been used traditionally by skiers and mountain climbers seeking access to the high country. The South Fork Waterfalls located approximately one mile south of the confluence of the South Fork and the main Eagle River drainage is considered by some to be one of the most spectacular natural features within the area but lacks appropriate access and park facilities.

Management Intent

Protect the recreational opportunities by developing and supporting outreach and education efforts that enhance park user's understanding and experience. Work to establish, protect and develop as appropriate¹⁵ access to park lands. Protect the scenic qualities of the valley. Establish a wildlife viewing area in the Eagle River drainage.

Special Management Considerations

Existing Management Areas

Snowmachines are allowed in the main drainage of the Eagle River valley up to the confluence of Icicle Creek with adequate snow cover¹⁶. Currently, the Eagle River drainage, which includes Meadow Creek and the South Fork of Eagle River, is closed to hunting except sheep, goat, black bear and small game by permit only. There are some method and means restrictions for these species.¹⁷ The Eagle River management area is currently closed to trapping.

15 See the Chugach Access Plan for access recommendations.

16 See 11 AAC 20.040 for restrictions.

17 Consult the latest version of the hunting regulations for details.

Private Lands (inholdings)

Approximately 6,200 acres of private land exist within this unit, mostly in the South Fork of Eagle River and along the south side of the main fork of Eagle River. A number of smaller private parcels are located along Eagle River Road on the north side of Eagle River. While most of the parcels along Hiland Road in the South Fork, near the terminus of Eagle River Road, and near the community of Eagle River have already been subdivided, there are still a number of large tracts of undeveloped private land where residential subdivision may still occur. Development of these parcels should be monitored closely to assure that future access is secured to the park boundary.

Park Access

Recreational use in the Eagle River valley and its tributaries is increasing as the population of Eagle River grows. Virtually every form of activity is experiencing increased participation yet suitable areas to access park lands for these activities is challenging. A major management focus in this unit will be to secure and develop, as appropriate, additional access to park lands. During the plan development process, the public identified securing access to the Ram Valley and Harp Mountain areas as top priorities in this unit. The Chugach Access Plan¹⁸ will serve as the guiding document in this endeavor.

Lions Club Community Park

Lions Park is located adjacent to a school surrounded by residential subdivisions and commercial retail outlets. This area of the park is managed by the local Lions Club under a permit issued by the State prior to the formation of the legislatively designated park unit. The park includes ball fields, tennis and basketball courts, a playground and a clubhouse facility. The character of this area is quite different than the majority of Chugach State Park and has long presented unique management questions. Ultimately it would be best to trade these lands to another entity such as the Municipality of Anchorage that is better suited to support these types of organized public recreational activities. If this were to occur, reasonable assurances would be needed so that the Lions Club could continue to manage the day-to-day operations of the site.

Eagle River Nature Center

The Eagle River Nature Center is a very popular destination that receives heavy visitation by a variety of users and serves as a major launching point to areas within the unit. The center is currently managed and maintained by a non-profit group, Friends of Eagle River Nature Center Inc., through a concessions contract from the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. The center's popularity has led to the need to expand the facilities and parking associated with the center.

Eagle River Greenbelt

The Eagle River Greenbelt refers to the land adjacent to Eagle River extending from the Eagle River Campground to the Eagle River Nature Center acquired in 1987 through a land exchange with Eklutna, Inc. This area is popular for recreation and over the years, there have

¹⁸ The Chugach Access Plan, issued for public review in 2010, guides access development and distribution.

been various trail development plans for the area. Private land borders much of the greenbelt corridor creating management challenges due to the lack of adequate public access and issues associated with residential development so close to the riparian zone. Developments near the greenbelt should be closely monitored to assure proper access is secured, the recreational nature of the greenbelt is maintained and the riparian zone is protected.

Conservation Easements

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation has been assigned the responsibility of enforcing the terms of four conservation easements located in the South Fork Eagle River valley. Conservation easements are legally binding agreements that place restrictions related to uses and development on a piece of property to protect ecological or open-space values and conserve natural habitat for native plants and wildlife. Park managers must be aware of the specific terms of these easements and monitor the area and enforce the terms as needed.

Wildlife-Human Conflicts

The Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has raised concerns over the potential for wildlife-human conflicts in this unit associated with Eagle River itself, particularly in the Eagle River Greenbelt area, South Fork confluence, and near the Eagle River Nature Center. As access is secured and developed in the unit, it will be necessary to consult with ADF&G so that facilities are designed in a fashion to mitigate these concerns.

Hazards

Because of the nature of the terrain, portions of the Eagle River valley are particularly susceptible to avalanches including the Meadow Creek, Mount Magnificent, and South Fork of Eagle River areas. Facilities shall be carefully sited to avoid hazard areas or shall be made available on a seasonal basis to avoid avalanche prone times. Eagle River is a glacially fed river and portions of the river can be quite technical and challenging to negotiate and should only be used by a knowledgeable and experienced individual.

Existing Facilities

Below you will find a list of the existing park facilities within this unit and the basic amenities available at each of them.

| Facility | Campsite(s) | Picnic Table(s)/ Shelter(s) | Latrine(s) | Boat Access | Public Use Cabin(s)/ Yurt | Interpretive Display(s)/ Trailhead Kiosk/ Bulletin Board | Water (i.e. drinking fountains, hand pumps, toilets) | Fire ring/Grill(s) | Ranger Office/ Maintenance Yard | Visitor Contact Center | Scenic Overlook | Trailhead/ Parking Lot | Historic Feature | Fishing Access | Residential Cabin | Fee Station/Booth | Ballfield/Other (i.e. playground, dump station) |
|---|-------------|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------------|--|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Eagle River Lions Club Community Park* | | | X | | | | X | | | | | X | | | | | X |
| North Fork Eagle River Trailhead/River Access | | | X | X | | X | | | | | | X | | X | | X | |
| Eagle River Nature Center (ERNC) | | X | X | | | X | X | | | X | X | X | | | X | X | X |
| ERNC Public Use Cabin & Yurts | | | X | | X** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Crow Pass Trail Campsites (Rapids, Echo Bend, Heritage Falls, Twin Falls, Thunder Gorge, Raven Gorge, Surprise Creek) | X | | | | | | | X | | | | | X | | | | |
| Eagle River Campground | X | X | X | | | X | X | X | | | | X | | X | X | X | X |
| Eagle River Campground Day Use Area | | X | X | X | | X | | X | | | | X | | X | | X | |
| Eagle River Group Campground | X | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | |
| Eagle River Maintenance Compound | | | | | | | X | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Eagle River Greenbelt Trailhead/River Access | | X | X | X | | X | | | | | | X | | X | | X | |
| South Fork Eagle River Trailhead | | | X | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | | |

* Area is operated and maintained by the Lions Club.

** Maintained and operated by the Eagle River Nature Center and not reserved through the State public use cabin online system.

Facility Recommendations

Below you will find a listing of the new facilities or new upgrades to existing facilities.

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|----|-------|---|--|--|
| 30 | 6.3 | Mt. Baldy Trailhead | Work with the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) to either acquire or manage the site. Redesign to accommodate additional use, include latrines and a trailhead kiosk and upgrade as needed. | Mt. Baldy is a very popular destination for those seeking access to alpine terrain and good views of Eagle River, Knik Arm and the distant mountains across the inlet. The MOA acquired land to provide legal trail access to the park and Mt. Baldy. |
| 31 | 6.3 | Meadow Creek Trailhead | Work to resolve access issues and develop a small parking area. | The area provides access to the Meadow Creek drainage and surrounding alpine areas that are popular for hiking and skiing. |
| 32 | 6.3 | Mile Hi Trailhead | Develop a small parking area with a trailhead kiosk inside the park boundary to serve the Mile Hi Saddle and Mt. Magnificent trails. Upgrade as needed. | This trailhead would provide access to the Mile Hi Saddle, Mount Magnificent, Mount Significant, and the Meadow Creek drainage. Access to these areas is very limited and there is great public desire to recreate in them. |
| 33 | 6.3 | North Fork Eagle River Trailhead/River Access | Pave and upgrade parking lot and add picnic shelters in view of the river. Enhance area interpretation and river access. | The site provides year-round access to the Eagle River Greenbelt and the north stem of Eagle River. Since the river has changed its course at this site, the river access to launch boats and the site itself is not desirable and is consequently underutilized. |
| 34 | 6.3 | Eagle River Road | Look for opportunities as development and road upgrades occur to enhance access to the park by accommodating some pullouts, trailheads and trails in the area. Work and coordinate efforts with ADOT/PF. | The road currently offers opportunities for wildlife viewing and provides access to the Eagle River Greenbelt. With increased residential development, the sections of the undeveloped roadway will become more unique and valuable. |
| 35 | 6.3 | Ram Valley Trailhead | The access plan has identified several options to acquire access to the area. Monitor residential development, subdivision plats, and road upgrades and look for opportunities to site a parking area and trailhead to serve the valley. A separate site planning process will be needed to determine the size and type of facilities needed depending on the area secured for access. | Ram Valley is an important alpine valley and park destination that can only legally be accessed via difficult and lengthy routes from the Eagle River Road or the Mount Magnificent and Mount Significant ridgelines. The public has consistently identified acquiring access to this area as a high priority. |

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|----|-------|--|---|--|
| 36 | 6.3 | Falling Water Creek Trailhead | Develop a small parking lot trailhead with a trailhead kiosk. | No access facilities currently exist at this site. The site provides scenic views and good wildlife viewing. |
| 37 | 6.3 | Eagle River Nature Center | Redesign, rebuild and possibly relocate the ERNC to be a more functional and efficient space for educational programs and visitor services. Increase and redesign the parking lot to accommodate school groups and the heavy traffic the center receives. | The ERNC provides outdoor educational and interpretive programs, visitor information, camping and access to a variety of trails. It is a heavily used site that currently occupies a building that was once the Paradise Haven Lodge. While this building has served its purpose over the years, it was never designed to be an educational facility. Additionally, the building itself is in need of major repairs. A master site development plan is already underway for this area through a separate public process. |
| 38 | 6.3 | Eagle River & Iditarod Trail Trailhead | Construct a medium trailhead area with a trailhead kiosk and trailhead signs leading toward the trails which begin here. | The site is already a trailhead for the Iditarod Trail. It will also serve as trailhead for a nature trail and canoe portage to Eagle River Water Trail. |
| 39 | 6.3 | Crow Pass Trail Backcountry Campsites (Rapids Camp, Echo Bend, Heritage Falls, Twin Falls, Thunder Gorge, Raven Gorge, Surprise Creek) | Include fire pits and enhance campsites as needed to meet the demand. | These campsites are popular and will need some minimal upgrades to reduce resource impacts and better serve visitor use. |
| 40 | 6.3 | Eagle River Campground | Add animal-resistant food storage and cooking area. | Food storage areas would help reduce wildlife-human interactions. |
| 41 | 6.3 | Eagle River Group Campground | Upgrade to include fire pits, latrines, group use picnic pavilions and a kids bike course. | This is a large poorly designed area of the campground meant to facilitate group use and camping. The area needs additional amenities to maximize its potential and become a community asset. |
| 42 | 6.3 | Eagle River Greenbelt Trailhead/River Access | Enhance the area with amenities to facilitate winter use. Redesign the picnic area and add pavilions. | The trailhead provides access to Eagle River and the Greenbelt. The area is popular for non-motorized boating, walking, fishing, and sightseeing. |

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|----|-------|--|--|---|
| 43 | 6.3 | South Fork Waterfalls Overlook | Develop a day use viewing area near the scenic falls. Parking and access to the area will be determined through a future site planning process. The viewing facility should be situated and designed to minimize human-wildlife conflicts and protect sensitive areas. | This site has long been recommended in numerous plans for the development of a day use area. The lower falls, known as Barbara Falls, are close to 60 feet in height and are known as one of the most remarkable natural features in the area. Area development can help disperse use and provide new recreational opportunities. |
| 44 | 6.3 | South Fork Valley/ Headwaters Trailhead- (additional options in the area to existing TH) | Look for opportunities to establish additional trailheads in the South Fork Valley to disperse use and relieve pressure from the existing South Fork Trailhead. A site planning process should be used to determine the appropriate size and facilities needed for subsequent trailheads in this valley. | The area experiences heavy use for hiking, berry picking, climbing, skiing, and snowshoeing. It is also used as the jumping off point for more remote areas of the park. |
| 45 | 6.3 | Harp Mountain Trailhead | Develop a small parking lot trailhead with trailhead kiosk. | No access facilities currently exist at this site. The public has consistently identified acquiring access to this area as a high priority. |

Map 6.3: Eagle River & Ship Creek Units

Ship Creek Planning Unit

Setting

The Ship Creek planning unit encompasses an area of 47,000 acres. The unit has two main valleys surrounded by peaks and ridges of the South Fork of Eagle River and the Hillside and Turnagain Arm areas. The valleys contain numerous small lakes and tributaries. The entire unit has been zoned as “watershed” by the Municipality of Anchorage. It is one of the primary sources of water for the Anchorage military and civilian population. The main fork of Ship Creek begins at Ship Lake in the extreme southwestern corner of the unit and flows northwest for 13 miles where it exits the park and eventually flows into Cook Inlet. The North Fork headwaters are in the extreme eastern corner of the unit and flow northwesterly for 9.5 miles where they join the main creek.

There are numerous areas of muskeg and bog along the course of the creek, particularly at elevations below 1,500 feet. Tundra and rock predominate in two-thirds of the drainage. In the remaining third, and in close proximity to the main creek bed, are heavy stands of cottonwood, birch and white and black spruce. Farther from the wet areas, there is an abundance of alder, dwarf birch and dwarf mountain hemlock. Many varieties of edible berries and wild flowers complete the transition from forest to tundra. Wildlife is plentiful in the Ship Creek drainage, due in part to the limited number of visitors. There are frequent sightings of black and grizzly bear, moose, wolves, and Dall sheep. Two natural mineral licks located near the headwaters of the North Fork of Ship Creek are important for wildlife. Dolly Varden and rainbow trout are present in small numbers in Ship Creek.

Of historical significance is a branch of the Iditarod National Historic Trail which passes through this unit (see Chapter 3 for more information) and is one of three segments of the Iditarod Trail which traverse Chugach State Park. Also in this unit is the Nike Site Summit, an abandoned Nike Hercules Missile site, located on the eastern edge of Fort Richardson adjacent to Chugach State Park. The site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as an outstanding example of a Cold War-era missile installation.

The only existing vehicle access to this unit is the Arctic Valley Road which is owned, controlled and maintained by the U.S. Army. Arctic Valley ski area, located at the end of this road, is operated by the Anchorage Ski Club, Inc. Downhill skiing is available at this site and it also serves as a year-round access point to the alpine terrain within the park. The unit receives moderate use by hikers and backpackers in the summer, berry pickers and hunters in the fall, and cross-country and downhill skiers in the winter. Access to and activities within the Ship Creek drainage will continue to be carefully controlled to protect its value as watershed lands.

Management Intent

Protect the unit's wilderness values and water quality. Manage for low intensity recreational use. Work with the military to maintain access to Arctic Valley. Work with the Anchorage Ski Club, Inc. to enhance recreational opportunities at their lease site.

Special Management Considerations

Watershed Management

Ship Creek is another major water source for residents of Anchorage. Activity within the watershed is monitored by both the Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility (AWWU) and Chugach Park rangers to insure the purity of the Anchorage water supply. AWWU, the utility that manages the drinking water supply for the MOA, has a cooperative agreement¹⁹ with the park to facilitate management and protection of the important watersheds within the park that provide the bulk of the MOA water supply. Any development or other activities within the park shall be conducted in accordance with this cooperative agreement. Through this agreement, the park is charged with monitoring public use and identifying and correcting problems that could lead to a lowering of water quality, using Best Management Practices in the construction, operation and maintenance of trails and other recreational facilities to avoid or minimize contamination of the public water supply, and consulting with AWWU staff prior to authorizing or conducting significant land use activities in the watersheds.

Existing Management Areas

The Ship Creek unit lies almost completely within the zone designated wilderness. There are no private lands within the unit. Hunting is not allowed in the Arctic Valley ski area but is currently allowed in the remainder of the unit for black bear, bull moose, hare, grouse, ptarmigan and waterfowl and a permit is required for the harvest of brown bear, moose, Dall sheep and goat²⁰. Trapping is currently allowed within the unit.

Access

Improve vehicular parking along Arctic Valley Road and pedestrian access to and through the area with appropriate signing and interpretation, to the extent that watershed protection and wilderness classification allow. There should be an agreement for recreational uses of military lands adjacent to the park. Currently, a military recreation access permit and the subsequent checking in/out of an automated system are required to use military lands for access or recreation. Arctic Valley Road is currently only open daily from 6AM to 10PM and is subject to closure by order of the Garrison Commander without warning.

19 See Anchorage Water & Wastewater Utility and Chugach State Park Cooperative Agreement, Management and Protection of Chugach State Park Public Watersheds and the information in Chapter 5.

20 Consult the latest version of the hunting regulations for details.

Anchorage Ski Club Lease Site

This area is operated by the Anchorage Ski Club, Inc. through a 55-year lease from the State that expires in the year 2022. The 320 acre lease site includes a ski lodge, lifts and associated downhill skiing facilities. The lease for this area has been in effect prior to the establishment of Chugach State Park and has been allowed to continue within the park until its expiration. Since the legislature, in forming Chugach State Park, withdrew state lands within the boundary from the public domain,²¹ the lease, once it expires, must be converted to another form of authorization such as a concessions contract that allows for services and facilities of this nature within a park unit. Special purpose sites²² preclude activities that are usually allowed on public domain lands such as leasing and mineral entry.

21 Article 8, Section 8 of the Alaska Constitution allows for leasing on public domain lands.

22 Article 8, Section 7 of the Alaska Constitution provides for legislatively designated areas to be withdrawn from the public domain for specific purposes.

Existing Facilities

Below you will find a list of the existing park facilities within this unit and the basic amenities available at each of them.

| Facility | Campsite(s) | Picnic Table(s)/ Shelter(s) | Latrine(s) | Boat Access | Public Use Cabin(s)/ Yurt | Interpretive Display(s)/ Trailhead Kiosk/ Bulletin Board | Water (i.e. drinking fountains, hand pumps, toilets) | Fire ring/Grill(s) | Ranger Office/ Maintenance Yard | Visitor Contact Center | Scenic Overlook | Trailhead/ Parking Lot | Historic Feature | Fishing Access | Residential Cabin | Fee Station/Booth | Ballfield/Other (i.e. playground, dump station) |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------------|--|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Arctic Valley Ski Area/Trailhead | | X | X | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | X | X |

Facility Recommendations

Below you will find a listing of the new facilities or new upgrades to existing facilities.

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|----|-------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| 50 | 6.3 | Anchorage Ski Club Lease Site | Once the area has been converted to a concessions contract, upgrade the area to enhance recreational opportunities. A separate site planning process may likely be needed to evaluate the potential uses of the site. | This property is currently under lease until the year 2022 and the Anchorage Ski Club is responsible for the facilities in place until that time. Any facility enhancements or upgrades shall be made in keeping with park standards and in consultation with park staff. Once the lease expires, a planning process will be needed to address how the area can best be used. |
| 51 | 6.3 | Nike Site | Secure access to the site and work with non-profit group to expand recreation and visitor use to at a minimum provide parking and area interpretation. | The historic site is located on military property surrounded on three sides by Chugach State Park. The site would provide a great overlook and alpine access. A local non-profit group is working with the military to preserve the site and open the area for public tours. |

Map 6.3: Eagle River & Ship Creek Units

Hillside Planning Unit

Setting

The Hillside planning unit consists of approximately 28,600 acres located in the southwest corner of the park. The area has several mountain peaks over 5,000 feet high and contains the drainages of Campbell and Rabbit creeks, Rabbit Lake, Long Lake, the Williwaw Lakes and numerous others. The primary vegetation in this unit is willow, alder, and white spruce, with some cottonwood and mountain hemlock stands in scattered areas. Soil is generally well drained but thin, with no significantly large areas of bog. Above the tree line typical alpine tundra, including edible berries and wild flowers are found.

The mountains of this unit have high aesthetic value for Anchorage residents and visitors. Some of the popular peaks providing the scenic backdrop to Anchorage and destinations for hikers are Near Point, Wolverine Peak, Flattop, O'Malley Peak, The Ramp, and McHugh Peak. Because of its proximity, visibility and accessibility with respect to Anchorage, the area experiences heavy use. It is used by climbers, hikers, bikers, berry pickers, photographers, sightseers, skiers, snowmachiners, and others. Visitors gain access to the park's western boundary via numerous access areas including Rabbit Valley, Glen Alps, Upper Huffman, Upper O'Malley, Prospect Heights, and Basher Drive Trailheads.

Despite the intensity of recreational use and nearby development pressures, wildlife viewing is a popular activity in the Hillside unit. Moose may be found wintering in the lower portions of the North, Middle and South Forks of Campbell Creek and in the Rabbit Creek area. Sheep and bear are also sighted in this area. Small game is found off the beaten path. There are grayling in the lakes at the headwaters of the North Fork of Campbell Creek and Rabbit Creek. Dolly Varden can be found in Rabbit Creek and Rabbit Lake.

Basher Drive is the northernmost trailhead in the Hillside unit offering access to the Far North Bicentennial Park and Chugach State Park trail system. This trailhead receives moderate use, mostly by residents of East Anchorage that have few options to access the park. The Prospect Heights Trailhead allows for immediate access to the hillside trail system and Far North Bicentennial Park. This area receives considerable use in both summer and winter and frequently exceeds the parking lot capacity. The Upper O'Malley access point experiences moderate use year-round, mainly by local residents, and provides parking for approximately six cars. Access to the park from this point requires a climb in all directions since the surrounding terrain is moderately steep.

In spite of the difficulty in driving the steep and narrow road to the Glen Alps Trailhead, it receives the heaviest year-round use, frequently exceeding the capacity of parking spaces available. Once at this access point, a variety of different recreational opportunities are available. The Upper Huffman trailhead is located several hundred feet lower and

approximately one mile northwest of Glen Alps. A trail leads southeast from the parking lot up the South Fork of Campbell Creek to a snowmachine area in the Campbell Creek watershed. When snow cover is sufficient to protect the vegetation, the area is opened for snowmachine use. Rabbit Creek is the southernmost access and is via poorly maintained private roads which cross private and park lands. There are presently no park facilities at this access point, and the road is impassable during much of the year. In spite of the poor road, there is considerable traditional use of Rabbit Creek Valley.

Management Intent

Manage this unit for high recreational use and development. Protect the Campbell Creek watershed and the multi-use characteristics of the unit's trail system.

Special Management Considerations

Watershed Management

The drainages of Campbell Creek are an important watershed area supplying underground aquifers which in turn are a major source of water for Anchorage, via deep wells located outside the park. Activity within the watershed is monitored by both the Anchorage Water and Wastewater Utility (AWWU) and Chugach Park rangers to insure the purity of the Anchorage water supply. AWWU, the utility that manages the drinking water supply for the MOA, has a cooperative agreement²³ with the park to facilitate management and protection of the important watersheds within the park that provide the bulk of the MOA water supply. Any development or other activities within the park shall be conducted in accordance with this cooperative agreement. Through this agreement, the park is charged with monitoring public use and identifying and correcting problems that could lead to a lowering of water quality, using Best Management Practices in the construction, operation and maintenance of trails and other recreational facilities to avoid or minimize contamination of the public water supply, and consulting with AWWU staff prior to authorizing or conducting significant land use activities in the watersheds.

Existing Management Areas

Snowmachines are permitted in the unit with adequate snow cover in the south fork of Campbell Creek and on a designated corridor from the Upper Huffman Trailhead²⁴. Hunting is currently closed except for moose by permit only²⁵. The Anchorage management area is closed to trapping.

23 See Anchorage Water & Wastewater Utility and Chugach State Park Cooperative Agreement, Management and Protection of Chugach State Park Public Watersheds and the description in Chapter 5.

24 See 11AAC 20.040

25 Consult the latest version of the hunting regulations for details.

Glen Alps Trailhead

The Glen Alps Trailhead receives the heaviest year-round use of any other trailhead in the unit due to the variety of opportunities available from this single location including access to Flattop, the Anchorage Overlook, and the Hillside trail system. The trailhead was recently upgraded with the addition of a caretaker facility and paving of the parking lot. While crowding and use exceeding the capacity of the site continue to be a problem, additional parking lot expansion and enhancing of recreational opportunities at this trailhead is not the preferred solution. Instead opportunities for taking the pressure off of this area by dispersing use and creating new opportunities in other portions of the unit will be a priority and the policy this plan advocates. See the facility recommendation section for more specific proposals.

Park Access

Residential development and public access along the western edge of this unit and the close proximity of metropolitan Anchorage place pressures upon the watershed, trails, vegetation, wildlife and facilities of this unit. Resource protection is important but must be balanced with the unit's focus and intent to accommodate high density use and offer diverse recreational opportunities. Securing and developing more access to the park with adequate facilities to sustain and disperse the use will remain a priority in this unit.

During the plan development process, the public identified certain areas where access could be enhanced within the unit. The Campbell Canyon area within the legislatively designated boundary of the park and adjacent to the Stuckagain neighborhood is one such area. In 2008, The Conservation Fund purchased the approximately 150 acre private parcel with the intention of transferring it to the park to provide additional access. The transfer is pending but development of this area is a priority to distribute use and provide access to East Anchorage residents. Neighborhood concerns should be addressed through the site design process. Additionally, access to the Upper Potter Valley and the McHugh Peak Complex area from this unit is very limited yet the recreational opportunities in these areas abound. Development of a large regional trailhead in the area should be a major priority for the park as a means of dispersing use. The Chugach Access Plan²⁶ contains more detailed information and will serve as the guiding document for access-related issues.

26 The Chugach Access Plan, issued for public review in 2010, guides access development and distribution.

Existing Facilities

Below you will find a list of the existing park facilities within this unit and the basic amenities available at each of them.

| Facility | Campsite(s) | Picnic Table(s)/ Shelter(s) | Latrine(s) | Boat Access | Public Use Cabin(s)/ Yurt | Interpretive Display(s)/ Trailhead Kiosk/ Bulletin Board | Water (i.e. drinking fountains, hand pumps, toilets) | Fire ring/Grill(s) | Ranger Office/ maintenance Yard | Visitor Contact Center | Scenic Overlook | Trailhead/ Parking Lot | Historic Feature | Fishing Access | Residential Cabin | Fee Station/Booth | Ballfield/Other (i.e. playground, dump station) |
|----------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------------|--|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Basher Drive Trailhead | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Prospect Heights Trailhead | | X | X | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | X | |
| Upper O'Malley Trailhead | | | | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Upper Huffman Trailhead | | X | X | | | X | | X | | | | X | | | | X | |
| Glen Alps Trailhead | | | X | | | X | | | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | |
| Rabbit Valley Trailhead | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | |

Facility Recommendations

Below you will find a listing of the new facilities or new upgrades to existing facilities.

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|----|-------|----------------------------|---|---|
| 60 | 6.4 | Near Point Access | If this area is acquired by the park, establish a small trailhead that could be upgraded in size if warranted by use. The trailhead should include parking, trailhead kiosk, and perhaps a latrine, fee station, and caretaker facility if needed. During the site design and development process, local neighborhood concerns should be addressed. | There are few options for nearby, legal vehicular access to the park in this area. This trailhead would provide access to the North Fork of the Campbell Creek drainage, Near Point and surrounding alpine terrain. |
| 61 | 6.4 | Basher Drive Trailhead | Expand and redesign to better accommodate parking adding complementary facilities as appropriate perhaps including a fee station, latrines and trailhead kiosk. | This site experiences moderate year-round use by hikers and skiers wanting access to area trails. Currently the site has no amenities. A redesign will make the trailhead more desirable and will help distribute park use. |
| 62 | 6.4 | Prospect Heights Trailhead | Expand parking as needed. Add winter shelter and picnic pavilions. | This is a popular trailhead that often experiences use beyond its capacity and could benefit from some expansion and additional amenities to facilitate winter use. |
| 63 | 6.4 | Upper O'Malley Trailhead | Redesign trailhead to accommodate more vehicles and/or evaluate the desirability of moving the trailhead further into the park away from residential neighbors. | Conservative expansion of parking in this area could help disperse use and alleviate pressure on other hillside trailheads. |
| 64 | 6.4 | Sultana Drive | Upgrade road as needed to facilitate the connection (described below) with the Glen Alps Trailhead. | Sultana Drive is a park-owned right-of-way acquired using LWCF funding to provide access to the Upper Huffman Trailhead and park beyond. The road can only be upgraded to facilitate recreational use in order to be in compliance with LWCF program terms. |

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|----|-------|--|--|---|
| 65 | 6.4 | Upper Huffman Trailhead | Redesign and enlarge parking area to better accommodate winter use and future connection through the park to the Glen Alps Trailhead. Include winter shelter, picnic pavilions, trailhead kiosks, and scenic overlook enhancements. | This large parking area is currently the only designated snowmachine access point into the Campbell Creek drainage but is poorly designed and does not accommodate vehicles with trailers well. The site has the potential to help spread use and take the pressure off other popular trailheads with some upgrades. Improvements should be made with the long term vision of connecting this trailhead with Glen Alps (see below) via a road through the park. |
| 66 | 6.4 | Glen Alps Access Road & Associated Parking Areas | A road approximately 2½ miles long between the Upper Huffman and Glen Alps trailheads. Various smaller parking areas, and at least one that can accommodate vehicles with trailers, should be established along this road to disperse use. | This proposed road would bypass the steepest and most hazardous portions of the existing road (Toilsome) to Glen Alps and would help disperse use in one of the most popular areas of the park. Establishing this road would also help eliminate neighborhood impacts and jurisdictional concerns that exist now with the parking that occurs outside of the park boundary. |
| 67 | 6.4 | Glen Alps Day Use Trailhead | After the Glen Alps access road is completed, establish a group use area and picnic pavilions at this trailhead. | This trailhead experiences heavy use and has been expanded to its capacity. Once the access road and associated parking areas are established (see above proposal) this area could be repurposed to compliment facilities and serve as over flow parking. |
| 68 | 6.4 | Glen Alps Maintenance Compound | Develop a maintenance compound in the vicinity of the Glen Alps Trailhead to service the area once the connector access road (see above) is developed. The maintenance area should include secured storage for tools and equipment. | When the access road and associated parking areas are in place, there will be greater service needs in the area and more equipment storage will be necessary in the vicinity of the connected facilities. Currently there is minimal storage available and equipment must be mobilized from afar to service the area. |
| 69 | 6.4 | Rabbit Valley Trailhead | Upgrade and redesign trailhead to improve parking. Add latrines, fee station, trailhead kiosk, and caretaker facility if needed. | This trailhead has a long history of traditional use and has become more popular as park users are crowded out of neighboring trailheads. There is currently inadequate parking and facilities to support the use and as a result park resources are being compromised. |

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|----|-------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| 70 | 6.4 | McHugh Peak Trailhead | Develop a trailhead to serve the McHugh Peak Complex to include a large parking area, latrines, trailhead kiosk, and caretaker facilities. | The McHugh Peak Complex is currently an underserved portion of the park that could benefit from trailhead development that would help distribute park use. There is currently no road access to the park boundary in this area but people have traditionally accessed the park using informal trails in the vicinity. This trailhead could provide access to alpine areas in the park with views of Turnagain Arm and the Kenai Mountains. |
| 71 | 6.4 | Potter Creek Valley Trailhead | Establish a medium trailhead to include parking, scenic overlook, trailhead kiosk, latrines and fee station. | There is limited access to this part of Potter Valley but the area has been traditionally used by those seeking views of Turnagain Arm and the Kenai Mountains. |

Map 6.4: Hillside Unit

Turnagain Arm Planning Unit

Setting

This southernmost unit contains approximately 98,000 acres including approximately 15,000 acres of tidelands and waters of Turnagain Arm. Near the southern boundary are the communities of Rainbow, Indian, Bird Creek, and Girdwood. Near Girdwood and just outside the park's boundary is the State's largest downhill ski area, Alyeska Resort. Chugach National Forest and Municipal lands form the eastern boundary of this unit. Annual precipitation is more abundant and winter temperatures are higher along Turnagain Arm than other areas of the park due primarily to the flow of marine air from the Gulf of Alaska and Prince William Sound. Winds are typically strong and persistent as they flow down Turnagain Arm toward Anchorage. Nearly all creeks flow in a southerly direction beginning and ending within the planning unit. Beginning with the most westerly drainage, they include Potter, McHugh, Rainbow, Falls, Indian, Bird, and California creeks.

Mountain hemlock, Sitka spruce, Alaska paper birch, and cottonwood are the dominant tree species along the Arm. This unit's Sitka spruce forests are normally identified with the moderate temperatures and high rainfall of Southeast Alaska. Vegetation patterns and species throughout the rest of the unit are typical of the remainder of the park. Bird and Penguin creeks are spawning streams and ADF&G currently stocks Bird Creek, which causes the area to receive very heavy seasonal sport fishing pressure during the summer. In the summer, occasional beluga whales, harbor seals, and sea lions enter Turnagain Arm in search of eulachon, a small marine fish related to smelt, also called candlefish or hooligan. Large mammals in this unit include mountain goat, Dall sheep, brown and black bear, and moose. There are frequent sightings of Dall sheep along the Seward Highway between late spring and fall where south-facing slopes and meadows provide good habitat. A natural mineral lick, important for wildlife, occurs in the vicinity of Windy Corner.

The Seward Highway, a State Scenic Highway, a National Scenic Byway, and an All American Highway, is part of a transportation corridor which extends for 25 miles through the southern part of this unit. The Alaska Railroad right-of-way also shares this corridor. There are numerous vehicle turnouts along the highway where motorists gain access to the park and are treated to spectacular views of the mountains, inlet, and the famous bore tide. Several locations along the highway are designated as official access points to the park. These include Potter, McHugh Creek, Rainbow, Falls Creek, Indian Creek, Bird Ridge, Bird Creek, and Bird Point.

The historic Turnagain Arm Trail runs along the north shore of Turnagain Arm from the Potter Creek access to Windy Corner and is a popular spring hiking opportunity in the park. McHugh Creek is one of the most highly developed trailheads in the unit and being a mere 20 minute drive from Anchorage, it consequently receives heavy use during the summer and

winter months. Beluga Point is one of many rocky points along Turnagain Arm that affords views of beluga whales as they make their way up and down the inlet chasing eulachon and salmon. The Rainbow access is a popular entry for the Turnagain Arm Trail and a trail leading to Rainbow Peak. Windy Corner provides grand vistas and one of the best sheep viewing opportunities in Alaska and as a result, a significant traffic hazard exists in this area. Falls Creek access is little more than a wide spot in the highway where a few cars can pull off. There is a trail up Falls Creek leading to one of many waterfalls along this creek. The Upper Indian Creek access serves as an access point for hikers and cross-country skiers using Powerline Pass between Indian and Glen Alps or the Iditarod Trail between Indian and Ship Creek near Arctic Valley ski area. The Indian Creek Trailhead located on the south side of the highway provides access to the Indian to Girdwood Pathway and a baseball field.

The Bird Creek-Bird Ridge area has a variety of parking lots on the north side of the road to accommodate the sport fishery and access to Bird Creek ridge. Bird Creek Campground is located on the south side of the highway and has overnight camping and picnicking facilities and provides access to the Indian to Girdwood Pathway. This is the only camping area in the Turnagain Arm planning unit and it receives heavy use throughout the summer. Across the Seward Highway to the north of the Bird Creek Campground is a 2,200 acre wooded area owned by the Municipality of Anchorage and managed under an agreement as part of Chugach State Park. Presently, there is an extensive system of old roads and trails in this area which now serve as off-road vehicle trails in the summer and snowmachine trails in the winter.

Bird Point is a popular, developed site that provides scenic viewing opportunities of the Arm and the Chugach Mountains for residents and tourists alike. Bird Point also provides access to the Indian to Girdwood National Recreation Pathway, which is a 13 mile scenic path that parallels the Seward Highway along the north shore of Turnagain Arm. The separated pathway connects the communities of Indian, Bird, and Girdwood and is popular for biking, walking, running, and sightseeing. The California Creek headwaters are located within the park and are accessed via a trail easement across MOA land that leads from a trailhead off Crow Creek Road in Girdwood.

Management Intent

Manage the unit to protect the scenic properties of the transportation corridor and encourage developments along and within the corridor which will provide for optimum enjoyment, access to the park, outdoor recreation opportunities and safety of all visitors along this route. Coordinate recreational development with highway upgrades when possible. Preserve and interpret the historic, archaeological, and natural values of Turnagain Arm including the route of the Iditarod Trail.

Special Management Considerations

Existing Management Areas

Snowmachines are presently allowed in the Bird Creek drainage south of the Quartz Creek Ford with adequate snow cover²⁷. Summer off-road vehicles are allowed on the logging trails in the Bird Creek Valley²⁸. Trapping is currently allowed subject to Fish and Game regulations. Hunting is allowed for black bear, bull moose, hare, grouse, ptarmigan and waterfowl and a permit is required for the harvest of brown bear, moose, Dall sheep, and goat²⁹. The cliffs adjacent to the McHugh Creek Trailhead from the Seward Highway upstream along McHugh Creek including the cliffs around the pond are closed to climbing and rappelling.

Seward Highway Reconstruction & Scenic Corridor Enhancements

Due to the existence of a major road and rail transportation corridor through this unit, many experience the park only visually. Recognizing the scenic, natural, historical and recreational values of the corridor, the Seward Highway has been designated a State Scenic Highway, a National Scenic Byway and All-American Road. Any upgrades or alterations within this transportation corridor shall complement and enhance visual experiences along this route. The corridor should be accessible and safely useable by bicyclists and pedestrians. Bicycle use along the corridor is increasing. This is due to the increased interest in bicycling in general, the bike trail construction programs of the State Department of Transportation and the Municipality of Anchorage, and the scenic attractions along Turnagain Arm.

Hazards

Avalanches and rock slides occur at various times along the Seward Highway and along the drainages near the highway. There are numerous places along the highway where motorists use inadequate pull-outs and road shoulders for parking. This is a dangerous practice and should be discouraged by proper redesign and minimal signing of the most dangerous areas. The exposed mud flats along Turnagain Arm are also dangerous due to extreme and rapid tidal variations and the possibility of becoming mired in the mud and drowning with the incoming tide. The rapidly advancing tide can also trap unwary hikers along the Arm who venture too far out on rocks or spits of land and become cut off from the land. Use of these areas should be discouraged and education efforts should be pursued. Turnagain Arm can also present a hostile environment for small boats which are easily capsized by rough water. The bore tide is a popular but potentially dangerous tidal phenomenon that occurs in Turnagain Arm.

27 See 11 AAC 20.040

28 See 11 AAC 20.015

29 Consult the latest version of the hunting regulations for details.

Existing Facilities

Below you will find a list of the existing park facilities within this unit and the basic amenities available at each of them.

| Facility | Campsite(s) | Picnic Table(s)/ Shelter(s) | Latrine(s) | Boat Access | Public Use Cabin(s)/ Yurt | Interpretive Display(s)/ Trailhead Kiosk/ Bulletin Board | Water (i.e. drinking fountains, hand pumps, toilets) | Fire ring/Grill(s) | Ranger Office/ Maintenance Yard | Visitor Contact Center | Scenic Overlook | Trailhead/ Parking Lot | Historic Feature | Fishing Access | Residential Cabin | Fee Station/Booth | Ballfield/Other (i.e. playground, dump station) |
|--|-------------|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------------|--|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Potter Section House SHS | | | X | | | X | X | | X | X | | X | X | | X | X | |
| Potter Maintenance Yard | | | X | | | | X | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Potter Creek Trailhead | | | X | | | X | | | | | X | X | | | | X | |
| McHugh Creek Trailhead | | X | X | | | X | X | X | | | X | X | | | | X | |
| Beluga Point Viewpoint | | | | | | X | | | | | X | X | | | | | |
| Rainbow Trailhead | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Windy Corner Trailhead | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Falls Creek Trailhead | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Upper Indian Creek Trailhead | | | | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Indian Maintenance Compound | | | | | | | X | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Indian Creek Trailhead & Ballfield | | | X | | | X | | | | | X | X | | | | | X |
| Indian to Girdwood National Recreation Pathway | | X | X | | | X | | | | | X | | X | | | | |
| Bird Ridge Trailhead | | | | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | X | |
| Bird Creek Access | | | X | | | X | | | | | | X | | X | | X | |
| Bird Creek Scenic Overlook & Parking Area | X | | X | | | X | X | X | | | | X | | X | | X | |
| Bird Creek Campground | X | X | X | | | | X | X | | | | X | | | | X | |
| Bird Creek Valley Trailhead | | | | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Little Penguin Creek Rest Stop | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | |

| Facility | Campsite(s) | Picnic Table(s)/ Shelter(s) | Latrine(s) | Boat Access | Public Use Cabin(s)/ Yurt | Interpretive Display(s)/ Trailhead Kiosk/ Bulletin Board | Water (i.e. drinking fountains, hand pumps, toilets) | Fire ring/Grill(s) | Ranger Office/ Maintenance Yard | Visitor Contact Center | Scenic Overlook | Trailhead/ Parking Lot | Historic Feature | Fishing Access | Residential Cabin | Fee Station/Booth | Ballfield/Other (i.e. playground, dump station) |
|--|-------------|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------------------------|--|--|--------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Bird Point Viewpoint | | X | X | | | X | | | | | X | X | | | X | X | |
| Seward Highway Bird-to-Girdwood Access & Turnouts | | | | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | | |

Facility Recommendations

Below you will find a listing of the new facilities or new upgrades to existing facilities.

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|----|-------|--|---|---|
| 80 | 6.5 | Chugach State Park Headquarters & Ranger Station | Build a headquarters facility and ranger station near the existing Potter Section House to include offices, living quarters, information/interpretive facilities, toilets, and operational storage. | The Seward Highway upgrades may cause the ROW to move from its current alignment providing the park with new disturbed lands suitable for this type of development. The current park headquarters is situated in the historic Potter Section House. The current facility was never meant to be used for this purpose and as a result does not meet park needs as well as it could. |
| 81 | 6.5 | Potter Section House | If the above proposal is constructed, return the section house to museum status interpreting the history of the Alaska Railroad. | The Potter Section House is on the National Register of Historic Places and was once operated as a museum. It currently houses the park headquarters offices but should be returned to museum status when a new headquarters building is established. |
| 82 | 6.5 | Potter Maintenance Yard | Upgrade area to include covered parking, trailer storage, and vehicle turnaround area. | This site serves much of the park's maintenance needs but needs some minimal upgrades to better protect equipment and facilitate turning vehicles with trailers around. |
| 83 | 6.5 | Potter to Indian Trail Access Sites & Facilities | Establish access points that complement the Potter to Indian trail extension once it is built. All facilities will likely be built on the mountainside portion of the road with periodic access to the water and scenic overlooks. A separate site planning process will be needed. | A coastal trail that runs along the coastline of Knik and Turnagain arms has long been recommended for development. The Seward Highway and the Indian to Girdwood Pathway has become an important bike route for tourists and residents linking the Turnagain Arm communities. Once the remainder of the continuous, separated, paved pathway is completed between Potter Marsh and Indian, a number of access points and amenities will be needed along the scenic corridor for improved visitor enjoyment. Portions of the trail in this area may coincide with portions of the Iditarod Trail. |
| 84 | 6.5 | Picnic Rock Scenic Overlook | Create a scenic overlook at this location and a large parking area with a safe clear zone between the highway and the parking area. | This is currently a place of interest along the Seward Highway that gets some use but has no facilities. As highway improvements occur in the area, preserving the rock for a scenic overlook and adding amenities that allow for safer access and use would enhance the visitor experience. |

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|----|-------|--|---|---|
| 85 | 6.5 | Grunge Wall Pullout | Construct a pullout in the area to provide safe parking off of the Seward Highway. | The area is popular for rock climbing and bouldering. Currently, climbers park along the shoulder of the highway which poses safety concerns. |
| 86 | 6.5 | Crack-in-the-Woods | Construct a pullout in the area to provide safe parking off of the Seward Highway. | The area is popular for rock climbing and bouldering. Currently, climbers park along the shoulder of the highway which poses safety concerns. |
| 87 | 6.5 | McHugh Creek Trailhead | Create additional group use area with picnic pavilions and associated facilities. Upgrade the trailhead as needed to enhance the visitor experience and to meet visitor demand. | The site currently has limited group use amenities and receives heavy use. The potential exists at the site to provide additional group use areas needed for large gatherings that are very limited in this section of the park. |
| 88 | 6.5 | McHugh Quarry | Establish a maintenance site at this location with limited access and screened from the highway. | This is a potential materials site for the Seward Highway upgrades. Should this site be used it can serve as a storage area for rock or other highway debris. |
| 89 | 6.5 | Beluga Point Scenic Overlook (Waterside) | Establish a scenic viewing area with ADA accessible beach access, trail access, and a large parking area with a safe clear zone between the highway and the parking area. | Beluga Point is a major focal point along the highway but the site has minimal amenities currently available to the public. Upgrades would enhance the visitor experience by providing landscape viewing that is accessible to users of all abilities while providing a safer pedestrian-highway interface. Beluga Point also provides a unique opportunity to interpret local archaeology. |
| 90 | 6.5 | Beluga Point Trailhead-Mountainside | This is the existing trailhead that should be eliminated when the above facility is created since it will incorporate trail access. | Once highway upgrades are made and the above area is established, this trailhead will no longer be needed. |
| 91 | 6.5 | Rainbow Point Group Recreation Site | Create a group use site in the quarry area that is established for highway upgrades. Include latrines, pavilions and parking. | As safety upgrades are made to the Seward Highway material is needed and usually found locally by creating a quarry using park resources. A group use site can be sited in this quarry site. The size and shape of this site would be dependent on the reclamation area. |
| 92 | 6.5 | Rainbow Point Scenic Overlook | Redesign parking. Upgrade turnaround to include a viewing area and a safe clear zone between the highway and the parking area. Coordinate development with highway upgrades. | This is a popular pullout that should be enhanced in conjunction with the highway safety upgrades to better facilitate visitor use and enjoyment. |

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|-----|-------|--|--|---|
| 93 | 6.5 | Rainbow Trailhead | Upgrade and expand the existing parking area. Add a latrine and trailhead kiosk. Coordinate development with highway upgrades. | The current lot is small and can be difficult to access safely from the busy Seward Highway. As the highway gets upgraded there are opportunities to expand and provide a safer pull in/out. |
| 94 | 6.5 | Seward Highway Mile 107 Pullout-Mountainside | Depending on the highway upgrades and reclamation area at this site, the area could be suitable to relocate the current Windy Corner mountainside trailhead and trail from the sheep habitat area. | This area may be used as a materials site for highway upgrades to the Windy Corner area. If so, the reclamation area could serve to provide trailhead parking to the current trail. |
| 95 | 6.5 | Windy Corner Sheep Viewing Area | Upgrade existing pullout to create a safe sheep viewing area. Expand parking to a large lot with a clear zone between the highway and the parking area. Include interpretive displays and spotting scopes. Coordinate development with highway upgrades. | This area of the highway poses safety concerns as visitors try to view the sheep that congregate in the area. Parking is limited and there is significant traffic congestion when animals are present. |
| 96 | 6.5 | Falls Creek Trailhead | Upgrade trailhead parking to separate from the highway and more safely serve the trail. | This is a very popular trail and parking at this site is limited and can be difficult to access from the busy highway. |
| 97 | 6.5 | The Grotto | Upgrade the current small pullout to include a safe clear zone between the highway and the parking area on the mountainside of the road. | This is a popular pullout that can be difficult to access from the busy highway. Upgrades will help make the area safer. |
| 98 | 6.5 | Indian Point Scenic Overlook & Trailhead | Create a scenic overlook on the point with a large parking area with a safe clear zone between the highway and the parking lot and ADA accessible beach access. Coordinate development with highway upgrades. | This overlook would provide great views of Turnagain Arm, the Kenai Mountains and Chugach Mountains including Bird Ridge and Bird Point. |
| 99 | 6.5 | Upper Indian Creek Trailhead | Redesign the parking area to better facilitate parking and park use. Add latrines. | This trailhead receives moderate use and is poorly designed promoting haphazard parking. With minimal upgrades and some redesigning, the area could be made more desirable. |
| 100 | 6.5 | Indian Creek Trailhead | Relocate trailhead outside of the road and railroad right-of-way to better accommodate access to the trail. Coordinate development with any highway upgrades. | Currently the park leases railroad property in this area that includes a ball field and parking area that provides access to the trail. There is enough of a land base at this location however, to better accommodate parking and park access outside of the rights-of-way on park land. |

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|-----|-------|--|---|--|
| 101 | 6.6 | Bird Creek Campground & Trailhead | Redesign and expand as much as Seward Highway upgrades will allow. Add food storage provisions, group area and possibly a public use cabin or overnight shelters. Should a campground be established in Bird Valley (see below), consider converting this area to a day use site. | This is a very popular campground for residents and tourists alike. Some redesign plans have been approved and completed because of the planned highway upgrades in the area. Future planning will be needed if the campground is converted to a day use site or if the continued highway realignment and upgrade further removes useable land from the campground. |
| 102 | 6.6 | Bird Valley Public Use Cabin | Add one public use cabin in the Bird Valley to the current system for year-round use. | Public use cabins are popular and enhance the recreational experience. This area gets year-round use and the valley could be well served with the addition of a cabin. |
| 103 | 6.6 | Bird Valley Campground & Day Use Area | Establish a campground in the valley that can better facilitate RVs and can be available for year-round use near the valley trail system. Include a group area, tent & RV sites, pull-through parking spots for vehicles towing trailers, picnic pavilions and day use area. Developments should be situated and designed to minimize human-wildlife conflicts and protect sensitive areas. | This area has long been recommended for the development of a campground and a day use area. By providing a campground and day use area in proximity to the valley's existing extensive, year-round trail system, the park is more accessible to a wider range of users. Group areas are popular and very limited in this part of the park. These facilities would provide new recreational opportunities, in addition to becoming a community asset. |
| 104 | 6.6 | Bird Creek Valley Trailhead | Redesign and perhaps relocate existing trailhead to better accommodate vehicles towing trailers. Include latrines and trailhead kiosk. | This popular site provides year-round access to the Bird Creek Valley via the extensive trail system. The parking area is poorly designed and needs upgrading to make it more useable and to better accommodate vehicles with trailers. |
| 105 | 6.6 | Bird Flats Scenic Overlook & Trailhead | This area has the potential as an overlook that incorporates two of the existing pullouts at mile 99 and would provide access to the trail. | As road upgrades occur in this area, opportunities to enhance this segment of the highway may be provided. Adding an overlook and parking amenities would allow for improved trail access and visitor enjoyment. |
| 106 | 6.6 | Bird Point Viewpoint & Trailhead | Enhance viewpoint with the addition of interpretive trail system and safe access across the railroad tracks. Develop trailhead if needed. | The existing viewpoint gets high use by those wanting views of the inlet and Kenai Mountains and by those wanting to view wildlife. There is a land base at the site available for parking expansion if needed. A small interpretive trail system that allows for safe access to the beach would enhance the visitor experience and finish the last phase of this viewpoint upgrade. |

| ID | Map # | Proposal | Scope/Management Objective | Justification |
|-----|-------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| 107 | 6.6 | Bird to Gird, Girdwood Trailhead | Establish a small parking lot at the trail's start to provide trail access from the south. | There is currently no parking near the Bird to Gird trail for visitors wanting to access the trail from the south. There is some state, MOA, and/or ARRC land in the area that could be suitable for this purpose. |

Map 6.5: Turnagain Arm Unit

Map 6.6: Turnagain Arm Unit