

MANAGEMENT UNIT 6: NIXON FORK

Background

Location and Land Ownership. This management unit consists of the watersheds that drain into the Nixon Fork River. About three quarters of the lands in this unit are state owned. About six percent are state selected, five percent are Native-owned or selected, and the remainder are overlapping selections. There are only a few Native allotments in this unit that are located on the lower Nixon Fork.

Resources. This unit includes large tracts of uplands that are covered primarily with shrubs, black spruce, and sedges. There are some stands of white spruce in the unit along the Nixon Fork and West Fork rivers; along Wabash, Ivy, John Reek, and Broken Snowshoe creeks; and along some minor unnamed creeks. Cottonwood and birch are found on stretches of the Nixon Fork and West Fork rivers and on some south-facing slopes. Major peaks in the area including the Cloudy Mountains and Page Mountain are covered with arctic tundra. Some important wildlife areas exist in this unit. Brown bears concentrate in the Sunshine Mountains. Caribou are known to calve just north of Appel Mountain and concentrate in winter along the Nixon Fork as far upriver as Cottonwood Creek and along West Fork River. Anadromous fish are found in the Nixon Fork upriver to Cottonwood Creek. The known cultural and historic resources within the area are associated with the gold rush era. Several sites are located near Mystery and Ruby creeks and part of the Iditarod Historic Trail System (Mail Trail 202) passes through the southern part of the unit.

Access and Land Use. Access to the area is primarily by boat along the Nixon Fork in summer. Travel in winter is by snowmachine or dog team along a number of established trails, traplines, and rivers. The area is used by residents of McGrath and Takotna. Residents of McGrath use the lower North Fork and its drainages to hunt moose, bear, caribou, and ducks. They trap up the North Fork al-

most as far as Von Frank Mountain and north into the Nowitna drainage. McGrath residents also use the lower Nixon Fork for firewood, house logs and berry picking. Takotna residents also use this unit, but on a more limited basis. They hunt caribou, moose, and bear. Recent state land sales near Appel Mountain and other land sales and remote cabin permit offerings planned in the area should increase the use of this unit, particularly along the Nixon Fork.

Mining activity is currently taking place near Hidden, Ruby, and Mystery creeks. There are also claims near the Cloudy Mountains, Strand Peak, Limestone Mountain, and Von Frank Mountain. The Nixon Fork gold-copper-silver deposits have been a significant producer of these metals in past years, and exploration is currently underway employing local labor each season.

Management Intent

The general management intent for this unit is to provide opportunities for public recreation, and to support the continued public use of fish, game, timber, and mineral resources. All the land in this unit will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on wildlife habitat, forestry, public recreation, and mining. Remote cabin permits will be allowed in this unit with no more than three cabins in any one township. Remote cabins are prohibited in parts of the unit to avoid conflicts with brown bear concentration areas, mining activities, trapping and recreation. Grazing will be prohibited in some areas to avoid conflicts with caribou calving, winter moose habitat, and brown bear concentration areas. Although bordered by Native-owned lands, the bed of some tributaries of the Nixon Fork River are navigable and subject to the guidelines in the plan. State land and beds of navigable waters in this unit will remain open to mineral entry.

Subunit 6a - Nixon Fork

This subunit consists primarily of state-owned land along the Nixon Fork and West Fork rivers. The southwestern part of the unit, particularly along the lower Nixon Fork River, is frequently used by residents of McGrath and Takotna. There are a number of trails in this unit along the West Fork and Nixon Fork rivers. There are also local trails which connect Medfra, Takotna, and McGrath on the lower Nixon Fork. This unit will be managed for multiple use with an emphasis on hunting, trapping, fishing, wildlife habitat, public recreation, and forestry. A small part of this unit on Ivy Creek will be open to remote cabin permits. For the most part, remote cabin permits are not allowed along the Nixon Fork River in order to avoid conflicts with existing levels of public use and trapping. Grazing will not be permitted in parts of this unit along the Nixon Fork and West Fork rivers because of their importance as moose wintering habitat and as a caribou calving area.

Subunit 6b - Hidden Creek

This subunit has several active mining claims along Ruby, Mystery, and Hidden creeks. The subunit contains significant gold-copper-silver deposits and exploration is currently underway. Many of these claims date back to the gold rush and have historic significance. There are also a number of trails in this unit that connect the mining district with Takotna, McGrath and Medfra. Grazing will not be allowed in parts of this unit because of its importance as a winter moose concentration area. Remote cabins will not be permitted in this subunit in order to avoid conflicts with mining. This unit will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on mining and wildlife habitat.

Subunit 6c - Hinterlands

This subunit is composed of remote lands that are away from the major rivers and have low surface resource values. Grazing will not be allowed along the Nixon Fork and West Fork rivers because of important winter moose habitat and caribou calving. Grazing will not be allowed in the Sunshine Mountains be-

cause of brown bear concentrations. Remote cabin permits are allowed in part of the western-most block of this subunit. Remote cabins are not permitted in the remainder of the subunit to avoid conflicts with trapping, hunting, and public recreation. Dog mushers in McGrath have expressed interest in building a public use cabin on the Mail Trail 202. This type use would be consistent with the management intent of the subunit. These lands will be retained in public ownership and managed for general use.

Subunit 6d - Page Mountain

This subunit is composed of remote lands that include the upper Nixon Fork, the Sunshine Mountains, and uplands adjacent to the lower Nixon Fork. Grazing will not be allowed along the upper Nixon Fork, the lower Nixon Fork Flats, and the Sunshine Mountains because of important moose winter habitat, summer brown bear concentrations, and caribou calving. Remote cabins are allowed in most of the blocks of this unit that are located north of the Nixon Fork River. Dog mushers in McGrath have expressed interest in building a public use cabin on the mail trail 202. This type use would be consistent with the management intent for the subunit. This subunit will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on wildlife habitat.

Management Guidelines

The complete set of management guidelines is presented in Chapter 2. Any of the guidelines could apply to uses within this management unit. Those most likely to apply are listed below:

- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Forestry
- Lakeshore management
- Public access
- Public and commercial recreation resources
- Remote cabins and trapping cabins
- Subsurface resources
- Stream corridors and instream flow
- Trail management
- Wetlands management

Subunit 6a, 6b, and 6d - Nixon Fork, Hidden Creek, & Page Mountain

Grazing. Grazing leases or permits will not be allowed along the Nixon Fork River and West Fork River and in the Sunshine Mountains because of their importance as a moose winter concentration and caribou calving area. This does not prohibit temporary passage of domestic grazing animals through this area to travel between areas where grazing is permitted (Map 2.1). Grazing may be allowed in portions of these closed areas if consistent with the guidelines in Chapter 2 ("Grazing on Important Habitat Lands").

Grazing leases or permits will not be allowed in the following areas:

- Within 1.5 miles of the Nixon Fork River between the south boundary of the unit and the west boundary of T24S R22E K.R.M.
- Within .5 mile of the west fork of the Nixon Fork within
 - T26S R18E K.R.M.
 - T25S R18E K.R.M.
 - T25S R19E K.R.M.
 - T23S R20E K.R.M. sec. 20, 21 & 26-35
 - T24S R20E K.R.M. sec. 2-4 & 10-14
 - T24S R21E K.R.M. sec. 7
 - T26S R18E K.R.M. sec. 11-36
 - T27S R17E K.R.M. sec. 1-4, 9-16, 20-29 & 31-36
 - T27S R18E K.R.M. sec. 2-11, 15-22 & 28-33
 - T28S R17E K.R.M. sec. 1-18
 - T28S R18E K.R.M. sec. 5-7

Subunit 6a and 6c - Nixon Fork, Hinterlands, & Page Mountain

Remote Cabin Permit Areas. Parts of these subunits are within the Folger block of the Dishna-Folger-Tatalina remote cabin permit area. Boundaries of the area open for remote cabin permits are shown on Map 2.2. Parts of subunits 6a and 6c are also within this block. A total of 36 remote cabin permits will be allowed in the Folger block, with a maximum of three remote cabin permits allowed in any one township.

Subunit 6b - Hidden Creek

Historic and Cultural Sites. There is a known concentration of historic and cultural sites around Hidden, Ruby, and Mystery creeks. These sites are associated with the gold rush era. The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should be contacted prior to leases or permits being authorized in this subunit.

RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

Management Unit 6 - Nixon Fork

Resource	Subunit			
	6a	6b	6c	6d
Agriculture	Low to unsuitable	Low to unsuitable	Low to unsuitable	Low to unsuitable
Energy	Very low potential	Very low potential	Very low potential	Unsuitable
Fish	Salmon & anadromous fish	Salmon & anadromous fish	Resident fish	Salmon & anadromous fish
Forestry	High along Nixon Fork; moderate along tribs.; rest unsuitable	Low potential to unsuitable	Low potential to unsuitable	Low to unsuitable
Grazing	High to moderate potential	High to moderate potential	High to moderate potential	High to moderate potential
Historic/cultural	Unknown	Historic sites present	Unknown	Unknown
Materials	Low potential	Low potential	Low potential	Low potential
Minerals	Most very low; some moderate; a few existing claims	Very high potential; many existing claims	Low, moderate, & high potential; some existing claims	Very low to moderate; a few mining claims
Oil & gas	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Public access	Boat on Nixon Fork; local trails	Airstrip; local trails	Local trails	Boat and trails along Nixon Fork
Recreation	Moderate use on Nixon Fork	Low potential	Low potential	Low potential
Settlement suitability	High along Nixon Fork; rest moderate to unsuitable	Low to unsuitable	Most unsuitable; some moderate to low	Mostly unsuitable; some high along Nixon Fork
Wildlife	A-2 and B-1; moose calving & winter range caribou calving; ducks, geese	Mostly C, some B-1; moose calving & winter range; caribou winter range; bear	C and B-2; caribou winter range; bear ducks, moose	A-2 and B-1; moose calving and wintering; brown bear concentration area; caribou calving; ducks, geese
Important trails	Nixon Fork trail; Hidden Cr. trail; West Fork trail; Hosmer Cr. trail; local trails	Medfra-Nixon Fork trail; local mining trails	Iditarod NHTS; Mail Trail 202; Upper Nixon Fork trail; West Fork trail; Hosmer Creek trail; local trails	Trails along Nixon Fork

See glossary for definition of ratings.

LAND-USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

MANAGEMENT UNIT 6 - NIXON FORK



SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				COMMENTS
		Primary Surface Uses	Secondary Surface Uses	Prohibited Surface Uses ^a	Subsurface ^b	
6a Lower Nixon Fork	State, state selected & state/Native selected	Forestry Public recreation Wildlife habitat	Remote cabins in part of subunit	Grazing in part of subunit Land disposals Remote cabins in part of subunit	Open	
6b Hidden Creek	State selected	Minerals Wildlife habitat		Grazing in part of subunit Land disposals Remote cabins in part of subunit	Open	Historic sites present
6c Hinterlands	State, state selected, & state/Native selected	General use: low resource values	Remote cabins in part of subunit	Land disposals Remote cabins in part of subunit	Open	
6d Page Mountain	State & state/ Native select.	Wildlife habitat		Grazing in part of subunit Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	

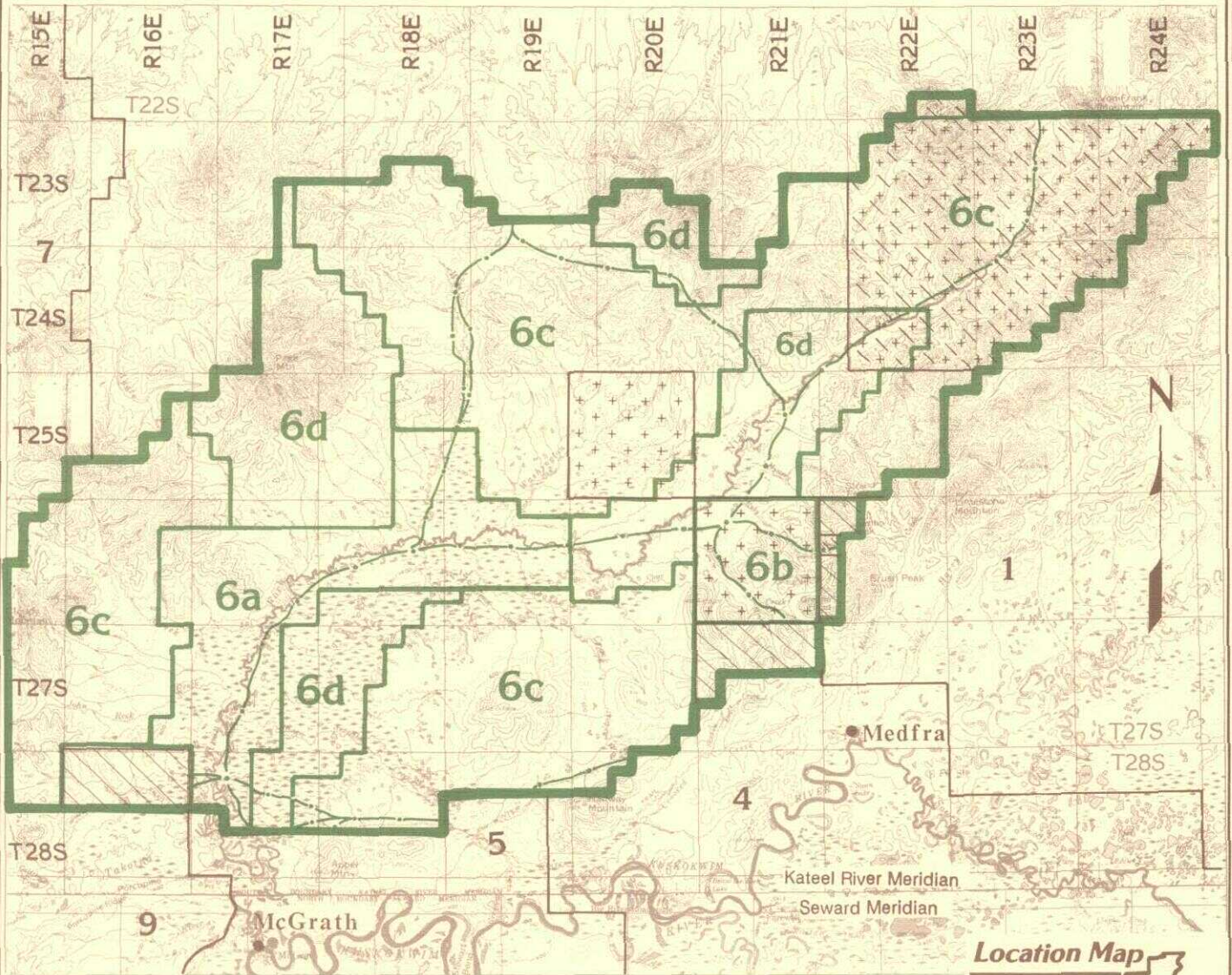
^aOther uses such as material sales, land leases, or permits that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management-intent statement, the management guidelines of this unit, and the relevant management guidelines listed in Chapter 2. Grazing may be allowed in portions of closed units when consistent with the guideline in Chapter 2 (Grazing on Important Habitat Lands).

^bAll areas are available for leasing for leasable minerals. Statements of whether or not the unit is open to mineral entry refer only to locatable minerals.

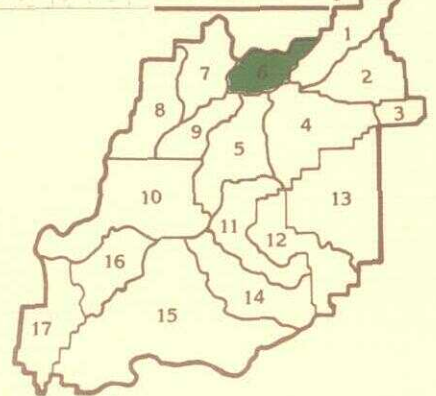
Kuskokwim Area Plan





6: Nixon Fork


-  Management Unit Boundary
-  Subunit Boundary



Location Map



-  State Owned
-  Native Owned
-  State Selected
-  Native Selected

 Trails on public lands
 Map shows approximate location of trails across state land. Portions of trails may cross private lands.

U.S.G.S. Quad:
 Medfra
 Map Scale:
 1:500,000