

Tidelands and Submerged Lands

This region consists of the tidelands and submerged lands owned by the state within the planning area, which coincides in its southern boundary with the corporate boundary of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough as it adjoins the boundary of the Municipality of Anchorage. Not included within this region are the tidelands owned by private entities or the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, nor those situated within the three LDAs situated along the Knik Arm of Cook Inlet that contain tidelands (Goose Bay, Palmer Hays Flats, and Susitna Flats State Game Refuges). Most of the important habitat within the region occurs within the three state game refuges. See Maps 8 through 10.

Distribution and Characteristics

This very extensive area of tidelands and submerged lands occupies the area within the corporate boundary of the Borough, with the exceptions noted above. This area is important seasonally as a feeding area for beluga whales. Concentrations of shorebirds, waterfowl, and seabirds occur throughout the two management units, particularly within marshes and wetlands (most of which are situated with the three state game refuges). Extensive areas of emergent and estuarine wetlands are concentrated along the shore in areas with higher elevation not exposed to tides on a frequent basis.

Portions of this region experience relatively high volumes of ship traffic, generally associated with cargo movements to/from the ports in the Municipality of Anchorage and at Point MacKenzie. Recreational use of the tidelands is essentially limited to occasional boat use, usually associated with access to prime fishing and hunting areas, and to duck hunting on the tide flats during the fall.

Management Constraints

Several state and local management plans affect the planning area and were consulted in the development of recommendations for the tideland region. Local plans include the Borough Comprehensive Plan and its Coastal Management Plan.⁷ These plans provide management guidance of a general nature and helped in the formulation of recommendations. The Enforceable Policies of the Coastal Management Plan were particularly useful.

⁷ The Point MacKenzie Area Meriting Special Attention (AMSA) affects a very small area of tidelands within Knik Arm, but these areas are owned by the Borough and are therefore not included in this plan.

Management Summary

State land is to be managed consistent with the plan designations and management recommendations contained in the Resource Allocation Table. State land will be managed in a manner similar to that inferred from its designation. The smallest of the three tideland units (TT-03) is adjacent to borough tidelands at Pt. MacKenzie. It is designated Waterfront Development to accommodate port development. Tideland unit TT-02, designated Habitat, will be managed to protect its habitat values related to marshes and estuarine wetlands. The tidelands of this unit are similar in character to those found in the Palmer Hay Flats, which are situated immediately to the east. The largest tideland unit (TT-01), also designated Habitat, is to be managed to provide for multiple uses while protecting critical species (primarily beluga whale feeding areas) and important habitats associated with marshes and estuarine wetlands having shorebird or waterfowl concentrations. Authorizations are to ensure that impacts to beluga whale feeding areas, important during the summer months in certain areas, are to be avoided or reduced to acceptable biological levels. Concentration areas of seabirds, shorebirds, or waterfowl are to be avoided.

Resource Allocation Table for Tidelands and Submerged Lands

Unit #	Designation(s) / Acres	Map(s) / MTRS	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
TT-01	Ha 35,929	Map 10 Various	<p>Multiple uses are allowed within this tideland parcel. Protect Beluga whale feeding and migration areas; consult US FWS and NMF prior to issuing authorizations.</p> <p>Proposed authorizations are to avoid estuarine wetlands and important recreation and fish and wildlife habitat. Impacts upon the adjacent Palmer Hay Flats LDA should be minimized or mitigated.</p>	<p>Parcel consists of a very large area of tidelands adjacent to the uplands of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. It primarily consists of regularly or irregularly exposed estuarine wetlands of generally unconsolidated sediments. Except for Beluga whale and anadromous fish passage, there few other significant resources associated with this tideland. The area of the Borough port and the route corridor for the proposed Knik Arm Crossing are not included within this tideland. They are located on municipally owned tidelands. Adjacent tidelands within the three state game refuges (Palmer Hay Flats, Goose Bay, and Susitna Flats) contain marshes and estuarine wetlands have plentiful seasonal concentrations of seabirds, waterfowl, and shorebirds.</p>
TT-02	Ha 3,963	Map 9 S016N002W: 11-17	<p>Manage to protect the habitat values. Authorizations should, in addition, consider and mitigate any adverse impacts upon the adjacent Palmer Hay Flats LDA.</p> <p>Proposed authorizations are to avoid estuarine wetlands and important recreation and fish and wildlife habitat. Impacts upon the adjacent Palmer Hay Flats LDA should be minimized or mitigated.</p>	<p>Parcel consists of an extensive area of tidelands west of the Palmer Hay Flats LDA. Consisting of both estuarine and palustrine (emergent) wetlands, this tideland area contains exposed marsh type vegetation similar to the type found in the LDA. Attributes of this wetland area are similar to those of the Palmer Hay Flats LDA. Important waterfowl and shorebird concentration area.</p>
TT-03	Wd 2,653	Map 10 S014N004W: 12, 13, 24 S014N003W: 7, 18, 19	<p>Manage this tideland area for waterfront development and accommodate port related development, roads, and utility corridors.</p> <p>Avoid areas of estuarine wetlands and summer feeding and migration areas of beluga whales.</p> <p>Tideland area is considered appropriate for conveyance to the MSB.</p>	<p>Tideland area is subject of application for conveyance of tidelands to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) under AS 38.05.825. The borough owns tidelands immediately adjoining this unit to the south.</p>

Total state land within region (3 units) – 42,545 acres