

MANAGEMENT UNIT 9: TAKOTNA RIVER

Background

Location and Land Ownership. The Takotna River management unit consists of the watersheds that drain into the Takotna River, Fourth of July Creek, and Tatalina Creek. Approximately two-thirds of the land in this unit is state owned. Approximately 20 percent is Native-owned. The remainder is state selected or Native selected or overlapping selections. Private lands are concentrated in the northeastern part of the unit. There are approximately 11 Native allotments within the unit, 19 mineral patents and applications, and 4 BLM homesites. There are also a number of private parcels around the village of Takotna.

Resource Use. The state-owned and state-selected lands in the northeastern two-thirds of this unit, especially lands located adjacent to McGrath and Takotna, are heavily used for hunting, trapping, fishing, berry picking, personal-use timber, recreation, and transportation. The southern part of the Beaver Mountains located within this unit are used by McGrath and Takotna residents and guides for hunting caribou and moose. The southwestern third of this unit is seldom used for these activities. There are claims and active placer mines around Yankee Creek, Moore Creek, Lincoln Creek, and the Candle Hills. The Upper Tatalina and the Upper Dishna River, have been identified as possible sites for a National Guard training facility and maneuver area. The Candle Hills and Roundabout Mountain have been identified as a possible source of riprap for the proposed McGrath erosion control project.

Resources. Valuable stands of white spruce and hardwoods that are used for house logs and firewood are located in the riparian zone along the Takotna River and Tatalina Creek. Stands of hardwoods are also found along Waldren Forks, Moore Creek, Fourth of July Creek, and some south-facing slopes. Open stands of black spruce are found at higher elevations, on poorly drained soils, or in per-

mafrost areas. Shrubs dominate the middle elevations in this unit while the tops of several mountains are tundra covered.

Anadromous fish are found in the Takotna River and in the lower part of the streams just west of McGrath. The Waldren Forks and the Takotna River are important for moose wintering and calving. Caribou calve and brown bears are concentrated in those portions of the unit located adjacent to the Beaver Mountains.

Access. Two maintained airstrips are in this unit and are located at Tatalina Air Force Station and in the village of Takotna. There is also a private airstrip at Moore Creek and at Candle. A DOT/PF maintained road exists between Takotna and Sterling Landing. The unit has numerous trails associated with historic and current mining activity. Many of these trails have been identified as part of the Iditarod National Historic Trail system including the Takotna-Flat, McGrath-Ophir, and Iditarod-Ophir trails. A concentration of local trails are located in and adjacent to McGrath, Takotna, and the Candle Hills. A section of the Iditarod race trail passes through this unit and follows the McGrath to Takotna trail and the Takotna-Ophir road.

Management Intent

This unit contains accessible areas near McGrath and Takotna particularly along the Takotna River and the Ophir-Sterling Landing Road. The general management intent of these areas in the northeastern part of this unit is to provide lands for Forestry, mining, public recreation, and wildlife habitat. Less accessible lands with low surface resource values will be managed for general use including hunting, trapping, mining, and transportation. Approximately 20 remote cabin permits will be allowed in this unit with no more than three cabin permits allowed in any one township. Remote cabins are prohibited in

some areas to avoid conflicts with trapping and mining.

All state lands retained in public ownership will remain open to new mineral entry. Lands proposed for disposal will be closed to mineral entry prior to sale. Although the lower reaches of the Takotna River are bordered by Native-owned lands, the bed of this river is navigable and subject to the guidelines in the plan. State-owned beds of navigable waters including the Takotna River in this unit will remain open to mineral entry.

Subunit 9a - Fourth of July Creek-Little Waldren Fork River

The blocks of land near the village of Takotna in this subunit are all overlapping state and Native selections. The remainder of this subunit along the Upper Takotna River is state owned. The eastern blocks of this subunit are accessible by boat in summer, trails in winter, and the Takotna-Sterling Landing Road year-round, and have high levels of use for hunting, trapping, recreation and personal-use timber particularly near Takotna. The Candle Hills contain valuable mining claims which are currently being worked. This area also has potential for riprap which could be used for an erosion control project in McGrath or for crushed aggregate for surfacing materials. The western block of this subunit along Fourth of July Creek has low surface values, and is generally not as heavily used. The primary trail between Takotna and McGrath, which is also the Iditarod race trail, passes through this unit along Porcupine Ridge. The DOT/PF-maintained Sterling Landing - Takotna Road provides access to overlapping selections south of Takotna. The Tatalina Air Force Station airstrip located nearby is restricted to military and authorized airplanes. Portions of this subunit are within the Tatalina Air Force Station military reservation and will not be available for state selection unless this reservation is relinquished. Parts of this subunit have been considered for an Alaska National Guard training site. The Guard has been less interested in this site than the proposed Dishna site described in Unit 8 because of the adjacent private lands that may restrict maneuvers. Present information indicates

that impacts of military training on state lands south of Tatalina Air Force Station in this area or along the Upper Dishna in unit 8 would be less than at other sites considered in the planning area. Based on preliminary information, these activities appear compatible with the management intent for state lands in this subunit. A final decision on the establishment of such a training site will not be made until an environmental assessment is completed (also see units 5 and 8).

Remote cabin permits are allowed along Fourth of July Creek. However, these permits are not allowed near the Beaver Mountains in order to avoid conflicts with brown bear concentrations and mining. Remaining public lands will be available for forestry, public recreation, and wildlife habitat.

Subunit 9b - Takotna

This subunit is located primarily southeast of the Takotna River and Little Waldren Fork. The area contains overlapping state and Native selections along the road between Takotna and Sterling Landing. The remainder of the land in this subunit is either state owned or selected. Portions of this subunit located just west and across the Kuskokwim River from McGrath have been identified as possible sources of peat for energy. Roundabout Mountain has been identified as a potential source of riprap for an erosion control project in McGrath. Peat and materials will be available for extraction consistent with management intent for fish and wildlife resources. Access is primarily from the DOT/PF-maintained Takotna-Sterling Landing Road and existing cat trails. Parts of this subunit have been considered for an Alaska National Guard training site. The Guard has been less interested in this site than the proposed Dishna site described in Unit 8 because of the adjacent private lands that may restrict maneuvers. Present information indicates that impacts of military training on state lands south of Tatalina Air Force Station in this area or along the Upper Dishna in unit 8 would be less than at other sites considered in the planning area. Based on preliminary information, these activities appear compatible with the management intent for state lands in

this subunit. A final decision on the establishment of such a training site will not be made until an environmental assessment is completed (also see units 5 and 8).

Grazing will not be allowed in most of this subunit because of its importance as a winter moose concentration area. Lands in this subunit will be retained in public ownership and will be managed for multiple use with emphasis on wildlife habitat and public recreation.

Subunit 9c - Upper Moore Creek

Most of this subunit is state owned or state selected. This subunit contains highly mineralized lands with several mining claims that have been intermittently active since the early part of this century. They are located in the vicinity of Moore, Yankee, Lincoln, Candle, and Spaulding creeks. The Candle Hills are a potential source of riprap which could be used for an erosion control project in McGrath or for crushed aggregate for surfacing materials. Remote cabin permits are allowed in parts of this subunit near Moore Creek but will not be authorized in the Beaver Mountains and other areas to avoid conflicts with mining, trapping, hunting, and public recreation. Remains of the Moore Creek roadhouse and the Duffy-Riley Alaska Road Commission cabin are related to the Iditarod National Historic Trail System and are located in this subunit. The remains of the Willow Creek reindeer cabin are also in this subunit. The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should be consulted before remote cabins are authorized in these areas so that these historic sites. This subunit will be retained in public ownership and be managed for multiple use with emphasis on minerals and materials extraction.

Subunit 9d - Middle Takotna River-Big Waldren Fork River

Most of this subunit is state owned. Access is by boat along the Takotna River and on the Takotna-Moore Creek cat trail. The area is frequently used by residents of McGrath and Takotna for hunting and trapping. Grazing is prohibited in most of this subunit because of

its importance as a moose wintering area. Remote cabin permits will not be allowed in this subunit. Portions of this subunit are within the Tatalina Air Force Station military reservations and will not be available for state selection unless the reservation is relinquished. This subunit will be retained in public ownership and be managed for multiple use with emphasis on forestry, public recreation, and 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:

- Agriculture/grazing
- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Forestry
- Materials
- Public access
- Public and commercial recreation resources
- Remote cabins
- Subsurface resources
- Transportation and utilities
- Stream corridors and instream flow
- Trail management
- Wetlands management

Subunits 9b and 9d - Takotna and Upper Takotna River-Waldren Fork River

Grazing. Grazing leases or permits will not be allowed in the following portions of the Takotna drainage because of its importance as a winter concentration area for moose. Temporary passage is not prohibited through this area to reach areas where grazing is permitted. Grazing may be allowed in portions of prohibited areas if consistent with the guidelines in Chapter 2 ("Grazing on Important Habitat Lands").

- Within 1 mile of the Takotna River in this unit.

- Within 1 mile of the Little Waldren Fork River between its mouth and Wolf Mountain.
- Within 1 mile of the Big Waldren Fork River within this unit.
- Southeast of the Takotna and Big Waldren Fork rivers within this unit.

Subunits 9a, 9b, 9c, and 9d - Moore Creek, Middle Takotna River, Fourth of July Creek, and Waldren Fork Rivers

Iditarod National Historic Trail system and race trail. Both trail systems pass through these subunits and setbacks along them will be consistent with policies in Chapter 2.

Remote Cabin Permit Areas. Parts of these subunits are within the Dishna and Tatalina blocks of the Dishna-Folger-Tatalina remote

cabin permit area. Parts of subunits 9a, 9b, 9c and 9d are also within this block. A total of eleven remote cabin permits will be allowed in the Tatalina block, and a total of 36 remote cabin permits will be allowed in the Dishna block with a maximum of three remote cabin permits allowed in any one township.

Subunits 9a, 9b, and 9d - Takotna River, Waldren Forks, and Fourth of July Creek

Takotna River Drainage Instream Flow. Gold Creek which runs through the village of Takotna is currently being considered as a possible hatchery site. Release sites would be along the Takotna River and its tributaries. If this hatchery is developed and leads to consumptive water use, an instream flow study to determine the flow levels necessary for the successful rearing and release of salmon may be necessary. Following such a study, a flow reservation may be necessary.

RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

Management Unit 9 - Takotna River

Resource	Subunit			
	9a	9b	9c	9d
Agriculture	Low to unsuitable	Unsuitable	Unsuitable	Unsuitable
Energy	Very low coal potential	Very low coal potential peat potential west of McGrath	Very low coal potential	Very low coal potential
Fish	Resident fish	Salmon and resident fish	None identified	Takotna R.: salmon & resident fish
Forestry	Mostly unsuitable; some low potential	Low-unsuitable	Low potential to unsuitable	High along Takotna R.
Grazing	High potential	Moderate to high potential	High potential	Moderate to high potential
Historic/ cultural	Iditarod NHTS	Iditarod NHTS	Iditarod NHTS	Iditarod NHTS
Materials	High potential near Candle	Low potential	Potential site for riprap and crushed aggregate for McGrath	Low potential
Minerals	Moderate to very low potential	Moderate to very low; a few mining claims	Very high to high potential; mining claims	Moderate to very low potential; mining claims
Oil & gas	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Public access	Sterling Landing Road; local trails	Local trails and Iditarod trail	Airstrips; local trails	Boat along Takotna R.; trail along Takotna R. Sterling Landing Road
Recreation	High use adjacent to Takotna	High use near McGrath	Very low potential	High use along Takotna River
Settlement suitability	Low to very low except near Takotna	Low to unsuitable	Very low to low	Mixed high and low
Wildlife	Mostly C; some B-2; part brown bear concentrat- ion area; caribou south of Beaver Mts.; moose	Mostly B-2; some A-2 bear, moose calving & winter range	B-2 and C; bear, moose	A-2 and B-2; moose calving & winter range; bear, ducks
Important trails	Iditarod NHTS; Takotna- Flat trail; local trails; Sterling Landing Road	Local trails around Takotna and McGrath; Iditarod Race Trail and NHTS	Iditarod NHTS; Takotna-Flat trail; local trails	Takotna-Moore Cr. trail; Sterling Landing Road; Iditarod NHTS; Iditarod Race trail; local trails

See glossary for definition of ratings.

LAND-USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

MANAGEMENT UNIT 9 - Takotna River

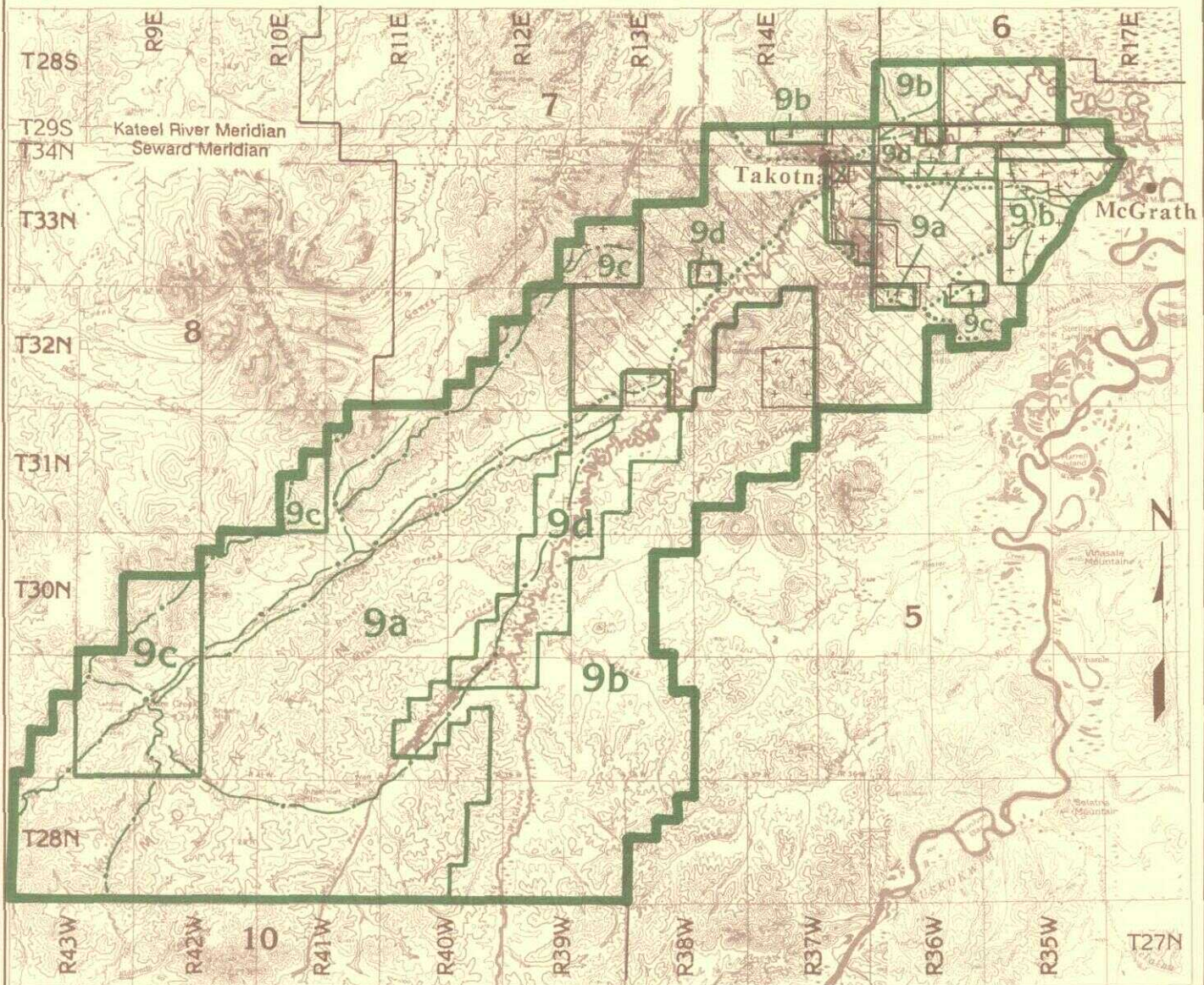
SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				COMMENTS
		Primary Surface Uses	Secondary Surface Uses	Prohibited Surface Uses ^a	Subsurface ^b	
9a 4th of July Creek-Little Waldren Fork	State	General use: low resource values	Remote cabins in part of subunit	Land disposals Remote cabins in part of subunit	Open	
9b Takotna	State, state selected, state/Native selected	Wildlife habitat	Public recreation Remote cabins in part of subunit	Grazing in part of subunit Land disposals Remote cabins in part of subunit	Open	
9c Upper Moore	State & state selected	Minerals	Remote cabins in part of subunit	Land disposals Remote cabins in part of subunit	Open	Historic sites present
9d Upper Takotna River- Waldren Forks	State & state selected Native select.	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	

^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

9: Takotna River



-  State Owned
 -  State Selected
 -  Native Owned
 -  Native Selected
 -  Trails on public lands
 -  Access easements to public land
 -  ANCSA 17 (b) easements
 -  & State Omnibus roads
-  Management Unit Boundary
 -  Subunit Boundary

Map shows approximate location of easements to state land and trails across state land. Portions of trails may cross private lands.

