

MANAGEMENT UNIT 2 – BISHOP CREEK

MANAGEMENT INTENT

Management Unit 2 includes portions of the Beluga River, Chuit and Bishop creeks, Bishop and Primo lakes, and portions of Lone Ridge. This unit will be managed to support wildlife habitat, coal development, recreation and limited amounts of settlement. These objectives will be achieved by retaining the majority of the land in public ownership and clustering land sales. This unit will remain open to mineral location and be available for coal leasing except for subunit 2b which is closed due to a proposed land disposal. The entire unit is open to oil and gas leasing.

This management unit has five subunits: the Chichantna Creek area (2a), Primo and Bishop Lakes (2b), the Beluga River (2c), Felts Lake (2d) and Lone Ridge (2e). See the map at the end of this section for boundaries of these areas and the accompanying chart for a summary of land use designations in each subunit.

Subunit 2a, the Chichantna Creek area, will be retained in public ownership and managed for coal and wildlife habitat values. Coal potential is high in this subunit, and areas to the west are currently under lease. Portions of this area have been identified as trumpeter swan nesting sites which are sensitive to disturbance. This subunit, particularly along Bishop Creek, also supports a high number of moose in winter months.

Subunit 2b includes land sales around the area's three largest lakes — Bishop, Primo, and a lake that is unnamed on the USGS topographic maps. The objective of land sales in this unit is to provide seasonal recreational cabin sites in a popular hunting area with fly-in access. The remainder of the unit will be managed for wildlife habitat and recreation. Most of this subunit has low coal potential.

Subunit 2c: The Beluga River flows through the center of this subunit. Land on the eastside of the river is owned by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and will be designated borough land bank. Land west of the Beluga River is in state ownership and will be designated resource management. This subunit has settlement potential as well as values for habitat and recreation, coal and forestry. This subunit will be retained in public ownership in the near term. The ultimate use of the area should be decided after more is known about the likely timing and magnitude of coal development

Subunit 2d (Felts Lake) is in native ownership. It is hoped that this area will continue to provide wildlife

habitat and opportunities for public recreation around Felts Lake. Felts Lake also could accommodate some recreational settlement. High coal values exist in the southern part of the subunit and may be developed in the future.

Subunit 2e (Lone Ridge) has lower overall resource potential than the other units, particularly with regard to coal. The area will be retained in public ownership and managed for wildlife habitat and public recreation. Remote cabins are an allowed use within this subunit. Portions of the Chuitna River and several of its tributaries run through this unit. The Chuitna River has been identified as a river of statewide significance by the Department of Fish and Game due to the number of anadromous fish it supports and its potential for sport fishing.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The complete set of areawide management guidelines is presented in Chapter 2 of this report. All of the guidelines potentially apply to uses within this management unit; however, those that are most likely to be applicable are indicated with asterisks in the list below.

- Agriculture
- *Fish and Wildlife
- Forestry
- Recreation
- *Settlement
- Subsurface
- Transportation
- Instream Flow
- *Lakeshore Management
- *Public Access
- *Remote Cabin Permits
- *Stream Corridors
- Trail Management
- Wetlands Management
- Resource Management

Management guidelines that apply to this management unit only are presented below by subunit.

Subunit 2a (Chichantna Creek)

Critical Habitat and Subsurface Resources

A portion of this unit (T14N R13W S.M. Sections 1-3, 10-12) contains an important trumpeter swan nesting area. Trumpeter swans are relatively scarce and nesting areas are vulnerable to disturbance. Activities and facilities requiring land use permits (e.g., gravel extraction, remote cabins and utility lines), coal mining and

LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

SUBREGION Beluga

MANAGEMENT UNIT 2 — Bishop Creek

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP (GENERALIZED)	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				PROHIBITED SURFACE USE(S)*	COMMENTS
		SURFACE		SUBSURFACE			
		PRIMARY USE(S)	SECONDARY USE(S)	LOCATABLE MINERALS	LEASEABLE MINERALS		
2a Chichantra Creek	State	Wildlife Habitat	Public Rec.	Open	Available for leasing	Remote Cabins Land Disposals	—
2b Primo/ Bishop Lake	State	Settlement	Forestry Public Rec. Wildlife Hab.	Closed prior to land disposal	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	—	Estimated net disposal area = 1,400 acres
2c Beluga River	Mat-Su Borough/ State	Borough Land Bank/Resource Mgt. (high) Values: Settlement, Public Recreation, Wildlife Habitat, Forestry, Oil & Gas, Coal, Minerals		Open	Available for leasing	—	—
2d Felts Lake	Native	Primarily Private Land— Recommended Uses: Wildlife Habitat, Public Recreation		—	—	—	—
2e Lone Ridge	State	Wildlife Habitat	Public Rec. Remote Cabins	Open	Available for leasing	Land Disposals	—

*Other uses such as material sales, land leases, remote cabin permits, etc., that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement and management guidelines of this unit, and with the relevant management guidelines in chapter 2.

other potentially disruptive activities should be designed to minimize their impacts on the swans and will be permitted only after consultation with the Department of Fish and Game.

Subunit 2b and 2c (Bishop and Primo lakes and Beluga River)

Stream Corridors

The management intent for land adjacent to the streams referenced below is to permit fishing, picnicking, camping and other active uses, and to protect water quality and riparian habitat. Consequently this land should be retained in public ownership. Corridor widths will be set on a case-by-case basis using the policies in chapter 2. The standard minimum width (200' on both sides of the river) should be used on the stream running from Bishop Lake to Bishop Creek and on the other tributaries to Bishop Creek shown on the 1:63,360 topographic quad for the area. The corridor on Bishop Creek and Beluga River should be 300' on both sides of the river in order to protect the riparian habitat along the river and provide room for a greater variety of public recreation activities along these streams.

Subunit 2e (Lone Ridge)

Forestry

Forestry is a secondary use in this management unit. The limited forest resources will be managed for personal use. Timber harvests will be designed to minimize impacts on habitat.

Remote Cabins and Stream Corridors

Remote cabin permits are an allowed use within this unit. Cabin sites shall be dispersed in a very low density (no more than 4 cabins per 640 acres) over the entire area, or clustered along stream corridors (3-4 cabins every two to four miles) to maintain limited forest resources and to reduce human impacts on wildlife.